

Read: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Be Prepared

2 Timothy 4:2-5

Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The meteorologist's voice sounded urgent coming from the TV. The hurricane was approaching within the next couple days, and he warned viewers of the impending danger it could cause for the people and places around the area. He listed off items that one should have in their emergency kits—most definitely water, food, a battery-powered radio, flashlights, batteries, and a first-aid kit.

It's important to be prepared for certain kinds of weather. Most often, we have an idea of what is coming and what we'll need to be ready for the weather.

It's important to be prepared for other circumstances of life too. There are plenty of times we can't see the future, so we're not sure what will happen or what we'll need. Yet, there are times when we can be prepared for certain situations because we know they are bound to happen.

The apostle Paul wrote to young pastor Timothy about being ready to face uncertain times, false teachers, and corrupt people with "itching ears." That's a fancy way of people saying, "Scratch my desire to hear what I want to hear." I wish I could say you and I have never possessed such ears. But many of our struggles, setbacks, and trouble with friends and family are because of words we tell ourselves that scratch our desire to hear what we want to hear.

What would prepare Timothy to confront lies? God's powerful truth. When someone says, "God can't use me unless I'm strong." God's Word calls out, "That's a lie!" If someone tells you "God's love must be earned," God's Word will equip you to say "That's a lie!" Whenever you think, "I can listen to God's Word but don't have to do what it says," God Word says "Wait! That's not true!"

Timothy needed to study the Word himself first. How can we avoid lies and be prepared to call them out? The same way Paul, Timothy, and anyone who shares the gospel prepares. *Hear, listen, read, and study the truth of God's Word.* Your parents, pastors, Sunday School teachers,

youth leaders, Lutheran school teachers, and many others teach you God's Word. In God's Word, you hear about Jesus' work which makes sinners righteous in God's sight, you receive the blessings of forgiveness, and you gain encouragement to share this message. Child of God, you *are* prepared!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name two people who have told you the truth about Jesus.
- Name one person you would like to tell about Jesus.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why is it important that we are prepared to speak God's Word at any time and any situation?
- What is the most important thing you want someone to know about God?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Identify an "itching ears" lie that is dangerous to your faith. Then identify God's truth which addresses it.
- As a family, find a Scripture verse that can serve as a reminder or encouragement to keep sharing God's Word even if it's hard to do so.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, help us be eager listeners of your Word that we may always be prepared in every situation to speak your truth. Amen.