

DIGGING DEEPER
2 TIMOTHY



Digging Deeper 2 Timothy

Study Guide

Acknowledgments

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Table of Contents

2 TIMOTHY Verse *By Verse*

Chapter	Page
1	1
2	18
3	24
4	54

7/17/26
Revision 4

2 TIMOTHY

Chapter 1

A. Introduction

Paul's second letter to Timothy was written between two and four years after his first letter and in approximately AD 66. As Paul wrote this second letter, the Christian church throughout the Roman Empire was facing severe persecution and hardship. Emperor Nero had begun a major persecution in AD 64 as part of his plan to pass the blame for the great fire of Rome from himself to the Christians. This persecution spread across the empire and included public torture and murder. The tone of this letter is rather somber. Paul imprisoned for the last time probably knew he would soon die. Unlike his first imprisonment in Rome when he was under house arrest and continued to teach (**Acts 28:16, 23, 30**), this time he may have been more confined while facing death (**2 Timothy 4:6-8**). As Paul awaited execution, he wrote this letter to his friend Timothy, a younger man who was like a son to him. How Timothy must have cherished this last letter from his beloved mentor.

B. Paul Greets Timothy

Read 2 Timothy 1:1.

- As he did at the beginning of **1 Timothy**, Paul identifies himself by name and also by authority. Paul was an apostle, meaning "one who is sent." Paul was not one of the original twelve disciples, yet Jesus did appear to him personally in **Acts 9:1-9** and commissioned him to be an apostle. God chose Paul for a very special work: "***But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings***

and the sons of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Paul did not seek this apostleship; it was not the will of Paul, but rather the will of God. It’s interesting to give thought to the difference between the introduction in **1 Timothy 1:1** where we read, *“Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God”* and here in **2 Timothy 1:1**, *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.”* Either way, as Paul neared the end of his life, he could claim his ministry had been the will and work of God, not of man: *“According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.”*

- The phrase *“according to”* could have two possible meanings. One would be the implication that Paul became an apostle when he received the promise of life. The other meaning implies that the phrase *“the promise of life”* was the message Paul was sent out to preach as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Therefore, this verse could read, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, sent out to tell others about the life he has promised through faith in Christ Jesus.” The *“promise of life”* is the promise of eternal life, and the phrase *“in Christ”* provides a summary statement for this whole verse. Paul had used the phrase *“in Christ Jesus”* in every one of his letters, with the exception of 2 Thessalonians and Titus. Paul saw clearly the union between Christ and believers. He describes this union as *“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27)* while in **2 Corinthians 5:17** we read: *“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation...”* These two phrases, *“in Christ”* and *“Christ in you”* are basic to understanding the New Testament.

Read 2 Timothy 1:2.

- Here Paul refers to Timothy as a beloved son, which reveals the special relationship that had developed between them. It was a relationship as a father to a son. In **Philippians 2** Paul wrote of Timothy, *“As a son with*

a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel” (Philippians 2:22).

- It’s interesting that grace and peace appear in the greeting of all of Paul’s letters; however, in his letters to Timothy he added mercy. Mercy pictures God’s loving-kindness and is often even translated “*loving kindness.*” Paul loved Timothy, so he added mercy to reassure Timothy of God’s constant love for him, especially as Timothy may have realized Paul was facing death. This phrase not only mentions what we desperately need—grace, mercy and peace—but it also reveals the fact of our abundant source: “*from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Therefore, as the writer of Hebrews encourages us, “*Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need*” (Hebrews 4:16).

Read 2 Timothy 1:3.

- Paul prayed for the churches he’d founded and visited (**Romans 1:8; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3**). Paul also prayed for Timothy, his friend, his fellow laborer, his son in the faith, and a leader in the church of Jesus Christ. Although the two men were separated from each other, their prayers provided a source of mutual encouragement. While Paul sat in a Roman prison and could no longer preach and travel, he could pray for Timothy as he ministered with and to the believers in Ephesus who were very dear to Paul. Paul expressed his gratefulness to God for Timothy and for his ministry as he prayed for him night and day. Paul knew he would soon die, but he also knew Timothy had been well prepared to carry on the leadership in the church. Paul would die, but Christianity would live on.
- “*Voltaire, the French infidel once said, ‘It required eleven men to build the church; I will prove that it needs*

only one man to knock it down.’ He was wrong on two counts. First, it was not eleven men who built the church, but rather one man, The Man Christ Jesus. Second, no one can ever knock it down, for it’s omnipotent Founder declared: ‘I will build My church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it’ (Matthew 16:18). The mere existence of the church is proof positive that the living Christ is in the midst of it. Voltaire is dust; Christ lives on. Every generation has produced its Voltaires, those who have predicted the downfall of the church. And although it has consistently faced tempest and persecution, there remains no explanation for its continued existence apart from the fact that its Founder and Protector is Jesus Christ.” Author unknown

- Paul’s statement that he worshiped God with a clear conscience mirrors his words in **1 Timothy 1:5**. Earlier in his ministry Paul had made this statement in Acts 24: **“I do my best always to have a clear conscience toward God and all people” (Acts 24:16)**. Thinking back now to **2 Timothy 1:3**, as Paul looked over his life he could confidently say he had walked whole-heartedly by faith and in dependence upon the blood of Christ which had cleansed him of all unrighteousness (**Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 10:19, 22**). Because of Paul’s faith in the blood of Christ, he had a clear conscience before God.
- The phrase **“as my forefathers did”** reveals Paul understood that faithful and God-fearing ancestors influenced him. Likewise, we Christians today have a role to be witnesses not only to our neighbors and co-workers, but also to those in our families who will come after us. Our faith builds a heritage and a legacy for all those who follow. The generations to come see evidence of our love for God and faith in Him. Some other scriptures to consider are **Psalms 78:1-8; 45:17**.

Read 2 Timothy 1:4.

- We don't really know when Paul and Timothy had last parted, but it could possibly have been when Paul was arrested and taken to Rome for his second imprisonment. The tears they had shed at parting had revealed the depth of their relationship. Paul longed to see Timothy again, so twice more in this letter Paul requested that Timothy do his best to come to him (**2 Timothy 4:9 and 21**). Although the words “*being mindful of your tears*” set us up to expect a statement of compassion for Timothy, instead Paul confesses his own longing to be reunited with him. Paul's earlier comment regarding a father/son relationship portrays what they must have meant to each other.

Read 2 Timothy 1:5.

- Timothy's mother and grandmother were apparently early Christian converts, possibly through Paul's ministry in their home city of Lystra (**Acts 16:1**). The phrase “*genuine faith*” is basically a sincere unwavering faith in God and does not rely on how one feels, but rather trusts in God no matter how difficult the circumstances may be (**Isaiah 50:10, 11**).
- Paul's words, “*I am persuaded*” are used again in verse 12 to speak of his confidence in Christ. Timothy had been in the ministry in Ephesus for a few years; perhaps his outward success may have been in doubt, but Paul was certain of his faith in God.

C. Paul Encourages Timothy

Read 2 Timothy 1:6.

- Paul writes “*therefore*” or “*for this reason.*” What reason? The reason being Timothy possessed sincere faith, a precious gift to any church leader.
- Timothy had also received a special gift from the Spirit to serve the church. In **1 Timothy 4** we read, “***do not neglect the gift that is in you which was given to you through the laying on of hands by the church leaders, elders***” (**1 Timothy 4:14**). This gift was most likely a gift of ministry for which the Holy Spirit had set Timothy apart. In **Acts 13:1-4**, we read that the Holy Spirit said, “**Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.**” Through these two scriptures (**Acts 13:1-4; 1 Timothy 4:14**), we could conclude that at some point Paul had laid hands on Timothy and the Holy Spirit sent him forth into the ministry (**1 Timothy 1:12**).
- Paul’s statement “*to stir up the gift*” or “*fan into flame*” leaves us wondering if Paul thought Timothy was burning out in ministry or whether he was merely encouraging this young pastor to continue on by faith and avoid that spiritual burnout. It’s interesting to give thought to the fact that we are not robots possessed by God’s Spirit, but rather we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit’s presence provides each believer with not only gifts *of* ministry, but also gifts *for* ministry. We see that in the next verse.

Read 2 Timothy 1:7.

- Timothy experienced much opposition to his message as well as to himself as a leader. His youthfulness, his association with Paul and his leadership had come under fire from believers and nonbelievers alike. Perhaps Timothy felt intimidated, angered, even helpless in the face of the opposition from the false teachers. Whatever the degree of his difficulties, Paul urged Timothy to be

bold by reminding him of God's provision: "***God does not give us a spirit of fear***"—that is, timidity or cowardliness, but rather God provides strength of character and Christ-confidence that wins us respect when we face opposition as we speak, preach, and live the truth.

- Life lived at the foot of the cross where the flesh is crucified (held in the place of death) and the Holy Spirit is influencing our mind, will, and emotions, will result in fear or timidity being replaced with a Christ-confident boldness (**1 Corinthians 2:4**).
- Accompanying the power to speak the truth must also be love for the listeners, believers and nonbelievers alike. Love separates Christians from the heathen world around us. Jesus promised, "***by this all will know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another***" (**John 13:35**). Love indeed separates the Christian leader from the false teachers.
- Not only does God give us power or strength to carry out the ministry with love for those to whom we are ministering, but He also gives us a sound mind. In order to lead others, the true minister must have a sound mind. The term "***sound mind***" refers to a mind that is not influenced or controlled by the flesh, but rather influenced and controlled by the Spirit (**Ephesians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16**).
- All these qualities—boldness, power or strength, love, and a sound mind—are from the Spirit. They function in harmony. Under the pressures of leadership people tend to gravitate toward a desire for power and boldness as the most effective tools for success, but used alone these qualities are self-defeating. A leader who exhibits boldness and power may impress us, but without love or sober-mindedness, such a leader is little more than a bully (**1 Corinthians 13:1-3**).
- Opinions differ about whether or not the word "spirit" as used here refers directly to the Holy Spirit or to some

inner attitude given by God. The answer is that when we come to Christ, the Holy Spirit actually enters man's human spirit and brings it to life strengthening the human spirit. Therefore we could conclude that to have a spirit with these qualities of boldness and power and love and a sound mind is to have a human spirit that has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. This statement prepares the way for Paul's later direction to Timothy in verse 14 to rely on the live-in Holy Spirit to guard the gospel (**Ephesians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Colossians 1:11**).

