

“All Scripture is God breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17



Life Matters

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER
TO TIMOTHY

BELIEVE

FOLLOW

DISCIPLE

Bible Study Guide

3 Bible Studies on Paul's 2nd letter to Timothy



St Phil's

Introduction to 2 Timothy

Known as the Pastoral Epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are letters from Paul giving practical advice to the organisation and government of churches.

Written at a time when Paul was contemplating his own death (4:6), Paul begins his second letter to Timothy with an introductory thanksgiving. This is possibly written around 66, if martyred in 67 under Nero. He writes with a personal and affectionate tone, encouraging Timothy to remain faithful and be prepared to suffer for the gospel truth. (1:6-2:13) Paul had met Timothy as a young man (Acts 16:1-5) and disciplined him in his faith. Timothy's mother was Jew and a believer, his father a Greek.

Paul was alone in a Roman prison as everyone had deserted him apart from Luke (4:10-12). He had appeared before the emperor Nero (4:16-17), where the Lord had enabled him to share his faith in Jesus, but his case had been postponed. He faced probable death, but had fought the good fight to the end. God will give him the crown of righteousness as He will to others who also endure to the end (4:6-8).

Key text: 2 Timothy 2:1-3

This is the main emphasis of the Epistle. Timothy is **encouraged** to be strong, and to identify with Paul and Onesiphorus, rather than Phygelus and Hermogenes, or move from the truth like Hymenaeus and Philetus.

Paul also wants to **entrust** Timothy with the gospel he heard to share with other faithful brothers and sisters who will be able to teach others also (2:2). Timothy's suffering is to be like Paul's – to endure it for the sake of the elect (2:8-10).

Godlessness will increase in the last days (3:1-9) and therefore the challenge to godly living will be increasingly difficult. But they will give an account to God on the last day (4:1ff)

Overall, if Paul is about to be put to death for his faith, he is thinking that this is his final letter to Timothy, and perhaps anyone else. It shows us how a Christian faces

death under persecution. He calls people to remember that the foundation of a Christian life is not in what we do, but in what Christ has already done. This is always to be our motivation. Christians are always to stand by these facts, whatever the cost. The life of the believer is like a soldier, an athlete, a farmer – while our salvation is a free gift, it is also demanding on our life as a response. Sound teaching is of the utmost importance in order to keep God’s church on his path. This is not to be based on the orthodoxy of the church, but the foundation that God himself has laid.

2 Timothy outline and structure

A. False teaching

1:1–2	Address and greeting
1:3-5	Thanksgiving for Timothy’s faith
1:6-2:13	Dealing with false teaching

B. Christian living

3:1-4:8	Faithful Christian ministry in the last days
4:9-18	Personal requests and warning
4:19-22	Final greetings

References

D. A. Carson, D.J. Moo & L. Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992)

G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin & D.G. Reid (eds), *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993)

John R. W. Stott “The message of 2 Timothy.” *The Bible Speaks Today* Series. IVP. 1999. (Some study questions sourced from the study guide of this book.)

Study 1: Believe: SEE

2 Timothy 1:1-18

Paul reminds Timothy about his Christian faith and roots which grew as his grandmother and mother had been a great help. Paul regularly prays for Timothy and recalls how God had gifted him. Timothy needed encouragement. God has saved every Christian from God's judgment so they can tell others the good news. God has called each to live a holy life. For Paul and others this meant suffering, but he had full confidence in God to fulfill all His promises.

Think about this...

1. Think of a Christian you know that you look up to. What is their "nature and character"?

Now read 2 Timothy 1:1-18

The big picture...

2. What is the church problem Paul is pointing to in this passage?

3. What is the main action Paul is calling for, from Timothy?

4. What is your initial response to this passage?

The text...

5. READ 1:4-7. What do these verses teach us about Timothy's nature and character?

6. READ 1:6-9,13-14 What are the things that Paul tells Timothy to do as an active Christian?

7. READ 1:1-3,11-13. What do these verses teach us about some of the ministries of Paul?

8. READ 1:6-12. In these verses what are some of the things God the Father and God the Son have done for people?

Applying it to your life...

9. How do the verses in 1:1-18 encourage and warn us in our faith?

10. What inspires you about Paul's life?

Study 2: Follow: DO

2 Timothy 2:1-3:9

Timothy must guard the truth of the gospel and be faithful in teaching reliable people to teach others. He must endure hardship like a good soldier of Jesus Christ. As athletes and farmers work hard, so should Christians. Paul may be chained because of his gospel ministry, but he is not ashamed of the gospel, nor is he afraid of suffering for it. He is encouraged that God's word is not restricted in any way. He wants to tell as many as possible the good news of the gospel.

