

LIVING FEARLESSLY IN THE LAST DAYS

BOOK OF 2ND TIMOTHY

Are we living in the last days?

Biblically, the answer is “yes.”

Ever since Jesus ascended to heaven, we have been watching and waiting for His return. He could return at any moment. Thus, technically, we are in the last days.

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has **in these last days** spoken to us by His Son... (Hebrews 1:1-2a)*

*Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth **in the last days**. (James 5:3)*

***The end of all things is near**; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. (1 Peter 4:7)*

So perhaps we should ask: “Are we living *in the last days* of the last days?”

It sure seems like it.

Israel is in the land.

The world is in turmoil.

Lawlessness has increased.

Humanity seems to be on the brink of self-destruction.

And there is a growing hunger for a “political messiah” to save the day.

How do we live faithfully in such times?

How do we live fearlessly in such times?

2 Timothy was the last letter written by the apostle Paul, sometime around AD 66.

Paul writes this letter from Rome.

He is in prison again (1:8). This time he is not under house arrest like his first imprisonment (Acts 28:30). Rather, he is sitting in a cold cell facing imminent execution (4:6, 13).

From AD 33-64, Christianity was considered a sect of Judaism. Though some Roman officials saw it is a nuisance, for the most part, early Christians were able to live out their faith and spread the gospel without hindrance from the Roman government. The early church's biggest opposition came from the strict, legalistic Jews not from the Romans.

However, after the Great Fire of Rome (AD 64), Nero singled out Christianity as his scapegoat.

A CHRONOLOGY OF PAUL'S LIFE	
AD 30	Crucifixion of Jesus Christ
32	Stoning of Stephen (Acts 7)
34	Paul's Conversion (Acts 9)
47-48	1 st Missionary Journey (Acts 13-14) <i>Galatians</i>
49-51	2 nd Missionary Journey (Acts 15-18) <i>1 & 2 Thessalonians</i>
52-56	3 rd Missionary Journey (Acts 18-21) <i>1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans</i>
56	Arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21)
60	Imprisoned in Rome (Acts 28) <i>Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians</i>
62	Released. 4 th Missionary Journey (?) <i>1 Timothy, Titus</i>
64	Great Fire of Rome (Nero)
66	Paul arrested again and then executed <i>2 Timothy</i>

Christianity was declared an illegal religion within the Roman Empire. Full-scale, empire-wide persecution of Christians began and would continue, off and on, for the next 250 years.

Paul's first imprisonment was over false charges brought forward by the Jews (Acts 21:27-36).

Paul's second imprisonment was over charges brought by the Roman Empire itself.

Paul knows his time is short.

So Paul pens this letter Timothy, his son in the faith, his friend, and his spiritual successor.

2 Timothy, like the other two pastoral epistles that Paul wrote (1 Timothy and Titus), is more personal than theological. It is written to an individual not a church. It is more heart-felt than perhaps any other letter of Paul since he senses that the end of his life is near.

2 Timothy is Paul's passing of the baton to Timothy.

Paul has finished his race and now he must give the reins of the church to the next generation.

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.
I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

2 Timothy 4:6-7

AN OVERVIEW OF 2 TIMOTHY

Read 2 Timothy in one sitting. Pray for God to open your eyes to His Word. Find a quiet place and read through Paul's epistle to Timothy. Imagine Paul in a cold, dark prison cell. His writing supplies are limited. His time is short. His body is tired. His heart is longing for companionship. He writes to his dear friend and young disciple, Timothy, to encourage him to hold on to the faith.

The NKJV version is included below. Mark key words or phrases as you read.

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, a beloved son:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, **4** greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, **5** when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. **6** Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. **7** For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, **9** who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, **10** but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, **11** to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. **12** For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. **14** That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

15 This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. **16** The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; **17** but when he arrived in

Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. ¹⁸ The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.

2 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. ⁵ And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶ The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops. ⁷ Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

⁸ Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, ⁹ for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. ¹⁰ Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

¹¹ This is a faithful saying:

For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.

¹² If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.

If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful;

He cannot deny Himself.

¹⁴ Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. ¹⁷ And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, ¹⁸ who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. ¹⁹ Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. ²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. ²² Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ²³ But avoid foolish and ignorant

disputes, knowing that they generate strife. ²⁴ And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

3 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; ⁹ but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

¹⁰ But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. ¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ 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; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

⁹ Be diligent to come to me quickly; ¹⁰ for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. ¹² And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³ Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.

¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. ¹⁵ You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

¹⁶ At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. ¹⁸ And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!

¹⁹ Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.

²¹ Do your utmost to come before winter.

Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

²² The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

What verses or thoughts stand out to you after reading through Paul's epistle to Timothy?

AN OUTLINE OF 2 TIMOTHY

Introduction: Paul's Personal Encouragement to Timothy (1:1-7)

- I. **BE A SOLDIER!** The Spirit of Power (1:8-2:13)
 - A. Don't Run from Suffering (1:8-12)
 - B. Stand Firm in the Faith (1:13-18)
 - C. Stay Faithful to Your Calling (2:1-7)
 - D. Stay Focused on Your Savior (2:8-13)

- II. **BE A SERVANT!** The Spirit of Love (2:14-26)
 - A. Serve the Church with Truth (2:14-19)
 - B. Serve the Church with Purity (2:20-22)
 - C. Serve the Church with Humility (2:23-24)

- III. **BE A STUDENT!** The Spirit of a Sound Mind (3:1-4:5)
 - A. Be a Discerning Student of the World (3:1-9)
 - B. Be a Devoted Student of the Word (3:10-17)
 - C. Be a Determined Teacher of the Word (4:1-5)

Conclusion: Paul's Final Instructions to Timothy (4:6-22)

The following study guide takes you through an exploration of 2 Timothy. The five-day format for each week is designed to enhance your Bible study.

Day 1: **OBSERVATION.** Reading the passage and observing what it says.

Day 2: **MEDITATION.** Reading key verse(s) over and over and memorizing them.

Day 3: **INTERPRETATION.** Doing a word study and/or exploring parallel passages.

Day 4: **DEVOTION.** Reading an excerpt from a classic commentary on 2 Timothy.

Day 5: **APPLICATION.** Seeking to live out God's Word in your daily life.

We encourage you to do this study individually *and* corporately. Spending time alone in God's Word is a daily discipline that grows us in the faith. However, our spiritual growth is also connected to and lived out in community. Sharing what you are learning with others, praising God together, and loving and praying for one another are essential to our growth and to our joy.

PAUL'S PERSONAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO TIMOTHY
2 Timothy 1:1-7

DAY ONE
Observation

Paul begins his letter with his typical greetings but then quickly turns personal in his encouragement to his young disciple and friend, Timothy. Paul's love for Timothy is clear in these opening verses.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read 2 Timothy 1:1-7. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, for the sake of the promise of life in Christ Jesus:

² To Timothy, my dearly loved son.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³ I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience as my ancestors did, when I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day. ⁴ Remembering your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced, is in you also.

⁶ Therefore, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. (CSB)

What thought or verse stands out to you in 2 Timothy 1:1-7? Why?

How does Paul describe himself (1:1)? _____

How does Paul describe Timothy (1:2a)? _____

What three things does Paul want Timothy to experience from God and from Christ (1:2b)?

Why does Paul thank God (1:3)? _____

What does Paul remember about Timothy (1:4)? _____

What is Paul convinced of in regard to Timothy (1:5)? _____

Read Acts 16:1-5. This is the first mention of Timothy in the New Testament.

Paul went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek. ²The brothers and sisters at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him. ³Paul wanted Timothy to go with him; so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, since they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they traveled through the towns, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for the people to observe. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Write down 3-5 things that you learn about Timothy from Acts 16:1-5.

Now write down what you learn about Timothy from 2 Timothy 1:1-7. His personality? His faith? His relationship to Paul? His relationship to his mother and grandmother? His struggles?

What has God not given us (1:7)? _____

What has God given us (1:7)? _____

How did fear impact Timothy (1:6)? _____

**DAY TWO
Meditation**

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read 2 Timothy 1:6-7 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*Therefore I remind you
to stir up the gift of God which is in you
through the laying on of my hands.*

*For God has not given us a spirit of fear,
but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (NKJV)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type “2 Timothy 1” into the “Search the Bible” box. Click on 2 Timothy 1:6 to bring up the verse in the Greek. Find the word “stir up” and click on the Strong’s number (G329) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for “stir up”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine’s Expository Dictionary* and its three root words.)

Next click on 2 Timothy 1:7 and find the word “fear” and click on the Strong’s number (G1167) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for “fear”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*.)

Paul uses a unique word for fear that is always used in a bad sense in the Greek language. It is a word that denotes cowardice or timidity, a shrinking back from a task that one is called to do.