Read 2 Timothy 1:8.

- In this time of mounting persecution, it would appear that Timothy might have been struggling with fears as he continued to preach the gospel. His fears would have been based on knowing believers were indeed being arrested and executed. Perhaps some viewed Paul's imprisonment and soon-to-be execution as God's judgment against the Christian movement. Maybe Jesus and His gospel really were lies. Maybe Paul deserved to be locked up for spreading that message.
- Against such opposition and doubt, Paul urged Timothy not to be ashamed that Paul was in prison for his testimony and to remain strong, sure, certain, and unwavering as he testified about the Lord. Paul was sure of God's hand in his present situation; so sure that he called himself "***God's prisoner.***" Paul invites Timothy to join with him in suffering for the gospel. Eventually Timothy did suffer; from **Hebrews 13:23** it would appear he was indeed jailed for preaching the gospel. Paul continues telling Timothy that through the power of God, he would be able to endure if suffering did come. Paul had written in **2 Corinthians 12**, "***I am content with weaknesses, with insults, with hardships, persecutions and calamities for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then am I strong***" (2 Corinthians

12:10). When believers do indeed undergo suffering, we need not rely on our own strength for survival and sustenance; instead God gives His strength to endure. Consider this phrase: “*partakers of the afflictions of the gospel*.”

- In **Colossians 1:5-6**, Paul speaks of the gospel and makes a reference to the “*fruit of the gospel*”; with the gospel comes fruit. Now in **2 Timothy** he makes another observation that with the gospel, affliction comes. We’ve often made the comment that we ought to put a warning label on the gospel for the simple reason that when we do come to Christ there are going to be difficult times (**1 Peter 2:21**).
- “*According to the power of God*”: Paul’s assumption was that Timothy knew that only by faith in his co-crucifixion and by God’s grace would he have the Holy Spirit given power to deny himself and willingly “*partake of the afflictions of the gospel*” (**Luke 9:23**).

Read 2 Timothy 1:9.

- Paul writes that God saved us. Salvation forms the core of the gospel, the good news of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 15:3**). There would be no gospel without the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for our sins so that we could be saved.
- Moreover, God called us with a holy calling. In other words, He saves people from sin and then calls them to holiness. Each believer is called to a holy and righteous life. In **1 Thessalonians 5:24** Paul writes, “*Faithful is He that called you who also will do it.*” Here in **2 Timothy**, we see what God has called us to—a holy and righteous life. But faithful is the one who called us who also will carry it out. We could say that holy living comes from God, not from man. Holy living expects to find God’s self-less point of view, rather than man’s self-

centered point of view. Holy living expects to find God involved in every facet of life.

- It's interesting to give thought to the remainder of this verse—believers can truly live holy lives because holiness is not according to our works but “***according to His own purpose in grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.***” Therefore, we could say that salvation and holiness rely on the giver alone, not on the receiver. We cannot be saved nor live holy lives according to our works (**Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 2:6**). Our works cannot save us nor empower us to live holy lives. Instead, our salvation and holiness occur because of “***God's purpose and grace.***” It's God's sovereign choice alone, through His planned purpose and His grace, that allows sinners to receive salvation. We not only have the right to stand holy before Him, but also the power and desire to live a holy and righteous life (**Philippians 2:13**). Everything fits into the framework of God's sovereignty. We create neither the opportunity nor the possibility of our salvation. God graciously allows us to simply respond by faith to His plan.
- We read at the end of verse 9, “***...not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before time began.***” Notice that our salvation was given to us in Christ Jesus. We are saved only because of Jesus' death on the cross in our place. Only because He took the punishment we deserved does God offer salvation and holiness. A verse to consider would be **John 14:6**. This incredible offer to all human beings did not occur as God saw the world spinning out of control. Rather, it was planned before time began. God knew people would require a savior. From the beginning, He planned to give His only Son. **Ephesians 3:11**: “***This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.***”

Read 2 Timothy 1:10.

- God's purpose in grace, given to us in Christ Jesus, was planned since eternity; but has been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ. Of course, this appearing was in human form—Christ Jesus on earth, in a human body, preaching, teaching, healing, dying, and rising again. His becoming visible and touchable allowed humans access to Him in a way that had not been available before the incarnation. “...***Who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.***” Through His death and resurrection Christ destroyed death. He ended death's claim of invincibility by mortally wounding this terrible foe called death. All human beings still must die physically, but physical death is not the end.
- There is hope beyond the grave and that hope overcomes any fear of death. Consider **1 Corinthians 15:51-55**: “***Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’***”
- It's interesting to realize that believers are immortal and are given eternal life beginning at the moment of salvation, even though it is necessary to physically die but not spiritually or eternally.

D. Paul Affirms His Credentials

Read 2 Timothy 1:11.

- Paul was appointed by God to be a ***preacher*** or a herald, one who announces and proclaims; an ***apostle***, one who is sent; and a ***teacher***, one who gives knowledge and instruction. Though the title of apostle was the weightiest of the three, Paul listed it second. Top billing went to a herald or a preacher. A herald has little importance apart from his or her message. Paul's practice was to proclaim God's message of grace everywhere he went.
- Paul also maintained that God had appointed him as an apostle in the same way the original twelve had been appointed apostles—by Jesus Himself (**1 Corinthians 15:8; 1 Corinthians 9:1; Galatians 1:11-12**). The twelve had spent three years with Jesus and Paul had not, but the final proof of apostleship was not that they had chosen to be with Christ but that Christ had chosen them. **John 15:16: “*You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.*”**
- As a ***preacher*** or herald, Paul had been entrusted with the message. As an ***apostle***, he had been entrusted with an authority. Third among Paul's credentials was his role as a ***teacher***. Timothy was a product of his work as a teacher. In Chapter 2:2 we can see that Paul desired to see Timothy not only pass on what he had been taught, but to also find others who could carry on the process.

Read 2 Timothy 1:12.

- Because Paul had traveled the Roman Empire preaching and teaching the gospel, he was now suffering in prison. His faith in God and God-given desire to serve Him had

led Paul into suffering as a common criminal; but he had no doubts, no apologies, and no fear for the future. ***“And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”*** (2 Timothy 3:12).

- Review **Chapter 1, verse 12**: ***“Nevertheless, I am not ashamed for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that what I have committed to Him until that day.”*** Paul knew his confidence was rightly placed in God; He knew he had given his life for the right cause; thus, he was not ashamed. The phrase ***“keep what I have committed to Him”*** carries the meaning of placing valuables in the hands of someone who would keep them safe. It would appear that the valuables, which Paul speaks of here, could be the message and ministry that God had given him. It’s interesting to read the Amplified translation here: ***“I am persuaded that He is able to guard and keep that which has been entrusted to me and which I have committed to Him until that day.”*** Or the Good News version which states it this way: ***“I am sure that He is able to keep safe, until that day, what He has entrusted to me.”*** If we relate these valuables to the word ***“deposit”*** in verse 14 which says, ***“guard the good deposit,”*** or **1 Timothy 6:20**, ***“guard what has been entrusted to your care,”*** the deposit implies protecting the teachings. Even in prison, Paul knew God was the guardian and protector of truth. No matter what setbacks or problems we face in life, we can fully trust in God. In **Romans 8:38-39** Paul writes, ***“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

E. Paul's Warning

Read 2 Timothy 1:13.

- Timothy did not need to wonder about the content of sound teaching. He could always recall Paul's teaching as his standard. The Greek for "***sound teaching***" refers to an outline or sketch. Rather than rote repeating of Paul's teaching, Timothy was to use Paul's teaching as his outline or pattern. It was a foundation upon which Timothy could preach and teach. All throughout this letter Paul emphasizes his concern that Timothy pass on a pure and true message (**2 Timothy 2:2, 14-15; 3:10-14; 4:1-2**).
- The phrase "***In faith and love which is in Christ Jesus***" is the conclusion of a sentence which begins with "***Retain the standard or pattern of sound teaching in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.***" Paul is instructing young Timothy to hold fast, by the faith and the love which is his as he abides in his position in Christ Jesus, to the good solid teaching which he had heard from Paul and is now flowing through Timothy.

Read 2 Timothy 1:14.

- Paul had been entrusted with the Good News (**Acts 9:15-19; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; Titus 1:3**). This ministry that had been given to him by Jesus Christ became his life mission as he preached the gospel across the Roman Empire. The language throughout this letter creates a strong sense of Paul writing his last wishes and communicating to Timothy a desire for him to preserve what had been deposited with him. That deposit included all the good that had flowed from God to Timothy through Paul—not only his own conversion, but the teachings, experiences, as well as the ministry that God through Paul had entrusted to him. Timothy was to

guard that treasure, not by burying it and keeping it hidden, but by entrusting it to faithful men and women who would then in turn teach it to others who in turn would teach it to others (**2 Timothy 2:2**). Men like Timothy had guarded the treasure as Paul had encouraged him, and now two thousand years later, we too have the true gospel. However, it was only through the work of the Holy Spirit that the truth remained guarded and protected as it passed through the centuries.

Read 2 Timothy 1:15.

- By saying, “*everyone has deserted me*,” Paul may have been referring to a general lack of concern or support for him in his difficult time of need. Many had refused to stand up for him or at least stay at his side during his trial.
- Nothing more is known about Phygellus and Hermogenes who evidently deserted Paul. The fact that Paul named them could mean that he least expected their desertion, or that he knew they were in Ephesus and that he was giving a warning to Timothy.
- Paul provided Timothy a great example of how to face life’s difficulties by faith. He did not present himself as some kind of superhuman; rather he described his all too human-ness in ways that highlighted the saving and keeping grace of Jesus Christ. Therefore, he could speak of suffering and abandonment in the same context with confidence in God.

