

# THE CHURCH

*Irrelevant, Dangerous, or Necessary?*

## 1 & 2 Timothy Discipleship Guide





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# Passage Schedule

<b>Week 1</b>	1 Tim. 4:6-16
<b>Week 2</b>	1 Tim. 5:1-16
<b>Week 3</b>	1 Tim. 5:17-25
<b>Week 4</b>	1 Tim. 6:1-2
<b>Week 5</b>	1 Tim. 6:3-10
<b>Week 6</b>	1 Tim. 6:11-21
<b>Week 7</b>	2 Tim. 1:1-7
<b>Week 8</b>	2 Tim. 1:8-18
<b>Week 9</b>	2 Tim. 2:1-7
<b>Week 10</b>	2 Tim. 2:8-13
<b>Week 11</b>	2 Tim. 2:14-26
<b>Week 12</b>	2 Tim. 3:1-9

## HOLY WEEK

<b>4/2/23</b>	Palm Sunday
<b>4/7/23</b>	Good Friday
<b>4/9/23</b>	Resurrection Sunday

# Series Introduction

With each passing day we are given more bad news in our complex and chaotic world. Information that used to take weeks or months to reach us is available in an instant, and we barely have time to catch our breath before we're alerted again. Our attention is diverted, sold, and bought on a global scale and we're overwhelmed not just by what's out *there* in the external world but by our own response to it all.

So where does the church fit in all of this? Is the church irrelevant? Is it dangerous? Or is the church, with all of its blemishes, sin, and failures, the necessary and good epicenter of God's activity in the world?

Nearly 2,000 years ago, a regular man on an irregular mission wrote two letters describing the church as "the household of God", "the church of the living God", and "a pillar and buttress of the truth". That man was the Apostle Paul, and his letters to Timothy and the churches in Ephesus stand today as two explorations of the relevance, safety, and necessity of the church.

# Art Explanations

1 & 2 Timothy are two letters sent by the Apostle Paul to his protege Timothy, a young church leader assigned to help the church in Ephesus grow in health and holiness.

These letters were meant to be read to the entire church because they contain God's cross-cultural instructions related to the structure, leadership, and organization of the church, which is God's household.

The art contains three main stamp images that each represent a different assessment of the church in our culture: irrelevant, dangerous, or necessary.

## IRRELEVANT



The image of a phone book stands as a representative of something that is considered irrelevant.

The phones represent Paul's emphasis on what we speak and how we should speak.

"67" represents a date suggested by some scholars for the writing of 2 Timothy. 67 AD is roughly 30 years after Jesus' resurrection.

## DANGEROUS



The imagery here is of a wolf along with warning signs and money. Some outside of the church may view the church as a predatory, dangerous institution only out for money and power.

For believers, the wolf represents the dangers of false teaching and false teachers, who are called wolves by Jesus and the Apostle Paul.

“1/2” represents 1 & 2 Timothy.

## NECESSARY



The imagery here is of a heart, which represents every person's need for a working biological heart and a new heart, which is God's gift to us in salvation. This new heart comes through the proclamation of the gospel, represented by the open book.

“33” represents the traditional year of Jesus' resurrection and ascension, and the continuing of the mission of the church after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.



# 3 Steps for Bible Interpretation

## 1. Observe the Text<sup>1</sup>

*This is the key step in interpreting the Bible, yet it's the one we most often skip. Instead of trying to immediately interpret the passage, observe it.*

Here are some questions you can ask while observing/reading the Bible:

- What are repeated words or ideas?
- Who is writing? Who is talking?
- Where is this passage taking place?
- Are there contrasts? Comparisons? Lists?
- What figures of speech are present?
- What verbs are used? Are the actions past, present, or future?
- Are there quotes from other parts of the Bible? Where are these quotes from?
- Are there words that indicate a mood, tone, or emotion?
- Are there any linking words such as "but", "therefore", "because", etc.?
- What are the roles and actions of God in this passage? What about the roles and actions of people?