Read the following passages out loud. Mark key words or phrases as you read.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)*

*When I am afraid, I put my trust in You.
In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust.
I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4)*

*The fear of man brings a snare,
But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe. (Proverbs 29:25)*

*Fear not, for I am with you;
Be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)*

*Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)*

Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.
The one who fears is not made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18)*

Write down what you learn about fear from these verses. What causes us to fear? What things are we afraid of? What does fear do to us? What is the antidote to fear?

Next click on 2 Timothy 1:7 and find the word “sound mind” and click on the Strong’s number (G4995) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for “sound mind”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*.)

How would you describe a “sound mind”? How would it be the opposite of a “fearful mind”?

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from William Barclay's *Daily Study Bible*. **William Barclay** (1907-78) was a Scottish minister, Greek scholar, and theological professor at the University of Glasgow. Though liberal in some of his beliefs, his *Daily Study Bible* is considered a masterpiece of scholarly and biblical insight.

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-2

When Paul speaks of his own apostleship there are always certain unmistakable notes in his voice. To him it was always certain things.

1. His apostleship was an honor. He was chosen to it by the will of God. Every Christian must regard himself as a God-chosen man.

2. His apostleship was a responsibility. God chose him because he wanted to do something with him. He wished to make him the instrument by which the tidings of new life went out to men. No Christian is ever chosen entirely for his own sake, but for what he can do for others. A Christian is a man lost in wonder, love and praise at what God has done for him and aflame with eagerness to tell others what God can do for them.

3. His apostleship was a privilege. It is most significant to see what Paul conceived it his duty to bring to others—the promise of God, not his threat. To him, Christianity was not the threat of damnation; it was the good news of salvation... The dynamic of his gospel was love, not fear.

As always when he speaks to Timothy, there is a warmth of loving affection in Paul's voice. *My beloved child*, he calls him. Timothy was his child in the faith. Timothy's parents had given him physical life; but it was Paul who gave him eternal life. Many a person who never knew physical parenthood has had the joy and privilege of being a father or a mother in the faith; and there is no joy in all the world like that of bringing one soul to Christ.

2 TIMOTHY 1:3-7

Paul's object in writing is to inspire and strengthen Timothy for his task in Ephesus. Timothy was young and he had a hard task in battling against the heresies and the infections that were bound to threaten the Church. So, then, in order to keep his courage high and his effort strenuous, Paul reminds Timothy of certain things.

1. He reminds him of his own confidence in him. There is no greater inspiration than to feel that someone believes in us. An appeal to honor is always more effective than a threat of punishment.

2. He reminds him of his heritage. Timothy was walking in a fine heritage, and if he failed, not only would he smirch his own name, but he would lessen the honor of his family name as well. A fine parentage is one of the greatest gifts a man can have. Let him thank God for it and never bring it dishonor.

3. He reminds him of his setting apart to office and of the gift which was conferred upon him. Once a man enters upon the service of any association with a tradition, anything that he does affects not only himself but all those associated with it... That is especially true of the Church. He who serves it has its honor in his hands; he who serves it is strengthened by the consciousness of the communion of all the saints.

4. He reminds him of the qualities which should characterize the Christian teacher.

These, as Paul at that moment saw them, were four.

- **There was courage.** It was not craven fear but courage that Christian service should bring to a man. It always takes courage to be a Christian, and that courage comes from the continual consciousness of the presence of Christ.
- **There was power.** In the true Christian there is the power to cope, the power to shoulder the back-breaking task, the power to stand erect in face of the shattering situation, the power to retain faith in face of the soul-searing sorrow and the wounding disappointment. The Christian is characteristically the man who could pass the breaking-point and not break.
- **There was love.** In Timothy's case this was love for the brethren, for the congregation of the people of Christ over whom he was set. It is precisely that love which gives the Christian pastor his other quali-

ties. He must love his people so much that he will never find any toil too great to undertake for them or any situation threatening enough to daunt him. No man should ever enter the ministry of the Church unless there is love for Christ's people within his heart.

- **There was self-discipline.** The word is *sophronismos*, one of the great Greek untranslatable words. Someone has defined it as “the sanity of saintliness” or as “control of oneself in the face of panic or of passion.” It is Christ alone who can give us that self-mastery which will keep us alike from being swept away and from running away. No man can ever rule others unless he has first mastered himself. *Sophronismos* is that divinely given self-control which makes a man a great leader of others because he is first of all the servant of Christ and the master of himself.