E. Paul Praises Onesiphorus’ Service

Read 2 Timothy 1:16.

- In contrast to those who deserted him, Paul mentioned Onesiphorus as a true and loyal friend. His name means, “help bringer.” Unashamed of Paul’s imprisonment,

Onesiphorus encouraged and refreshed Paul. Paul prayed for mercy on his friend and his friend's family here and in verse 18. Some Bible teachers think that because of Paul's strong prayer in verse 18, it could be an indication that Onesiphorus had died.

Read 2 Timothy 1:17.

- Onesiphorus lived in Ephesus but for some reason had been in Rome and while there, had gone out of his way to search for Paul. Paul saw in Onesiphorus a brother who allowed neither inconvenience nor fear to keep him from tracking Paul down; his visits had been a great encouragement to this lonely prisoner.

Read 2 Timothy 1:18.

- Paul prayed that his friend would receive mercy from the Lord on that final day. This chapter closes out with these words: “*...and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.*” Onesiphorus had a record of service, not only in Ephesus but also now in Rome. Paul's statement to Timothy gives a beautiful insight into the character of this otherwise unknown servant of God.

2 TIMOTHY

Chapter 2

A. The Call to Be Courageous in the Lord Jesus

Read 2 Timothy 2:1.

- Many of Paul's associates had deserted him, but at least one had remained which Paul mentioned in Chapter 1:15-16. Paul encouraged his beloved son Timothy to be like Onesiphorus, unashamed of the gospel, unashamed of his standing as a Christian leader, unafraid of the false teachers, and courageous through hardship and persecution. But how? Through the grace that is in Christ Jesus (**1 Corinthians 15:10**). Paul reminded Timothy that strength comes not from himself, but as a free gift from Jesus Christ through faith—by grace, through faith: ***“My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”*** Only as we rest in our co-crucifixion with Christ and walk by faith abiding in Christ, only as we are occupied with Christ, only as we are resting in Christ, only as we are looking unto Christ will we be strong in grace.
- There has always been a tendency in the body of Christ to teach salvation by grace through faith and then to attempt to live a holy and righteous life through every imaginable form of legalism.
- God is made known to us as ***“the God of all grace”*** and the position in which we are placed is that of recipients of His grace. The word favor is the nearest biblical synonym for the word grace. Grace is favor, and favor is grace, and it finds its greatest triumph and glory in the sphere of human helplessness. Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to withdraw it because of human failure or sin. In fact, grace cannot be exercised where there is the slightest degree of human merit to be

recognized. God cannot propose to do less in grace for one who is sinful than He would have done had that one been less sinful.

- The sin question has been set aside forever, and equal favor/grace is extended to all that believe. Thus, grace cannot be increased, or diminished. The following is an interesting quote by Lewis Smedes:

Grace does not make everything all right. Grace's trick is to show us that it is good and even wonderful for us to be breathing, while at the same time feeling that everything gathering around us is totally wretched. Grace is not a ticket to Fantasy Island; Fantasy Island is dreamy fiction. Grace is not a potion to charm life to our liking...Grace does not cure all cancers, transform all our kids into winners, or send us into the high skies of success. Grace is rather an amazing power to look earthly reality in the face, see its sad and tragic edges, feel its cruel cuts, join in the chorus against its outrageous unfairness, and yet feel in our deepest being that it is good and right for us to be alive on God's good earth...Grace is power to see life very clearly, admit that it is sometimes wrong, and still know that somehow in the midst of all this, it's all right...This is one reason we call it "Amazing Grace."

Read 2 Timothy 2:2.

- Notice the four generations: Timothy, Paul, faithful men and others. Timothy had heard Paul preach to many groups of people. Paul now was reminding Timothy that his role as a minister of the gospel was to guard the truth he had heard and to pass it onto others who in turn would guard the truth and pass it on to the next generation (**Psalms 78:5-7**).
- Paul is laying out a pattern for discipleship that requires leaders to develop new leaders. Since the time of Paul, there has been a link from disciple to disciple, from

generation to generation. Paul is telling Timothy to pass on what had proven to be true and entrust that truth to reliable people who were both loyal to the faith and able to teach; and then like ripples in a pool, the gospel would spread across the world. When Paul wrote these words to Timothy, he was probably beginning to realize that the passing on of the gospel truth was already in the hands of second generation believers.

B. The Example of the Soldier

Read 2 Timothy 2:3.

- Back in Chapter 1:8 Paul writes, “*join with me in suffering for the gospel.*” Paul had previously given this warning in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (**Acts 14:22, 23**). Paul was returning to the theme of suffering that he knew would test the faith of his disciple. As Paul had suffered, so Timothy would share in that suffering (**2 Timothy 3:12**). Another scripture to consider would be **John 15:18-20**; Jesus had warned His followers, “*if they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.*” Paul continues on now with three characters to illustrate the attitude that Christ’s followers should have through suffering—soldier, athlete, and farmer. In **1 Corinthians 9:7, 24**, Paul uses these same three characters. First Paul wrote of the soldier; he often used military metaphors (**Romans 7:23; 2 Corinthians 6:7; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18; Philippians 2:25; 1 Timothy 1:18; Philemon 2**).
- From the military model, Timothy could learn that every soldier will experience difficult conditions. Therefore, he can expect both hardship and suffering in his ministry of the gospel.

Read 2 Timothy 2:4.

- He wants to please his commanding officer. A good soldier's service takes precedence over civilian affairs, referring to any distraction that gets in the way of the mission. While civilian affairs are not wrong in themselves, they become a problem if the Christian gets so entangled in them that his or her mission/ministry suffers. Paul wanted Timothy to understand that a good minister of the gospel must have a single-minded purpose to preach the truth and if necessary to suffer for it. There are limits to how involved Christians should be in civilian affairs. Some have taken Paul's words here to mean that Christians should do non-stop Christian work. While the image of the soldier presents helpful insights about endurance, soldiers need rest and relaxation.

C. The Example of the Athlete

Read 2 Timothy 2:5.

- Now Paul uses the athlete as an example. Paul would never have been content with the slogan, "it's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game." Based on these words to Timothy, Paul probably would have revised the slogan to say, "Whether you win or lose depends on how you play the game." This section of scripture in 2:1-7 begins with a pair of commands in verse 1: "***be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,***" and in verse 3, "***endure hardship.***" These commands represent a two-fold strategy needed in a Christ-centered life in order to be enabled by His strength flowing out of grace to endure the difficulties of life.
- Being crowned most likely referred to winning the prize in a sporting event. A competitor had to know the rules of his event and compete according to those rules; those

who competed fairly were eligible to receive the crown. What rules did Paul have in mind for the Christian? We must be careful not to give the impression that Christians are rules-oriented or legalistic. We do however; live under the rule of Christ in this dispensation, which is ***“by grace through faith.”*** Therefore, we could read this verse in this way: ***“and in the case of the Christian’s life, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules; and the rules are, by grace through faith.”*** Whether or not Timothy understood the crown to mean a heavenly reward is unclear; however, Paul made it more clear in Chapter 4:8 when he wrote, ***“Finally, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me at that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”***

D. The Example of the Farmer

Read 2 Timothy 2:6.

- From the example of the farmer, Timothy was to learn that hard work will harvest a good crop. The farmer knows that seeds will not plant themselves, and the harvest will not walk into the barn. The farmer must, by faith, go out into the fields to sow the seed, water it, protect it, and finally harvest the crop. The reward will be a share of the crops for the farmer and his family.
- If the soldier enjoys the commander’s approval and the athlete enjoys the victory, then the hardworking farmer can enjoy the fruit of his or her labor. Likewise, the faithful believer can enjoy all of the above results from his or her ministry. Those results may not be received immediately or even while on this earth, but certainly the fruit will be received from Christ in eternity.

- We could conclude these verses in this way: The soldier submits to the officer, the athlete submits to the rules for the competition, the farmer submits to God's laws of nature, and the believer submits to Jesus Christ. In Him we have a gracious commanding officer who provides all that is needed to run our course and who rewards us for all that is done "by grace through faith."

E. Various Instructions and Warnings

Read 2 Timothy 2:7.

- Either Paul was worried that Timothy was not getting the point, or he was confident the Lord would give Timothy understanding and insight into the wisdom of Paul's words as Timothy reflected on them. Whether "*what I say*" referred to the three illustrations above or to all of Paul's words to Timothy, the point remains that all believers must rely on the Holy Spirit to give understanding as we reflect on Scripture.

Read 2 Timothy 2:8-9.

- False teachers were a problem in Ephesus (**Acts 20:29-30; 1 Timothy 1:3-11**). At the heart of their teaching was an incorrect view of Christ. Many taught that Christ was divine, but not human—"God but not man." These days we often hear that Jesus was human, but not divine or "*man but not God*." Both views destroy the truth that Jesus Christ has taken our sins on Himself and has reconciled us to God.
- Paul's response begins with "*remember Jesus Christ*" or "*keep on remembering*." Paul firmly stated that Jesus is fully man when he said, "*descended from David*," and fully God by making the additional statement "*raised from the dead*." These phrases express a central doctrine

of Christianity. They echo Paul's teaching of his message recorded in **Romans 1:3-4**.

- “[*This is*] *my gospel for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains.*” Paul was in chains in prison because of the gospel he preached and was being treated like a “*criminal*.” The only other place that this same word is used is in **Luke 23:32 and 39** describing the men crucified with Christ. Such was the persecution against believers; they were considered criminals by the Roman authorities. We read on in verse 9, “*but the Word of God is not chained.*” Although Paul was sitting in chains in prison, he did not feel ashamed or that his life had been worthless because he knew the gospel message entrusted to Timothy and other faithful people could not be chained (**Philippians 1:12-18; 2 Thessalonians 3:1**). Even if the Romans succeeded in putting in prison or killing every Christian leader, they could never stop the spread of the gospel. God's Word will continue despite persecution and will change lives wherever it is proclaimed.