Pauls' concern for Timothy is that he stands out as a leader of God's people. That he is to be different. He **will** be different if he avoids wickedness and ungodliness. Anyone serving the Lord has a big responsibility and should avoid quarrelling about words and godless chatter. The focus of God's workers must be on important issues.

The way to seek God's approval is not to be ashamed, but to correctly teach the truths of God's Word – living holy lives, seeking to serve the Lord and turning away from wickedness. Otherwise, godless teaching can lead to godless living and false teaching, which spreads, causing some to wander from the truth. Paul encourages Timothy to flee the evil desires of youth and pursue pure and holy things. Timothy must instruct those who oppose his teaching from God's word, in the hope that God will grant them repentance, leading to knowledge of the truth. Paul reminds them that the devil is always active trying to trap some to do his will and lead them away from God's truth and ways in His word.

He calls Timothy to stand apart – to be different to the false teachers. And to speak differently also, being kind instead of quarrelling, not resentful, but able to teach, even in the face of opposition – something Paul expects Timothy will encounter and must be ready for.

Think about this...

1. What sorts of things undermine a person's faith or trust?

The big picture...

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-3:9

2. What is the church problem Paul is pointing to in this passage?

3. What is the main action Paul is calling for from Timothy?

The text...

4. In 2:1-10, how does Paul call Timothy to challenge his church with endurance, hardship and "competition"? Are these relevant ideas to still use today? Do they challenge you in living out your faith?

5. What do verses 11-13 add to Paul's argument? Which of these verses speak to you the most, and why?

6. In 2:14-19, what sort of damage is caused by false teaching and false teachers? In what ways do we see this in Christian churches today?

7. Why does Paul add verse 19 here?

8. In 2:20-21. What sort of vessels do you think Paul is talking about?

9. In 2:22-26, what is result of fleeing these things?

10. In 3:1-9, when do you think the “last days” are?

11. Who do you think are the “men of depraved minds” in today’s church?

Applying it to your life...

12. Are there things you need to flee from?

Study 3 – Disciple: TEACH

2 Timothy 3:10-17, 4:1-22

Introduction

Paul reminds Timothy of his own hardships and persecution as he spread the gospel in modern-day Turkey. Timothy is told to continue in his faith as he has been taught by his family since birth from God's Word, which enabled him to come to a saving knowledge through faith in Christ Jesus. The Bible is God-breathed and is able to equip every believer to serve God in the world.

As Paul approaches death, he urges Timothy to preach the Word, while people will listen.

Paul is satisfied that he has kept the faith and will be rewarded by the Lord, the righteous judge, along with all who have laboured in His service. In the light of the Lord Jesus' return to judge the living and the dead, Paul entrusts to Timothy the responsibility to continue preaching God's Word, patiently and carefully. The time is coming when people won't want to listen to sound Biblical teaching.

It is believed these were the last words recorded by Paul, as he faced death at the hands of Emperor Nero in about 67 AD. He was probably beheaded for his Christian faith and ministry, which had lasted over 30 years. Paul ends his letter by sending greetings to some, mentioning certain co-workers - some of whom were supportive of his ministry, others who deserted him, and some who did him harm. But the Lord encouraged and strengthened Paul, by enabling him to proclaim the message so the Gentiles might hear. To God goes the glory!

Think about this...

1. Are there people you try to stay away from? Why?

The big picture...

Read 3:10-17 and 4:1-22

2. What is the church problem Paul is pointing to in this passage?

3. What is the main action Paul is calling for from Timothy?

The text...

4. Looking at 3:10-13... (You can compare some of Pauls' persecutions in Turkey in Acts 13:49-14:6 and Acts 14:19-20). How do Christians face persecution today throughout the world? In our country?

5. Consider 3:14-15. What impact did Christian teaching have in your childhood?

6. From 3:16-17. What do these verses mean in your life? What do these verses mean for the teaching in your church? Discuss especially the use of the word “All” in verse 16.

7. In 4:1-8. What do you think Paul would have meant by the phrase “*Preach the word*”? What does Paul say about the **type** of preaching and ministries Timothy is to undertake?

8. How do the warnings of 4:3-4 apply today?

9. What do 4:6-8 tell you about Paul's current situation?

10. From 4:9-18. What do these verses tell you about Paul's relationships in the church?

Applying it to your life...

11. What things are important in the teaching in our churches today?

12. What could you say about your ministry in God's church at the end of your life?

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