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<sup>1</sup> Portions of this section are adapted from Matt Smethurst's article, "How to Study Your Bible in 2020", [www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org)

## 2. Investigate the Context of the Passage

Here are some questions you can ask while investigating the Bible passage:

- Does the surrounding context clarify any confusing words or phrases?
  - *It's best to examine the "nearest" context—other verses in the same chapter or other chapters in the same book—before consulting "farther" passages or outside resources.*
- How would I write this passage in my own words?
- Why did the biblical author write this particular passage?
- Why did the author feel it necessary to include this passage?
- Is my interpretation consistent with what I noticed in the observation stage, or have I made leaps based on prior assumptions?
- Do other passages of Scripture help me clarify or expand upon my interpretation?
  - *Let clearer Bible passages help you understand less clear Bible passages*
- Where does this passage fall in the unfolding history of the Bible?
- How does it fit within the Bible's story as a whole?



### 3. Application

Here are some questions you can ask while trying to apply the Bible passage to your own life or to others:

- What's something I learned about God? (His character, His plan, His priorities, His promises)
- What's something I learned about myself? My neighbor? The world?
- What's the sinful condition on display in this passage?
- What aspect of human sin or brokenness is most obvious?
- What aspect of God's grace is most obvious?
- How does the gospel - the news of what God accomplished in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus to reconcile sinners to Himself - affect my understanding of this passage?
- How do I need to change my thinking or living based on what I've learned?
- How should I be praying in light of this passage?
- Is there an encouragement or promise here that I need to meditate on?
- What implications does this passage have for the way I engage my unbelieving friends?
- How does this passage apply to my brothers and sisters in Christ? How does it speak to our life together as a church?

# Background on 2 Timothy

Paul wrote the two letters we know as 1 and 2 Timothy to his friend and “child in the faith” Timothy and the churches he was helping in one of the ancient world’s largest cities: Ephesus.

One of the “Seven Wonders of the Ancient World” - the Temple of Artemis (or *Diana*) - was in Ephesus. This fact gives us a peek into the city’s spiritual climate in Timothy’s time: the worship of a false god like Artemis wasn’t just a theological issue for Ephesus, such worship brought money to the seaport community. So when Paul proclaimed the gospel in Ephesus, and it had a negative economic impact (because “no Artemis worship” = “no Artemis merch sales”; read about it in Acts 19:21-40), the gospel and those proclaiming it were likely labeled as “unwelcome”.

Nevertheless, a church was planted, which Timothy was then sent to help. This second letter has one dominant emphasis: in the face of all the adversity he’s facing, Paul wants his dear friend to *endure*. And surprisingly, Paul is writing about endurance from prison, knowing that his own death is rapidly approaching.

# Week 7

## SINCERE FAITH

### 2 TIMOTHY 1:1-7

#### MAIN POINT

Sincere faith in Jesus is a gracious gift from God that strongly binds us to others who trust Jesus. Therefore, we can take bold steps for God, knowing we're not doing so without Him and His people.

#### GROUP INTRO

In this passage, Paul highlights the fact that his friend Timothy is rooted in his faith because he grew up in an environment that valued and honored God.

In your life, what habits, traditions, or routines - whether in your family, the church or somewhere else - help you value and honor God?



## TEXT

1. Read the passage. We can grow used to biblical words like “grace” and “mercy”, so slowly read Paul’s greeting: *“Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Through faith in Jesus:

- We have God’s undeserved goodness (grace)
- We have God’s compassion in our need (mercy)
- We have complete reconciliation with God (peace)
- God is our attentive, loving Father
- We belong to Jesus’s people, and He’s our Master

Which part of Paul’s greeting sticks out to you or impacts you emotionally? Why?

Read again: *“Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

2. What does Paul mean by the words “sincere faith”? Where else in the Bible can we look to understand what genuine faith is?

*Leader help: One theologian defines sincere faith like this, “Saving faith is faith that not only knows and comprehends the facts about the gospel of Jesus Christ but also trusts in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone for salvation.”<sup>2</sup>*

*Other passages that help us understand sincere faith:*

*Luke 18:9-14; Romans 4:20-24; Romans 10:8-13*

3. How would you describe Paul and Timothy’s relationship to one another? Why would this kind of relationship be important for both men as they follow Jesus?