Read 2 Timothy 2:10.

- Paul could confidently endure everything, even imprisonment, knowing God was in control of all and that He would continue to do His work of calling out the elect. Although Paul experienced tremendous suffering as he spread the gospel, his focus was never on his circumstances, but rather on those who were finding salvation in Christ.
- “*I endure all things for the sake of the elect.*” Who are the elect? The chosen ones (look at **Ephesians 1:4**–“*He chose us before the foundations of the world.*”)
- Give some thought to this—He chose us before He created the universe so that our salvation is wholly from His grace and not on the basis of anything we have done. Paul takes us all the way back to eternity past in order for

us to realize that salvation is altogether of God and not of us (**Ephesians 2:8**).

- Charles Spurgeon once said, *“God chose me before I came into the world, because if He had waited ‘till I got here, He would have never chosen me.”*
- God the Father chose us in Christ, not in ourselves. And He chose us for a purpose—to be holy and blameless. God didn’t choose us because we are good, but rather He chose us so that He could make us good (**1 Thessalonians 5:24; 4:7**).
- Someone once said, *“Try to explain the doctrine of election and you may lose your mind; however, try to explain it away and you may lose your soul.”*
- Left to our own ways, we would not seek God (**Romans 3:10-11**).
- I heard a story of an old country boy who was asked how he got saved. He responded, *“I done my part and God done His part. My part was the sinning; I ran from God as fast as my rebellious little legs would carry me, but the faithful Hound of Heaven took out after me till He run me down. God did the saving, and I did the sinning.”*
- Someone asked a little boy when he found Jesus; he answered, *“He wasn’t lost, I was. I didn’t find Jesus, He found me.”* In actuality, the Lord seeks us/draws us (**Luke 19:10; John 6:44**).
- The true system of biblical thought begins with God, and man is conformed to the plan and purpose of his Creator, not the other way around. Scripture makes it clear that man has not chosen God. Jesus emphasized that in **John 15:16**. Even Adam, before the fall and totally free to choose did not choose God. If that is true, then we can safely say that we descendants of Adam, in and of ourselves, will not choose God or His ways either.
- The following are some rather interesting thoughts from A.W. Tozer: *“God is always first, and God will surely be last...Man in the plan of God has been granted considerable say; but never is he permitted to utter the*

first word or the last. That is the prerogative of the Deity, and one which He will never surrender to His creatures. Man has no say about the time or place of his birth; God determines that without consulting the man himself. One day the little man finds himself in consciousness and accepts the fact that he is. After that he struts and boasts and utters his defiant proclamations of individual freedom, and encouraged by the sound of his own voice, he may declare his independence of God and call himself an “atheist” or an “agnostic... Have fun little man, you are only chattering in the interim between the first and the last; you had no voice at the first and you will have none at the last....it should humble us when we remember how frail we are, how utterly dependent upon God...”

Read 2 Timothy 2:11.

- This phrase echoes Paul’s words in Romans 6. In fact, the entire passage from **Romans 6:2-23** describes how believers are dead to the power of sin and alive unto God. (Take special note of **Romans 6:4-5, 11**).
- Notice the parallel between **2 Timothy 2:11**—***“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.”*** And **Romans 6:5**—***“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.”*** This verse could be paraphrased as follows: If we actually became united with Him through identification and have shared the reality of His death, we shall also share the reality of the likeness of His resurrection.
- When Paul declares that we are united with Him in the ***“likeness of His resurrection”*** in **Romans 6:5** or ***“we shall also live with Him”*** in **2 Timothy 2:11**, he refers to “walking in newness of life” in Christ today.
- To be joined and placed into Christ, and moment by moment, day by day, share in His death is a wonderful

truth to rest in; but now, we can also by faith, walk in the blessedness of His heavenly “newness” of resurrection life (**Philippians 1:21; Galatians 2:20**).

- *“Victory is the believer’s right, as sure as the air he breathes. However, he must understand the conditions. He must see himself crucified with Christ, dead, buried, raised and made to sit in heavenly places with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Without this, he will go down to defeat in spite of all his efforts and prayers. With this position, he is more than a conqueror.”* ~F. J. Hugel
Paul could confidently endure everything for the sake of the elect because he knew the sure promises of God.

Read 2 Timothy 2:12.

- Those who live for Christ may face severe difficulties that must be endured. Christ endured and now reigns (**1 Corinthians 15:25**). All believers who endure by faith, shall also reign with Him (**Revelation 3:21; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 2:21-23**). As we die to our selves, which is painful to the flesh (**1 Peter 4:1**) and can only happen as we appropriate the truth of **Romans 6**, then we will truly reign in life with Him, and by Him (**Romans 5:17**).
- The flesh loves religious legalism because rules and regulations enable us to appear holy while avoiding death; but only as we suffer the death to self by faith in the work of the cross will we reign in life.
- *“If we deny Him, He also will deny us.”* It’s interesting that the Amplified Version translates in this way: *“If we deny and disown and reject Him, He will deny and disown and reject us.”* To disown results in being disowned. These words provide a solemn warning. To deny Christ was unthinkable to the early Christians, even in the face of tremendous persecution, and the implication here is this—true born again believers might be faithless and weak at times; they might falter when giving a testimony, but they will never disown Jesus

Christ. While the word “deny” has been used in some of the translations in place of “disown” the meaning here implies deliberate refusal/rejection of Jesus Christ (**Matthew 10:32-33; Hebrews 10:39**).

Read 2 Timothy 2:13.

- This verse reveals the depth of the relationship between believers and Christ. When we fail, this does not mean that God rejects us. An interesting quote by F.B. Meyer: *“Three things are impossible with Go: to die, to lie and to fail the soul that trusts Him. Even when we cannot muster faith enough, His word of promise cannot be frustrated.”*
- Humans by their very nature are prone to failure; however, even when we believers act faithlessly, God remains faithful. We are secure in Christ’s promises. This does not give us a license for faithlessness, rather it eases our consciences when we do fail, allowing us to come back to the Father and start anew. God does not deny those for whom He died.
- It’s interesting how Paul lays this out in verses 11-13. First he speaks of our identification with Christ in verse 11. Next he speaks of enduring the hardships of this present life. Then he expressed the worst case scenario of the one who would disown Christ. Finally, just when everything is looking so bleak, Paul sounds a note of hope and grace. If we are faithless, He remains faithful. Our future hangs not on the strength of our faith but on the strength of God’s faithfulness.

Read 2 Timothy 2:14.

- This verse begins by saying, **“keep on reminding.”** All believers, no matter how many years they have been Christians, need to be reminded of the basics of their faith and how to relate that faith to the circumstances of

life. Few lessons are as difficult to swallow for young pastors as the importance of repetition. The basics must be reviewed and repeated. Paul kept on reminding Timothy to keep on reminding others (**Philippians 3:1; 2 Peter 1:12-13**).

- Paul urged Timothy to remind the believers not to do as the false teachers who argued over unimportant issues and participated in foolish discussions. Such arguments are confusing, useless, and cause strife and division. ***“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself”*** (1 Timothy 6:3-5). Quarrelling about words is a major problem, not only in society today but also in the churches. Churches split over the most trivial things. Quarrelsome, carnal people in our churches nit-pick, criticize, and verbally attack.
- Much of Paul’s first letter to Timothy focused on dealing with false teachers. For instance in 1 Timothy 1:3-4 he writes, ***“Command certain men not to teach false doctrines. These promote controversies rather than God’s work, which is by faith.”*** These false teachers discussed myths and genealogies. ***“Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do”*** (1 Timothy 1:4). They quibbled about words and details that focused not on Scripture but on their own ideas and opinions. This took valuable time away from teaching the truth of the Scriptures and spreading the gospel. Believers who get caught up in quarrels about words waste their time and end up ruined rather than spiritually strengthened.

F. The Seven Dispensations

Read 2 Timothy 2:15.

- The most effective silencer of the false teachers was the truth in the hands of faithful teachers. Christians are in need of truth to survive the persecutions that come into our daily lives. Jesus told a very interesting parable about a master entrusting money to his servants in **Matthew 25:14-30**. Notice two of the servants wisely invested their talents and gladly gave the master his money upon his return. The master's reply: "**Well done.**" They had proven themselves to their master to be faithful workers who need not be ashamed.
- Paul rounded off the image of the workman by bringing into focus the word of truth; "**Rightly dividing the word of truth.**" The expression translated, "**rightly dividing or correctly handling**" literally is to cut a straight path. Even though the term is used only here in **2 Timothy** in the New Testament, the meaning is clear enough—to present oneself as approved or tested by trials or proven to God, will depend on our correctly dividing, understanding, and applying the word of truth.
- There is much in Scripture that would cause us to believe that the phrase "**rightly dividing the word of truth**" refers to the biblical doctrine of "dispensationalism." If we look closely at Scripture, we will see that it divides time into seven unequal periods called dispensations. These periods are marked off in Scripture by a change in God's method of dealing with people because of sin, and each one ends in judgment:

The Seven Dispensations

Five of these dispensations have come and gone; we are in the sixth probably toward the end and have before us the seventh and last the millennium. Very briefly the seven dispensations are as follows:

1. MAN INNOCENT. From the creation of Adam to his expulsion from Eden. Adam was created innocent and ignorant of good and evil; he sinned and then this dispensation ended in judgment—he was put out of the garden (**Genesis 1:26; 2:16-17; 3:6 & 22-24**).
2. MAN UNDER CONSCIENCE. After the fall, man now had a knowledge of good and evil (**Genesis 3:7, 22**). This dispensation began with Adam’s expulsion from Eden and ended in judgment at the flood (**Genesis 6:5, 11-12; 7:11-12, 23**).
3. MAN IN AUTHORITY OVER THE EARTH. Human government resulted as man attempted to become independent of God. This dispensation began at the flood and ended in judgment at the Tower of Babel where the languages were confused and the people scattered (**Genesis 9:1-2; 11:1-8**).
4. MAN UNDER PROMISE. Out of the scattered descendants of Babel, God entered into a covenant with one man, Abram. Some of the promises to Abram were unconditional (grace) and these have been or will be fulfilled by God. Other promises were conditional upon faithfulness and obedience (law). Every one of these conditions was violated. This dispensation went from Babel to God’s judgment—bondage in Egypt. It is interesting that Genesis opens with “*in the beginning, God created,*” and ends with “*in a coffin in Egypt*” (**Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:5; 26:3; 28:12-13; Exodus 1:13-14**).
5. MAN UNDER LAW. In the wilderness of Sinai, God proposed the covenant of law. Instead of the people pleading for a continued relation of grace, they self-confidently answer, “*all that the Lord has spoken, we will do*” (**Exodus 19:1-8**). The history of Israel is one long record of repeated violations of the law. This fifth dispensation began at Mt. Sinai and

ended at the cross (**2 Kings 17:1-9; Psalms 106; Acts 2:22-23; Romans 3:19-20; Galatians 3:10**).