*Leader help: These men share a profound friendship built on the gospel. There’s trust, personal knowledge, emotional investment and sacrificial love.*

*This kind of “knowing and being known” is crucial because following Jesus is hard as we face spiritual attack, our own sinful desires, and a world opposed to God.*

4. 2 Timothy is the last letter we have from Paul before he was executed in Rome. Knowing this, why is he highlighting Timothy’s sincere faith and reminding him what God has given him?

*Leader help: Paul is basically asking Timothy to carry the gospel forward so that Jesus can be known and trusted not only in Ephesus, but across the world. And he knows this will be difficult at times.*

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<sup>2</sup> J.V. Fesko, The Doctrine of Saving Faith, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/doctrine-saving-faith/>

## APPLICATION

1. It takes trust in Jesus to let other Christians get to know you - the good and the bad. What do you find difficult about being known, even in your sinfulness? What are some helpful ways for us to get to know one another as we follow Jesus?
2. Timothy was taught about God in close relationships. Will you commit to telling others about Jesus this month?
  1. For those of you with a close relationship with an unbeliever: How will you introduce Jesus to one person?
  2. For those of you without a close relationship with an unbeliever: How will you pursue one person who doesn't know Jesus?
3. Where in your own discipleship do you need more courage, spiritual power, love or self-control? How or where might God be inviting you to receive that?



## PRAYER

Ask God for strong, trustworthy friendships with other Christians and for the courage to be known.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer:***

***1 Thessalonians 3:11-12***

Thank God for those in your life who told you the gospel and helped you better know God.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Ephesians 2:8-9***

Ask God to save those in your life who do not have sincere faith, including those who may think they are Christians but do not show sincere trust in Jesus.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: John 17:20-21***



# Week 8

## NO SHAME

### 2 TIMOTHY 1:8-18

## MAIN POINT

Despite the suffering Christians can face for following Jesus, we can follow Him without shame by trusting that, through Him, the grace and power of the triune God have been freely gifted to us.

## GROUP INTRO

In this passage Paul reminds Timothy of biblical truths to help Timothy keep following Jesus. In your own life, when has someone helped you follow Jesus by reminding you of truth? Why did that help you?

## TEXT

1. What is “the testimony about our Lord” that’s referenced in verse 8?

*Leader help: Testimony = the gospel message - Jesus the Messiah died like a criminal on a Roman cross in our place and physically resurrected from the dead. Timothy could have been tempted to be ashamed of the gospel for 2 reasons: (1) To die on a cross was a very shameful way to die and (2) The resurrection would have sounded just as unlikely then as it does today.*

## 2. What does Paul say God has done, is doing, or will do?

*Leader help: Saved from wrath (verse 9), called Paul and Timothy into ministry (verse 9), gave grace through Jesus (verse 9), abolished death and brought immortality (verse 10), appointed leaders for His church (verse 11). God also guards the gospel so that His people always have it (verse 12) and He continually empowers Christians to believe and guard the gospel message (verse 14).*

## 3. Why does Paul say he is suffering and how does he respond to this suffering?

*Leader help: Paul is suffering because a selfish Emperor was recently elected and his Netflix subscription just went up in price (NOT).*

*Paul is suffering because of the message he was proclaiming - the gospel. The reality of Jesus dying for sin and resurrecting as Lord confronts us with our own sinfulness, our need for salvation, our inability to save ourselves, and the worthlessness of our own righteousness - this makes proclaiming the gospel a sometimes difficult experience. Paul's response is trust in Jesus and a certainty that all of his work proclaiming the gospel and discipling others wasn't in vain.*



#### 4. How is immortality brought and death “abolished” (or “destroyed”) by the gospel?

*Leader help: See 1 Corinthians 15:20-26. The gospel message is what God uses to reveal someone’s need for salvation, how God has saved them, and what kind of God He is. As the Holy Spirit causes the person to be made new, they believe this message and the person is united to Jesus and thus given the gift of immortality.*