6. MAN UNDER GRACE. God-given righteousness, rather than God-required righteousness. From the cross to the rapture (**Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**).
7. MAN UNDER THE PERSONAL REIGN OF CHRIST. This period of time is known as the millennium. The seat of Jesus' power will be in Jerusalem and the saints, including the church, will reign with Him. Eventually Satan is set loose for a season and he finds the natural heart of man as prone to evil as ever. He gathers the nations to battle against the Lord and His saints. This last dispensation closes like the others in judgment. The Great White Throne is set; the wicked dead are raised and judged and then comes the new heaven and new earth (**Revelations 20:2-3; 7-15; 21-22**).
- Instead of walking in a God-given path of separation from the world, the church has attempted to use Scripture written to the Jews for the purpose of justifying and pursuing earthly treasures such as health, wealth, power, and magnificent church buildings among other things. We must come to a clear understanding that the word of God has "***right divisions***." Jesus didn't come to patch up the old; He brought something entirely new—the new teaching of grace will not fit in with the old teaching of the law (**Matthew 9:16, 17**).

G. The Danger of Engaging in Debate with False Teachers

Read 2 Timothy 2:16.

- In **Ephesians 4:17-19**, we are told that those who pursue vain, empty things will begin a downward spiral of sin which results in our understanding being darkened. God

then is no part of our thinking, we become hardened and calloused to any kind of sin that comes along.

- Basically what Paul is saying in 2 Timothy 2:16 is that those who indulge in godless chatter will become more and more ungodly. False teachers will progress to even worse forms of sinfulness and destruction just as Paul teaches in **Ephesians 4**. “*O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called...*” (1 Timothy 6:20).

Read 2 Timothy 2:17.

- Paul understood the addictive power of false teaching as people become drawn into “*godless chatter*.” Paul compared the spiritual deterioration, becoming more and more ungodly, to gangrene. In Paul’s day gangrene was nearly always a fatal disease. Once a limb gets gangrene it often has to be amputated as the only way to stop the spread. The spread and deadly result of false teaching could not be more aptly described. The last part of verse 17 mentions “*..among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus...*” Hymenaeus is also spoken of in **1 Timothy 1:20** where he is mentioned with Alexander. Paul had put these men out of the church and had handed them over to Satan. Just as a limb with gangrene must be amputated, these false teachers were amputated from the body of Christ so they could cause no more harm. Nothing further is known about Philetus. We’ll see from the next verse that the false teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus was about the resurrection and was destroying the faith of some people.

Read 2 Timothy 2:18.

- The false teachers were denying the resurrection of the body. They had grown up under Greek philosophy,

which viewed the spirit as immortal and the body as evil. Thus, a doctrine that taught the resurrection of the body was especially difficult to believe; therefore, the false teachers were attempting to combine the doctrine of the resurrection with Greek philosophy in order for it to make sense to them.

- Heresy about the resurrection was especially problematic because Jesus' resurrection is the key to the Christian faith. Jesus rose from the dead and His bodily resurrection shows us that He is the living Christ, not some false prophet or imposter. We can be certain of our own resurrection because Jesus was resurrected. Death is not the end; there is future life—the divine power that brought Jesus back to life is also available to us.
- The problem Timothy faced in Ephesus was apparently widespread. Paul addressed it at length in **1 Corinthians 15:12-57**. Because the physical body decays after death, it is tempting to think that whatever the future might hold, it will not involve re-inhabiting what is rapidly turning to dust. Paul answered these concerns by appealing to God's power and pointing to the illustration of a seed that is planted in the soil and springs to life. ***“So it will be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable; it is raised imperishable”*** (1 Corinthians 15:42; John 12:24).
- To deny the resurrection of believers is to deny the resurrection of Jesus Himself. Moving on to the end of verse 18: ***“They destroyed the faith of some.”*** Because the resurrection is foundational to Christianity, when the doctrine of the resurrection is called into question, Christianity itself is questioned. This questioning undermines our faith.

Read 2 Timothy 2:19.

- The word ***“nevertheless”*** introduces a rather forceful contrast. False teaching, for all its enticing qualities, will

not last. Although it plagued the first-century church and still has footholds today, it cannot prevail against the foundation of truth that God has laid. Heresies, false teachings, even persecution cannot destroy “truth” which is the foundation of God. It stands and will stand until Christ returns.

- Focusing on “*God’s seal*” is basically a sign of authenticity and approval. In **Numbers 16** we read of Korah’s rebellion. Korah and several associates had challenged Moses’ leadership. They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, “*You’ve gone too far. Why do you set yourselves above all the rest of the Lord’s assembly*” (**Numbers 16:3-5**). When Moses heard this, he fell face down and said to Korah and all his followers, “*In the morning the Lord will show who belongs to Him.*” These words should encourage all believers. False teachers may cause problems, but God knows His true followers.
- Those who name themselves to truly be Christ’s will turn away from wickedness. What a reminder of God’s sovereignty over His church to enable those who are truly His to turn from evil. Timothy did not need to fear for the future of the church, for God was in control. False teachers still spout lies and distort the truth; some dilute it and some simply delete it, but no matter how many people follow the liars, the solid foundation of God’s truth never changes, is never shaken, and will never fade.

H. The Analogy of Household Vessels

Read 2 Timothy 2:20.

- Paul changes his metaphor from a building to household utensils but basically continues the same theme. In a large house there are valuable utensils made of precious metal (gold, silver) that are used only on special

occasion. Other utensils made of common and less valuable materials are for ordinary use. Paul makes the distinction here between commonly useful and uncommonly useful workers of God, pointing out to Timothy that both will be useful and found in the church. Paul's point is that believers should desire to be valuable utensils who present themselves to God for honorable use and special occasions (**Romans 9:21**).

Read 2 Timothy 2:21.

- The natural question is how does one cleanse himself? Going back to **Romans 6:6-7**: *“Knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.”* There is no other way for a Christian to be cleansed. Moving on to **Romans 6:13**: *“And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”* Going back to **2 Timothy 2:21**, *“If a man therefore cleanse himself from these...”* In other words, if he appropriates the truth of the cross and is set free from the power of sin and the Holy Spirit enables him to set aside the fleshly desires, *“...he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared to do every good work.”* Paul's counsel to Timothy could refer to a personal involvement in godless chatter, which we saw in **2:16**. Paul's words to Timothy here are rather simple and straightforward.

I. Various Instructions and Warnings Continued

Read 2 Timothy 2:22.

- Paul now is offering a few more words of advice to follow up verses 20 and 21. It's rather clear that Paul knew Timothy well and most likely his weaknesses. It would appear from **1 Timothy 4:12** that Timothy was a young man, at least for the heavy responsibility he carried in ministry. The lusts mentioned here may or may not have sexual connotations, but could refer to passions characteristic of the young such as impatience, favoritism, intolerance, egotism. Instead, Paul advised Timothy to ***"pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."*** As was frequently the case with Paul when he issued a warning, he followed it with an alternative positive strategy. ***"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness"*** (**1 Timothy 6:11**). By God's grace, Timothy was to flee from evil and to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. The word "righteousness" refers to actions that are morally right; it expresses a way of life that seeks to model itself after God. Of course, faith is God-dependence and love is selfless; both faith and love are fundamental to Christianity and basic to Paul's teaching. ***"And now abides faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love"*** (**1 Corinthians 13:13**).
- In addition, while Timothy was to oppose the false teachers and deal strongly with those who followed them, he was to ***"pursue peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."*** The peace of which Paul speaks here comes from the Spirit of God calming the hearts and minds of the believers (**Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:7**). In spite of all that Paul has shared in 2 Timothy, he was not encouraging Timothy to go it alone, but rather for Timothy to find fellowship and encouragement from those who ***"call on the Lord out of a pure heart."*** The phrase refers to those believers who are resting in their co-crucifixion with Christ. In addition the Holy Spirit is influencing their mind, will, and

emotions and ultimately drawing their attention to Christ; thus, their hearts are pure, being as they are Christ-centered.

Read 2 Timothy 2:23.

- Paul is not forbidding Timothy to have contact with false teachers, but rather advising him to stay out of lengthy discussions with them because they would be senseless as well as lead to quarrels. In the same manner, the Apostle John writing to the believers in 2 John told church members to avoid controversy with the false teachers by refusing to show them any kind of hospitality (**2 John 10**). We should do nothing to encourage false teachers to continue teaching their lies. If believers listen, show hospitality, or attempt to discuss with them, that action will often show approval of the false teachers. It may seem rude to cut off debate with heretical teachers but how much better it is to be faithful to God than merely courteous to people. There can be no doubt about the problem caused by false teachings—it gets people caught up in all kinds of controversies that end up dividing the Church. Paul repeated numerous times in his letters to Timothy and Titus to avoid these senseless controversies:
 - “[Don’t] give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (**1 Timothy 1:4**).
 - “[Love from a pure heart] from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor the things which they affirm.” (**1 Timothy 1:6-7**).
 - “Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons [...] But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness” (**1 Timothy 4:1, 7**).

- *“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself” (1 Timothy 6:3-5).*
- *“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen” (1 Timothy 6:20-21).*
- *“Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers” (2 Timothy 2:14).*
- *“But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their word will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort” (2 Timothy 2:16-17).*
- *“But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient...” (2 Timothy 2:23-24).*
- *“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:2-4).*
- *“Hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort*

and convict those who contradict [...] This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth” (Titus 1:9, 13-14).

- “[Remind them] to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men [...] But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless” (Titus 3:2, 9).

Read 2 Timothy 2:24.

- The phrase “*a servant of the Lord*” refers not only to Timothy and to his role as a leader of the church, but is also addressing all leaders in Christianity today. In **Mark 10:43-45**, Jesus reveals the role of a Christian leader by stating these words: “*Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.*” As a minister of the gospel, Timothy’s role would not include quarreling with the false teachers, but rather he was encouraged to be kind and gentle to all. The hard, sharp edge of the truth requires the skillful hand of someone who can speak the truth in love.
- “*Able to teach, patient...*” Timothy had already met the requirement for a church leader of having the ability to teach (**1 Timothy 3:2**). Paul encouraged him to remain confident and to continue teaching truth to those who were teachable/able to learn. At the same time he would need to exercise patience with those who opposed him. The Greek word for patient is used only here in the New Testament. It literally means, “to face ill treatment without resentment.”

Read 2 Timothy 2:25.

- This verse has the idea of having nothing to do with senseless controversies and exercising patience with everyone. The goal of a true Christ-centered leader is to gently lead his opponents to the correct understanding of truth. Instead of antagonizing opponents, we are to calmly and gently and lovingly correct their wrong ideas. The NIV completes this verse with these words: ***“in the hope that God will grant them repentance, leading them to a knowledge of the truth.”*** As a teacher, Paul’s advice to Timothy and to all who teach God’s truth is to be kind and gentle, patiently and courteously explaining the truth. However, the bottom line is if God will perhaps give them the grace to change their minds and come to know the truth. The New Living Translation puts it this way: ***“Perhaps God will change these people’s hearts, and they will believe the truth.”*** It only and always comes down to the sovereignty of God. Either God opens the hearts and minds of man, and gives illumination/understanding, or man remains in darkness (Luke 24:45).

Read 2 Timothy 2:26.

- ***“To come to their senses”*** could be translated as ***“return to soberness.”*** In other words, the false teachers are drunk, under the influence of the devil, with the result that they had lost their senses and had become an easy prey for his trap. ***“Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil”*** (1 Timothy 3:7).
- Basically we could say that Satan is at the root of all false teaching and division in the church. He knows the strength of a unified church and does all possible to

cause division by working his schemes, creating traps such as money, fame, the pride of feeling intellectual, etc. All these things draw people away from true faith to false teaching. Always keep in mind that the cross is God's remedy for man's dilemma. ***“Having been taken captive by him to do his will.”*** Satan working his schemes on the outside, and on the inside working through the flesh to influence and control man's mind, will and emotions (soul), so that the man will carry out Satan's purposes and not God's.

2 TIMOTHY

Chapter 3

A. Paul Predicts Difficult Days and People

Read 2 Timothy 3:1.

- The last days began at Pentecost and will continue until Christ's Second Coming, which means that we are living in the last days. It should not surprise us then to see the moral degeneration of society around us. Paul warned it would happen as did Jesus and the other leaders of the early church:
 - *"Your gold and silver is corroded, and the corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped treasure in the last days"* (**James 5:3**).
 - *"Knowing this first: scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts..."* (**2 Peter 3:3**).
 - *"How they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts"* (**Jude 18**).
- Paul now lists a whole catalog of attitudes and behavior typical of last days people.

Read 2 Timothy 3:2-5.

- People will be lovers of themselves. When people misdirect their love toward themselves, they become *"alienated from the life of God"* (**Ephesians 4:18**), or we could say that they give no consideration or regard to God at all.
- Without God as the center of our lives, moral corruption naturally results, which can be seen in the characteristics that Paul now mentions. It all begins with loving

oneself; any time we occupy ourselves with anything other than Jesus Christ, that thing gets bigger and stronger and Christ gets smaller and weaker. Here in these verses man is occupied with himself and therefore the outcome is that self becomes much more important than others or God. Out of that love for self comes *covetousness* or a love for material things, *boasting*, *pride*, *blaspheming*, a *disobedience to parents*, *unthankfulness*, *unholiness*.

- In verse 3 we see the word *unloving*—the same word is used in only one other place in the New Testament and that’s in **Romans 1:31** in a passage where Paul listed the characteristics of people who refused God and followed their own inclinations. The New Revised Standard version actually translates this as “*inhuman*.” Indeed, it is inhuman because these people are unloving toward everyone and everything but themselves. The KJV uses the phrase “*without natural affection*.” An example could be women who abort their babies.
- Paul goes on in verse 3: “*trucebreakers, false accusers, uncontrolled, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*.” It’s interesting that the list ends as it began with those whose love has become so misdirected that they can only think of their own desires. Those who fail to acknowledge God aren’t able to love God.
- In verse 5: “*having a form of godliness but denying its power*.” Often these evil qualities are exhibited by people known for being religious; however, Paul wrote “*they practice a form of godliness*”—that is, using godliness as a cloak of respectability while really denying God’s power in their lives. The appearance of godliness includes such things as going to church, knowing Christian doctrine, using Christian clichés, and following a community’s Christian traditions. Such practices can make a person outwardly look good, but if the inner attitudes of faith, love, and teachable spirit are

lacking, the public appearance is hollow and meaningless. Paul ends this verse by these words: ***“have nothing to do with them.”*** Or as the NKJV reads: ***“from such people turn away!”***

Read 2 Timothy 3:6.

- The expression ***“creep into households”*** indicates the cunning, deceitful methods of the false teachers. They targeted weak-willed women and through their intellectually sounding talk, these false teachers were able to captivate the women. The word literally means, ***“taken captive.”*** The indication here is that these women were especially vulnerable because they were loaded down with sins—that is, their consciences were laden with guilt and were looking for relief and therefore could be swayed by all kinds of evil desires. Their weak wills combined with guilt made them easy targets for the cures the false teachers brought. Paul warned Timothy to watch out for men who would take advantage of such women. His concern was not for women in general, but for those women who were being targeted by the false teachers in Ephesus. ***“That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, and cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...”*** (Ephesians 4:14).

Read 2 Timothy 3:7.

- These women were willing to listen to any teacher making them easy targets for the false teachers. Without the basic knowledge of truth, these women would only get more confused and never be able to recognize or understand more and deeper truth. In **Psalm 36:9** we read: ***“In Your light will we see light.”*** The thought here is that as God reveals truth to us and we step into the light of that truth, then He reveals more truth and as we step into that truth, He reveals more truth. Another verse to

consider would be **Proverbs 4:18**: “*But the path of the just is like the shining sun that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.*” The problem with the weak women in 2 Timothy was that they had no truth base. Churches that have little or no Biblical and theological content in their teaching program fall into this error and people who attend these churches are easy targets for false teachers. This verse is actually warning against ineffective learning. It is possible to be a perpetual student, going to Christian seminars and classes and Bible studies and read Christian books; and yet never find God’s truth.

Read 2 Timothy 3:8.

- According to Jewish legend, Jannes and Jambres were two of the magicians who counterfeited Moses’ miracle before Pharaoh in **Exodus 7:11-12**. Paul explained that just as Moses exposed and defeated them in **Exodus 8:18-19**, God would overthrow the false teachers who were plaguing the Ephesian church. Paul goes on to explain that these people have corrupt minds, oppose truth, and have a counterfeit faith (their faith in God is fake). They are not merely mistaken in their teaching—they are actively opposing God.

Read 2 Timothy 3:9.

- While the false teachers’ threat to the church was very real, Paul makes it clear that the threat will never be fatal to the gospel. He tells us why in the latter part of verse 9: Just as Jannes’ and Jambres’ fake power was eventually revealed by God’s power through Moses, so the foolishness of the false teachers’ words will eventually become clear to everyone.

B. Paul, An Example of One Indwelt by Christ

Read 2 Timothy 3:10.

- After strongly denouncing the false teachers and their foolishness, Paul now turns his attention back to Timothy and encourages him to look at Paul's own example of living out the opposite characteristics of the false teachers. Paul's words are not proud; rather they are a testimony to the truth of the gospel and God's faithfulness and are meant to encourage young Timothy. Timothy knew the content of Paul's teaching; it was truth as opposed to the false teachers' lies, myths, and godless arguments.
- Timothy also knew of Paul's "*manner of life*." Timothy had lived and traveled with Paul; he had seen Paul happy and sad, worried and encouraged; he had watched Paul handle difficult people and problems; he had seen him study and had heard him pray. Paul's way of life was a shining example to Timothy. Timothy also knew Paul's "*purpose in life*," his central mission, his chief aim. Traveling with this tireless missionary must have convinced Timothy of Paul's single-minded focus on his God. God had said about Paul in **Acts 9:15**, "*He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.*" Timothy also knew of Paul's "*faith, love, patience, gentleness*" (1 Timothy 6:11).

Read 2 Timothy 3:11.

- Paul mentioned his suffering here to contrast his experience with that of the pleasure seeking false teachers. In **2 Corinthians 11:23-33** Paul had summarized his life of persecutions and sufferings for the sake of the gospel:

- In Antioch the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of their regions (**Acts 13:50**).
- In Iconium the residents of the city were divided. Some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews with their rulers to mistreat them and stone them, the apostles learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe (**Acts 14:4-6**).
- In Lystra (Timothy's hometown) they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city supposing that he was dead (**Acts 14:19**).
- Out of them all Paul says, "***the Lord delivered me.***" At times Paul had been miraculously delivered, as in Philippi (**Acts 16:25-26**). At other times, Paul had to suffer through the persecution as with the stoning in Lystra.
- Persecution did not take Paul by surprise because Jesus had predicted it many times:
 - "*Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and shall say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you*" (**Matthew 5:11-12**).
 - "*But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will*

be saved. When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes” (Matthew 10:17-23).