*Death is God’s judgment upon all humanity for our sin. But if you believe the news about Jesus, then Jesus took death for you so that, instead of being separated from God forever, you’re united to Him forever. Death continues to be a reality for us until Jesus returns to bring the new creation, where there is no more death.*

### **APPLICATION**

1. Imagine if Jesus didn’t preserve the gospel and let it instead disappear from history. Where would you be without the gospel?
2. How do you tell the difference between suffering because you proclaimed the gospel and suffering because you aren’t respectful, humble, and gracious?

3. Paul tells Timothy (and us by extension) to “guard the gospel”. What are some modern lies about Jesus, humanity, or salvation that we need to guard against? How can we lovingly do this together?
4. In what ways does your fear of suffering or shame impact your willingness to tell others the gospel? What are some truths from this passage that God’s given you to comfort and strengthen you?

## PRAYER

Admit your own fears about suffering for the gospel or ways you have resisted following Jesus and ask God to make you unashamed of the gospel.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Romans 1:16-17***

Thank God for everything that this passage says He has freely given you.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Romans 5:1-6***

Ask God for 1 specific opportunity to tell someone the gospel, and to help you believe the promises in this passage.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Colossians 4:3***

# Week 9

## DISCIPLES MAKE DISCIPLES

### 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

#### MAIN POINT

Unlike those who deserted Paul, Timothy is exhorted to live a life of persevering discipleship by God's grace. This means putting the mission of Jesus first and believing that God will reward his hard work.

Christians today are also called to persevering discipleship, not in our own faith and power, but through humble dependence on the Lord Jesus.

#### GROUP INTRO

Part of this week's passage is about keeping our focus on Jesus's mission.

We all have distractions that pull our attention away from discipleship - what is your single biggest source of distraction right now?



## TEXT

1. To get a better grasp of verse 1, read the verse in the following translations: **ESV** (English Standard Version), **NIV** (New International Version), and **NLT** (New Living Translation). Why would Timothy need strength and how is Timothy told to get this strength?

*Leader help: Following Jesus and discipling others is difficult relational work; it can take years to see just a small amount of progress in ourselves and in others' theological understanding, character, and trust in Jesus, and we can experience frustration, hurt, or even betrayal. Timothy, like us, needed God's strength to keep discipling.*

*Timothy is told to get his strength through his relationship with Jesus. Through Jesus, God empowers us for His mission.*

2. Why does Paul instruct Timothy to entrust doctrine to faithful men and not faithful women or faithful children?

*Leader help: In this specific context, Paul is exhorting Timothy to disciple godly men who are or will be serving as elders. God wants doctrine to be authoritatively taught in the gathered church by qualified men only (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7). However, broadly speaking, all Christians are responsible for helping each other know and understand good doctrine in their local churches as they're led by qualified elders (see Colossians 3:14-16 for example).*

3. Paul uses 3 metaphors in this passage to help Timothy persevere in his discipleship. What's the takeaway from the first metaphor, the soldier (verses 3-4)?

*Leader help: Soldiers in Paul's time, much like today, had to have a single-minded focus - they couldn't get distracted by anything that wasn't related to their mission. Likewise, Paul wants Timothy to have **a single-minded focus on discipleship** - seeing people know, love, and follow Jesus.*

4. What is Paul's focus in the second metaphor, the athlete (verse 5)?

*Leader help: Athletes submit themselves to training so they can win the prize, and this training takes self-discipline. Likewise, Timothy is called to have **self-discipline** as he follows Jesus and helps others follow Jesus. And just like the athlete, a heavenly reward awaits those who submit to Jesus and His training.*

5. What is Paul's focus in the third metaphor, the farmer (verse 6)?

*Leader help: Most people in Paul's time would spend a large amount of time growing and harvesting their food, which would have taken a lot of time, patience, and hard work. Likewise, Timothy should prayerfully seek **a willingness to work hard and trust God for results**.*

## APPLICATION

1. One of the most spiritually destructive things in our culture is our almost limitless access to distractions (our phones, TVs, work, social media, etc.). How have you seen distractions keep you from obeying Jesus's commands such as "go...make disciples" and "love your neighbor as yourself"?
2. How might the ways you spend your time, money, and energy change if you give more attention to Jesus and His mission (discipling others, evangelizing, etc.)?
3. Why do you personally pursue distractions instead of wholeheartedly giving yourself to Jesus and His mission? What does repentance look like for you?

*Leader help: Be sure to bring your group back to the reality of God's grace and the gospel. 1 John 4:10-11 reminds us that Christianity isn't about our dedication to God, but His dedication to doing good for the undeserving. God calls us back to Himself out of our distraction for our good, not to crush us or shame us.*

4. God promises rewards to His people for obedience.<sup>3</sup> Read Matthew 16:27. How can looking ahead to the return of Jesus and the reality of heavenly rewards help you persevere in following Jesus?

## PRAYER

Admit the distractions in your life that seem to have a strong grip on you. Ask God to help you set these things aside for the better, more fulfilling life available on mission with Jesus.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Matthew 6:19-21***

Thank Jesus for His unfailing obedience. Praise Him for His great love for you.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: John 10:11***

Ask Jesus for the help to persevere in discipleship, even when relationships in the church are painful.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Psalm 118:5-7***

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<sup>3</sup> A good resource on heavenly rewards can be found at <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2023/02/heavenly-rewards/>



# Week 10

## THE UNBOUND GOSPEL

### 2 TIMOTHY 2:8-13

#### MAIN POINT

It's easy to neglect who Jesus is, what He's done, and what He's promised. This neglect of Jesus leads to a selfish life. But a life which has Jesus and the unbound gospel as the focus is drastically different and leads to eternal glory.

#### GROUP INTRO

In this week's passage Paul gives Timothy powerful motivation to thrive in difficult ministry.

Share about a time in your life when someone's reminder kept you going (during a marathon, big work project, or something more serious). Why did the reminder motivate you?

## TEXT

1. Paul calls Timothy to remember the gospel in verse 8. Why does Jesus's resurrection matter? Or, to ask it another way, how is Jesus's resurrection motivating or empowering?

*Leader help: The resurrection shows God's power over death, the defeat of sin and the devil, and God's faithfulness to His promises; it also shows that God can sovereignly use awful evil for His purposes; the resurrection also proves God has accepted the sacrificial death of Jesus in our place, and we therefore stand before God holy and righteous.*

2. Why is it significant that Jesus is "the offspring of David"?

*Leader help: This shows that Jesus was truly human, so He can deal with our struggles with true compassion and empathy. It also shows that He is the true king of God's people, coming from the lineage of Israel's greatest king, David. It also shows, again, that God is always faithful to His promises.*

3. How is the gospel "not bound" and how can this be an encouragement to all of God's people?

*Leader help: The gospel is itself powerful and God uses the good news to bring life to spiritually dead sinners. It's not limited to any single messenger. As long as the message can be communicated, people can be saved. This should encourage all of us by proving that someone's salvation doesn't depend on a "perfect" presentation of the gospel.*

4. Paul states that he endures everything for God's elect, a.k.a. those whom God freely chose for salvation. This tells us that God works through our evangelism to save unbelievers. Where else in Scripture do we see how necessary evangelism is?

*Leader help: Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 1:16-17; Romans 10:9-14*

5. Verses 11-13 contain both encouragement and warning. What encouragement do you see? What warning do you see?

*Leader help: The encouragement is that our dying to ourselves and our continuing trust in Jesus leads us into eternity with Him, where we will reign with Him over all creation.*

*The warning is debated. Some believe that verses 12-13 are essentially repeating what Jesus Himself said in Matthew 10:32-33. As one pastor states it,*

*"These statements appear to be parallel...'If we deny Him' is parallel to 'if we are faithless,' and 'He also will deny us' is parallel to 'He remains faithful.' God is faithful not just to extend blessing to those with genuine faith but also faithful to His warnings."<sup>4</sup>*

*In other words, God is faithful to His own words, including His warnings. We must take New Testament warnings seriously. However, we must remember that our salvation, endurance, and security aren't ultimately about us, they're about God and His faithfulness. The basic warning here is to keep trusting Jesus, no matter what.*

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<sup>4</sup> Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy, page 169.