- *“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many” (Matthew 24:9-11).*
- *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent me” (John 15:18-21).*
- *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).*
- *“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one” (John 17:14-15).*
- It's clear from Paul's epistles that he expected persecution:
 - *“And if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Romans 8:17).*
 - *“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my*

infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

- *“For to you it has been granted on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake...” (Philippians 1:29).*
- *“For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know” (1 Thessalonians 3:4).*

C. Suffering Is Unavoidable for Those Who Follow Paul's Example of Faith

Read 2 Timothy 3:12.

- Paul is making it clear to Timothy that all who desire to live godly can expect to be persecuted. We probably need to look at the true meaning of living godly. Godliness is not man imitating God; it's God reproducing Himself in a man.
- Christ-likeness is not man imitating Jesus Christ—that would be a fake. Christ-likeness is Christ actually living His life in and through us. They persecuted Christ; therefore, we can expect nothing less than what He received.
 - *“...strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God’” (Acts 14:22).*
 - *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you [...] Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also” (John 15:18, 20).*

- Today most Christians in the free world do not face persecution just because they are Christians, although there are many places in the world where they do. Those of us who worship freely and unhindered should be deeply grateful. However, we should not assume that this verse does not apply to us. For if we are truly living the Christ-life, if we are truly appropriating the truth of the cross and the old man is set in the place of death and Christ is living His life in and through us, we can expect opposition and hostility from the world.
- Based upon the testimony of countless “godly” believers, who have gone before us, we can expect to meet with some form of persecution or resistance if we persist in living the Christ-life. Absence of persecution may not mean we are not walking by faith; however, if our lives as Christians never affect the world, we may want to look more closely and question whether we are truly abiding in Christ. I heard this statement made: *“Don’t go looking for trouble. Walk with Christ and trouble will find you.”*

Read 2 Timothy 3:13.

- Oddly, the Greek word translated “***go from bad to worse***” is a verb expressing the idea of making headway or advancement. Therefore, the phrase gives an ironic picture of evil people “advancing backwards” away from the truth. The same word is used in 2:16 where it is translated “***become more and more ungodly***.” These wicked people were progressing toward their wicked goal and dragging others down with them (1 Peter 4:2-5).

D. Paul Encourages Timothy to Continue in the Truth

Read 2 Timothy 3:14.

- Paul again used “***But as for you***” to set a contrast between the situation in Ephesus and what he expected from Timothy. Besieged by false teachers and the inevitable pressures of a growing ministry, Paul counseled Timothy to hold fast to the basic teachings about Jesus that he knew were eternally true. The false teachers might constantly move on to new and more exciting concepts and ideas for discussion and argument, but Timothy must stand secure on what he had learned and firmly believed.

Read 2 Timothy 3:15.

- We see from **2 Timothy 1:5** that Timothy was probably a second generation Christian. He’d become a Christian not because an evangelist had preached a powerful sermon, but because his mother and grandmother had taught him the Scriptures when he was a small child. For Timothy, the Holy Scriptures were primarily the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi. The last part of verse 15 states, “***which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.***”
- God’s word teaches about salvation, but knowing Scripture alone saves no one. Many Jews had known Scripture from childhood like Timothy, yet had opposed Jesus and the salvation he offered. “***But even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away***” (2 Corinthians 3:15-16). Paul himself exemplified this in his early years (Acts 26:9-11). The Scriptures show people their need for salvation and point them to the Person who alone can give it, Jesus Christ.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16.

- The scriptures are God-inspired. A translation closer to the original Greek would be “*all scripture is God-breathed*” which makes it clear that every word of the Bible came out from God and then was written by men. The Apostle Peter affirmed this when he said, “*men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*” (2 Peter 1:21). Paul’s words here in 2 Timothy were to remind Timothy that because Scripture is inspired and infallible, it is also profitable for every area of Timothy’s life and ministry.
- “**Doctrine**”: Calling the Bible God-breathed, Paul was identifying its divine source. By making it the source of doctrine, he was reminding Timothy of its authority.
- “**Reproof**”: The word means rebuking those in sin. The initial impact of true doctrine involves the revelation that man is a sinner.
- “**Correction**”: Helping people straighten out wrong thinking, understanding, and actions. In the area of correction, the Scriptures have two roles: they provide a complete presentation of truth, and they also provide for right understanding and application.
- “**Instruction in righteousness**”: Teaching and training people how to live a holy and righteous life.

Read 2 Timothy 3:17.

- Paul was reminding Timothy to never forget Scripture’s purpose: to equip him and all believers to be capable and able to meet all challenges of the ministry through faith in Jesus Christ.

2 TIMOTHY

Chapter 4

A. Paul Commissions Timothy to Be Faithful

Read 2 Timothy 4:1.

- Paul used these words previously in **1 Timothy 5:21**, but this time he included references to judgment and to Christ's return. Paul's final words to Timothy in this letter, "***I charge you...***," is a command that is actually composed of five specific commands that follow and is witnessed by God and Christ Jesus. Paul the aged apostle, knew his death was at hand and he might not see Timothy again; therefore, he wanted Timothy to realize how critical it was for him to consider his words.

Read 2 Timothy 4:2.

- Paul begins by saying, "***Preach the word.***" Be bold to proclaim truth; keep on preaching the Word so that the Christian faith will continue to spread throughout the world.
- "***Be ready in season or out of season.***" Always be ready to share truth whether or not an opportunity develops and as Paul had written in **Ephesians 5:16**, "***Making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil.***"
- Paul continues; "***Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching.***" Patiently and carefully explaining the truth and helping others to understand, accept, and apply it. Patience should always characterize a Christian leader as well as careful instruction based on the truth of God's Word. Patience and careful instruction are fruits of faith.

Read 2 Timothy 4:3.

- When Paul spoke of false teaching, he often focused on the evil intentions of the false teachers. However, false teachers could not flourish if they had no audience. Here Paul is pointing out the fault on the part of the listeners. They would not listen to sound doctrine because it convicts and says what they don't want to hear. A thought to ponder: "***Man's morality dictates his theology.***" So these people would turn to others who would tell them what they wanted to hear. Like the false prophets of Old Testament times, these false teachers would teach whatever their audiences wanted to hear (Isaiah 5:20-21).

Read 2 Timothy 4:4.

- Paul is warning Timothy to be aware that people would turn away from truth and wander off into the false teachers' lies: "***Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith***" (1 Timothy 1:4). What they hear makes sense, seems true and makes them feel very comfortable. So wandering away from the truth that is so hard to hear is very easy, "***And many will follow their destructive ways; because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed***" (2 Peter 2:2; Jeremiah 5:30-31; 6:13-14; 2 Chronicles 18:6-7).

Read 2 Timothy 4:5.

- As in 2 Timothy 2:1; 3:10, 14, Paul follows the mention of those who are wayward with a strong, contrasting, comment for his disciple Timothy: "***Be on the alert at all times.***"

- Paul continues with, “***Endure afflictions,***” or endure suffering. The same Greek verb is used in 2:3 where Paul wrote, “***Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.***” Timothy would have to endure suffering (Hebrews 13:23).
- “***Do the work of an evangelist.***” Proclaim the truth to all people at all times.
- “***Fulfill your ministry,***” or as the NIV says, “***Discharge all the duties of your ministry.***” Paul is encouraging Timothy to carry out his ministry to the fullest, and when life ends, Timothy could say with Paul, “***I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith***” (2 Timothy 4:7).

B. Paul Warns of His Coming Departure

Read 2 Timothy 4:6.

- Paul is stating a difficult truth that his life was about to end. The phrase “***a drink offering***” consisted of wine poured out on an altar as a sacrifice to God (**Genesis 35:14; Exodus 29:4; Numbers 28:24**). Paul viewed his life as an offering poured out before God, and had used this same comparison in **Philippians 2:17** where he wrote, “***Even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming for your faith I am glad and rejoice with all of you.***” There will be times when service to the Lord seems wasted; at times being poured out will feel like being thrown down. Even in death, Paul, like Christ, was content to sacrifice his life for the purpose of building the faith of others. Paul’s words regarding his departure were communicating to Timothy that the shared leadership was ending. Timothy must now take the lead.

Read 2 Timothy 4:7.

- Paul's three phrases in the perfect tense convey finality. He was now calling Timothy to fight the good fight of faith that Paul himself had fought by God's grace. The true Christian life is nothing more than a walk of faith—trusting and resting and depending on the finished work of Christ.
- In **Galatians 5:17**, Paul tells us that the flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit wars against the flesh: ***“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:12)***. The end of Paul's race was clearly in sight. Paul made no claim to having won the race; he was content with just having finished it. Marathon runners know the joy of finishing the grueling miles of a race. They're thankful just to cross the finish line. Completion is a significant accomplishment, revealing incredible endurance.
- ***“But none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my race with joy, and the ministry, which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20:24)***. Paul had never wavered in his faith, he had by God's grace stayed the course, and now soon he would be absent from the body and present with the Lord.

Read 2 Timothy 4:8.

- Paul knew he would soon receive his reward from the righteous Judge and would ultimately be vindicated by God himself. Waiting for Paul was a crown of righteousness, Christ's righteousness. Paul finishes out verse 8, ***“...and not to me only, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*** This crown of righteousness is waiting for all who are truly born again and therefore

eagerly looking forward to the day He returns. What an encouragement this is. Whatever we may face—discouragement, persecution, or death—we know that our crown of righteousness is safe and secure with Christ in heaven.

C. Paul's Desire to See Timothy One More Time

Read 2 Timothy 4:9.

- Both here and in verse 21, Paul urged Timothy to come soon. Paul knew his execution was imminent and was looking forward to his home going, but he longed to see Timothy and be encouraged by him one last time.
- Scripture teaches believers to encourage one another:
 - *“Therefore comfort one another with these words [...] comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing” (1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11).*
 - *“But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin [...] not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 3:13; 10:25).*

Read 2 Timothy 4:10.