## APPLICATION

1. When do you find yourself most tempted to hide your trust in Jesus? How could this passage help you the next time you experience this temptation?
2. Jesus defeated our greatest enemy, death. What's hindering your trust in Him at this point in your life and what do you need from the rest of group?
3. What do you think God is calling you to endure right now so that someone can hear the gospel? It could be a difficult job, chaos at home, or something else.

## PRAYER

Pray for God to bring one situation into your life this week where you can tell someone the gospel, and ask Him to give you all you'll need for that situation.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: John 16:7-8***

Surrender your doubts, fears, and exhaustion to God, asking Him to help you accept your weakness and limitations.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10***



# Week 11

## THE LORD WHO KNOWS

### 2 TIMOTHY 2:14-26

#### MAIN POINT

All Christians are given amazing purpose: pursuing holiness together and proclaiming the one true gospel. Although this is hard work, we're empowered by the Lord who knows and loves us.

#### GROUP INTRO

NHL coach Jim Montgomery is known for being positive and encouraging, even when he needs to correct his players.

Has there been a time recently when you unknowingly dropped the ball or just didn't do something right and someone gently corrected you? What kind of impact did their gentleness have on you?

## TEXT

1. Who is the “them” referring to in verse 14 and what’s Paul asking Timothy to tell them?

*Leader help: “them” = those responsible for leading and teaching, but the principle — not arguing and focusing instead on Jesus — applies to all Christians. Paul’s basically saying that, before God, Christian leaders must be exhorted to not waste time fighting and arguing over words when we have God’s Word and we’re commanded to share it.*

2. Two false teachers are mentioned in verse 17. What were these and other false teachers doing in the church? How did their actions impact others in the church?

*Leader help: There are references to their actions throughout this passage: they were fighting/arguing (verse 14), engaging in irreverent babble*

3. Read verse 15. Why is correctly proclaiming the “word of truth” (aka, the gospel) so important for the church? What Bible passages help us see the importance of correctly proclaiming the gospel?

*Leader help: The proclamation of the gospel is how God chooses to save sinners, so eternity is on the line. Not only this, but intentionally teaching false doctrine has dire, eternal consequences. See Romans 1:16-17; Romans 10:8-11; 1 Peter 1:22-25; 2 Peter 2:1-3*

4. In verses 24-26 we see that Paul expected opposition to the one true gospel he proclaimed. How is he — and all Christians with him — exhorted to respond to that opposition?

*Leader help: Our first response must happen before we even experience opposition - pursuing righteousness, faith, love, and peace with other Christians (verse 22). Then we keep ourselves away from foolish debates and arguments (verse 23). Then we're empowered to respond with patience and gentleness, knowing that the devil blinds unbelievers so that they can't spiritually "see" how good Jesus is. God does the saving, we do the proclaiming.*

## **APPLICATION**

1. In your own words, what is "the word of truth", aka, the gospel? Remember, Community Group is a safe place to "get it wrong" - if you struggle to explain the gospel, this is the best place to practice.

*Leader help: the gospel is the good news that Jesus, God in the flesh, lived perfectly in our place, suffered and died under God's wrath for our sins, physically resurrected from the dead — defeating our sin, the devil and death — and ascended to heaven where He rules as King. Not everyone will explain the gospel in this way, but it's important for us to be able to explain that Jesus, truly human and truly God, lived perfectly, died for us, and resurrected from the dead.*

2. There is no greater purpose than doing what God wants us to do, yet our passion for His work comes and goes. How would you describe your current attitude toward God and His work? How can we pray for you?
3. As you think about the gospel, what truth about God is most amazing to you?
4. Christians are commanded to *flee* foolish arguments and *pursue* righteousness, faith, love, and peace with other Christians. What's this look like in your life? If you aren't participating what's currently stopping you?

## PRAYER

Thank God for His undeserved love and for making it known that He knows you.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Psalm 139:1-6***

Pray for one another, asking God to help you know how amazing and worthy He is.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: 1 John 3:2-3***

Admit any discouragement, distractions, or unbelief that you have about God and His work.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Psalm 32:5***



# Week 12

## LAST DAYS

### 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9

## MAIN POINT

God reminds us that as false teaching and moral decay expand and increase from the time of the first Pentecost until the return of Jesus, He'll still be at work in the world to save sinners through His church.

## GROUP INTRO

This week, Paul gets detailed about the kind of sins we'll keep seeing until Jesus returns. To help us study the passage with humility, we'll look at a parable.

Read Luke 18:9-14. What sticks out to you from this parable?

## TEXT

1. How would the clear descriptions in verses 1-5 have helped Timothy and the church in Ephesus stick with Jesus and the one true gospel?

*Leader help: Paul's descriptions are concrete reminders to Timothy and all Christians everywhere that false teaching isn't just "differences in opinions" - it's dangerous, sinful, and corrupting; lies about Jesus and what the Bible means do serious, ugly damage. Reading what the results of false teaching are would've helped the church stand firm on the gospel.*

2. According to verses 1-5, instead of loving God and His Word, what will some people grow to love? How do these disordered loves show up today in our culture?

*Leader help: People will love themselves, money, and pleasure.*

3. What is God's solution to the moral decay described in this passage? For help, read Jude 1:17-25.

*Leader help: God calls Christians to continue holding to the Bible, helping one another by remaining in honest, vulnerable, and caring community, praying, showing mercy, and trusting that Jesus will not let His sheep stumble away from Him.*

4. In Paul's time there was a legend which stated that Pharaoh's magicians (who opposed Moses in Exodus 7:8-13) were named Jannes and Jambres. What are some similarities between the ministry of Moses back then and the ministry of Timothy in Ephesus?

*Leader help: Moses was obeying God's word by leading God's people out of slavery and into worship. Likewise, Timothy is leading God's people out of slavery to sin through the preaching of the gospel, helping people be free in Christ, and helping the church worship God rightly. Both Moses and Timothy faced opposition to the truth of God's promises and warnings, and they faced opposition to God's power.*

## **APPLICATION**

1. When you see or experience the kind of sin described in this passage, how do you typically react? What's a Jesus-honoring reaction look like?
2. Instead of cowering, venting rage, or closing off from the world, how does Jesus want us to interact with the sinful world around us?
3. What are some ways that this kind of evil has personally impacted you? How can Community Group step in to help you?

## PRAYER

Confess your own sin and evil to God, especially any sin the Holy Spirit may have revealed to you through this passage.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Ephesians 5:8***

Ask God to embolden, encourage, and empower you and your church to stand firm in the gospel and avoid evil.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: 1 Corinthians 9:25***

Admit to Jesus how sin has harmed you or how your sin has harmed the church and ask Him to bring forgiveness, healing, and holiness.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Deuteronomy 32:39***



# Additional Resources

## Commentaries

[Commentary on 1-2 Timothy & Titus by Andreas Kostenberger](#)

[Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus by Platt, Akin, and Merida](#)

[Reformed Expository Commentary: 1 Timothy by Philip G. Ryken](#)

[Reformed Expository Commentary: 2 Timothy & Titus by Doriani & Phillips](#)

## Sermons

[1 Timothy Sermons \(monergism.com\)](#)

[2 Timothy Sermons \(monergism.com\)](#)

## Other

[Phillip Jensen on Teaching 1 Timothy](#)

[Gospel Coalition Course \(Includes Whole-Bible Insights\)](#)

[The Church by Edmund Clowney \(Book\)](#)

[Rediscover Church by Hansen and Leeman \(Book\)](#)

[Love Your Church by Tony Merida \(Book\)](#)