- Demas had been one of Paul's co-workers (2 **Corinthians 4:18; Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24**). But he had deserted Paul because he loved what the world had to offer—worldly values and worldly pleasures. Unlike Onesiphorus, he probably was ashamed of Paul's chains and not willing to face the same fate for the Christian faith. Demas may not have deserted the faith, but he deserted Paul in his time of need. Some scholars believe Demas had chosen to take an easy assignment.

Read 2 Timothy 4:11.

- Demas had deserted; Crescens, Titus and Tychicus (4:12) had been sent on various missions. Only Luke the doctor (**Colossians 4:14**) remained with Paul possibly to help minister to his physical needs. Luke had accompanied Paul on the second and third missionary journeys, as well as the voyage to Rome. This traveling companion and historian (author of the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts), probably used his medical expertise to minister to Paul and his companions during times of sickness and injury.
- Paul continues in verse 11, “***Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.***” This statement reveals an incredible change in Mark and in Paul’s opinion of him. Mark had left Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey and this had greatly concerned Paul (**Acts 13:13; 15:36-41**). Barnabas had desired to give Mark another chance, but Paul had refused. This had led to the separation of Paul and Barnabas. Paul took Silas on the second missionary journey but Barnabas took Mark onto Cyprus to preach there. Barnabas, known for being an encourager, apparently had significant impact on the young Mark, for he later proved to be a worthy minister. At some point, Paul recognized Mark as a good friend and trusted Christian leader (**Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24**). Mark had also been Peter’s assistant (**1 Peter 5:13**) and composed the gospel named after him.

Read 2 Timothy 4:12.

- Tychicus, a trusted companion (**Acts 20:4**) and messenger who had delivered the letters of Ephesians and Colossians, had already left for Ephesus (**Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7**). There is a possibility that Tychicus would be delivering this letter to Timothy and

would be sent to assume Timothy's role while Timothy traveled to Rome to see Paul. From **Titus 3:12** it appears that Tychicus was useful for such ministries.

Read 2 Timothy 4:13.

- Paul's arrest may have occurred so suddenly that he was not permitted to return home to gather his personal belongings. The scrolls would have included parts of the Old Testament. The parchments were very likely parchments frequently used in the first century for notebooks.

Read 2 Timothy 4:14.

- Alexander may have been a witness against Paul at his trial, thus doing Paul much harm. This may be the Alexander mentioned in **1 Timothy 1:20**, although Alexander was a rather common name in those days. Timothy apparently knew the man and the situation.
- Paul had no desire for revenge, as indicated by his paraphrase of **Psalms 62:12**. Paul's statement, "*may the Lord repay him*" is more a prediction of what will happen than a prayer cursing Alexander. Paul exemplified one of the most difficult areas that a Christian may encounter: to leave his or her hurt with the Lord. When others oppose us and undercut our authority or leadership or even our friendship, our natural response is to want revenge. Yet revenge does much damage. Our anger and bitterness causes separation between God and us.
- Most times in this world, we think we have only two choices—either vengeance or justice. We often pride ourselves on not "getting even" (vengeance) because we know that vengeance is not the way for Christians. But we do have "our rights" (justice).

- If someone does something to me, I immediately want to get him or her back. This is a very pagan, uncivilized way to live which many of us seem to be going back to today—taking the law into our own hands. Often, this is a **lose-lose** situation—one is dead and the other ends up on death row. However, Paul said, “*Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord*” (Romans 12:19).
- In America today, most of us pride ourselves on having “our rights.” We really enjoy blaming someone else. You know how that goes—blame-shifting goes all the way back to the Garden (**Genesis 3:9-12**). When something goes wrong, we may not want to get even, but we sure do know whose fault it is. If something is missing, we immediately think we know who took it. In the Old Testament on the Day of Atonement, the blame was transferred to a “scapegoat” (**Leviticus 16:8-10**). We often use that term today in our justice system; however, it’s a **win-lose** situation—one wins and one loses. The idea is for the right one to win. However, in the book of Habakkuk, we read of justice being perverted (**Habakkuk 1:4**). So now, many times, the good guys get punished, and the bad guys go free; it becomes not a matter of right and wrong, but who has the best lawyer. In most law schools today, right and wrong are not the major issue, but rather, can you win the case? He who wins the case, pockets the money. Now granted, this is a little better than vengeance because it’s a **win-lose** situation rather than **lose-lose**.
- But how do we get to a **win-win** situation? *There is only one way and that is through “grace.”* When we move up to grace, we find that the key word is “*forgive*,” while the key phrase for vengeance is “*get even*” and the main word for justice is “*blame*.” Instead of **lose-lose** or **win-lose**, there is now potential for **win-win**. However, the cost is death—death to self. All rights are set aside,

whether they are scales of justice or swords of vengeance because vindication is left to the Lord (**Isaiah 54:17**). It's coming to the cross—to the throne of grace naked and unashamed, with no accusations or thoughts of getting even. You see, grace gives a third option, rather than “*vengeance*” or “*blame*,” by God's grace, we can now “*forgive*.”

Read 2 Timothy 4:15.

- Paul warned Timothy to beware, be on guard and stay away from Alexander. If Timothy were to arrive in Rome after Paul's death, he could very possibly be Alexander's next target. The message Alexander opposed could most likely be the message of grace. As in Paul's other teachings regarding false teachers, he exhorted Timothy to have nothing to do with these men.

Read 2 Timothy 4:16.

- This first defense was most likely a preliminary hearing at which advocates for the accused were usually heard. The Roman legal system allowed for several steps in the prosecution of an accused criminal. Clearly the mention of a “*first*” indicates an expectation of a second defense. Perhaps the inconclusiveness of the first hearing was causing a lengthy delay. In any case, no one had come to speak in Paul's defense or to stand by in his support. Everyone had deserted him (**2 Timothy 1:15**). Although somewhat disappointed, Paul seemed to understand, for he hoped that this would not be held against them (**Luke 23:34**). Paul understood the fear that Christians were feeling; it had become extremely dangerous to be identified as a Christian in Rome. Emperor Nero had blamed the Christians for starting a great fire in Rome in AD 64; he had decreed that the Christians should be persecuted and punished through torture and death. Three or four years later, when this letter was written,

fear was still very present, causing Paul's fellow believers to be unwilling to defend him before the Roman authorities.

Read 2 Timothy 4:17.

- Although no human being had come to support Paul at his hearing, the Lord had sustained him (**Mark 13:9-11; Matthew 10:17-19**). Paul had sensed both the presence and the power of Christ. Christ had supplied Paul with spiritual strength, wisdom, and the ability to preach in order to carry the message of grace to the listening Gentiles in the far corners of the earth (**Philippians 1:12-14**). Whatever would happen to Paul at his trial, Paul was confident that God's purposes would once again be fulfilled in and through him. On this occasion in Rome, no one else had appeared brave enough to be identified with Christ, but Paul's courage remained strong. He continued to live out his faith to the very end.
- The last part of verse 17 we read, "*and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*" It seems rather certain that Paul knew he would not be released from prison. There is a good possibility here that his reference to the lion's mouth may be referring to Satan (**1 Peter 5:8**). More than likely, Paul was using a common biblical metaphor describing deliverance from extreme danger (**Psalms 22:21; Daniel 6:22**).

Read 2 Timothy 4:18.

- Although rescued from certain death with the first hearing and certainly at many other times over the years of his ministry, Paul realized that the end was near. He was prepared to physically die, confident in God's sovereignty. The Lord's rescue mentioned here would not be physical this time, but spiritual; Paul was affirming his belief in eternal life. He was comforted and

encouraged by knowing that God would bring him safely through physical death to heaven. The last part of this verse is, “*To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.*” Just as Paul praised God in life (**Galatians 1:5; Ephesians 3:21**), he also praised God in the face of death.

D. Paul’s Final Farewell to Good Friends

Read 2 Timothy 4:19.

- Prisca and Aquila were fellow Christian leaders with whom Paul had lived and worked (**Acts 18:2-3; 10, 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19**). Onesiphorus had visited and encouraged Paul in prison during this final imprisonment (**2 Timothy 1:16-18**). It appears that Paul is ending the final chapter in his book and in his life by greeting those who were closest to him.

Read 2 Timothy 4:20.

- Erastus was one of Paul’s trusted companions and Timothy’s close friend (**Acts 19:22**). The same would be true of Trophimus, another companion and friend of both men (**Acts 20:4; 21:29**). Timothy might not have been aware of Trophimus’ illness and would have been happy to know the location of his friend from Ephesus. In **Acts 19:11-12**, Paul had the God-given power to heal physical illnesses. Keep in mind that Acts is a transitional book, and in **1 Corinthians 1:22**, we read “*the Jews required a sign.*” As the book progresses and the Jews are set aside, so are the sign gifts. Some Scriptures to consider are **2 Corinthians 12:8-9, Galatians 4:12-14; Philippians 2:25-30; 1 Timothy 5:23**; and finally what appears to be the most convincing Scripture that the gift of healing was no longer in effect comes right here in **2 Timothy 4:20**.

- As Paul reached the end of his life, he could look back and know it was time to pass the torch to the next generation so that the world would continue to hear the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. Timothy was Paul's living legacy, a product of Paul's faithful teaching, discipleship, and example.

E. Paul's Closing Remarks and Benediction

Read 2 Timothy 4:21.

- Paul knew that sailing on the Adriatic Sea was shut down for several weeks during winter. This also gives some insight into Paul's desire to have his cloak before cold weather set in. Nothing more is known of the four men listed by name here. Paul sent greetings from all the brothers and sisters even though most had deserted him at his trial. His spirit of forgiveness by including greetings from them must not be missed.

Read 2 Timothy 4:22.

- The first sentence was directed personally to Timothy; the second includes the plural "you" and give the final goodbye to all believers. Just as Paul began his letter with "grace" in chapter 1:2, he now ends with "*grace be with you, Amen.*"



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