What thought from William Barclay’s words stands out to you the most? Why?

Here is a further thought on *sophronismos* (1:7) from **Alexander MacLaren** (1826-1910).

“Brethren, there is only one thing that will give complete self-command. Trust in Jesus Christ! Ask Him to govern, and He will help you to control yourselves. That is the noblest conquest that any man can make... Wherever you are a leader, be a leader inside your own soul first. And in order that you may, you must be the servant of Him who alone will make you master of yourself and of the world. In Christ the most timid may wax valiant in fight, the weakest may be made strong, the most self-centered heart be opened for love which is peace and joy, and the wildest revolt in this little kingdom within our hearts may be subdued.”

DAY FIVE
Application

Re-read 2 Timothy 1:1-7 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of 2 Timothy 1:1-7 to your life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of 2 Timothy 1:1-7?

Timothy received a godly heritage from his mother and grandmother. We do not know anything about them but we do know that they lived out their faith in God and impacted Timothy's life.

Who are the key people who have impacted your faith in Christ?

Thank God for each of them and, if you are able, thank them personally for their input in your life.

As you look into your heart today, what are you afraid of? What creates anxiety in you? Why?

After humanity's fall into sin, fear became a baseline emotion for us (Gen. 3:8-10). Often our fear is masked behind our anger. **What are you angry about? What fears may be behind your anger?**

God has not given us a spirit of fear. We do not have to live with a constant underlying fear of what people think of us or what will happen to us. One of the gifts of God is to be able to live without an abiding sense of fear. Instead, God gives us a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.

What would each of these look like in your life right now?

- Power: _____
- Love: _____
- Sound Mind: _____

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

The goal is not to get through all the questions but to spark good discussion around the truth of 2 Timothy 1:1-7. Use the questions below to interact together with what you learned.

- Which of the following fears tends to frighten you the most—heights, tight spaces, flying, public speaking, injections, spiders, or snakes? Why do you think you may have this fear?
- Based on what you read in this passage, how would you describe Timothy? How would you describe his personality? How would you describe his relationship to Paul?
- Who would you say are the two people that have impacted your Christian faith the most? How have they impacted you?
- How would you describe a “spirit of fear”?
- How can fear hinder us from using our gifts and opportunities for the Lord? How have you seen this in your own life?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of William Barclay? If so, what?
- Think about the three things that God gives us to combat a spirit of fear—power, love, and a sound mind. Which of these three do you need the most in your life right now? What would it look like for you to allow God to develop this quality in you more and more?
- Close your time in prayer together. Pray for a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind.

*Fear is self-protecting. Love is self-giving.
Fear asks, “What will I lose?” Love asks, “What can I give to others?”
Fear moves away from the problem. Love moves toward the problem.
Fear secludes self. Love reaches out beyond self.
Fear hesitates. Love moves ahead.
Fear can be cast out. Love can cast out fear.*

Sherry Allchin

BE A SOLDIER—Don't Run from Suffering!
2 Timothy 1:8-12

DAY ONE
Observation

Paul encourages Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel or of him as a prisoner but to be ready and willing to share in sufferings for Christ's sake.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read 2 Timothy 1:8-12. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of either the witness about our Lord or me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹ who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, ¹⁰ but now has been manifested by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

¹² For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. (LSB)

Circle the verbs in verses 9-10. These verbs detail what God and Christ have done in the gospel. Write these verbs below along with a brief description of what you can learn from each one.

In 1:11-12, Paul gives seven "I" statements in light of the gospel of Christ. **Write down each of these "I" statements below. Underline the one that stands out to you most.**

**DAY TWO
Meditation**

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read 2 Timothy 1:12 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*For this reason I also suffer these things;
nevertheless I am not ashamed,
for I know whom I have believed
and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him
until that Day. (NKJV)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

In this passage, Paul summarizes the gospel of Jesus Christ and his own calling into ministry.

Read Acts 26. This is Paul's testimony before King Agrippa and Festus, the governor of Judea. Mark key words or phrases you read.

Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."

Then Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense: ²"I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, ³especially since you are very knowledgeable about all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

⁴"All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. ⁵They have known me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived as a Pharisee. ⁶And now I stand on trial because of the hope in what God promised to our ancestors, ⁷the promise our twelve tribes hope to reach as they earnestly serve him night and day. King Agrippa, I am being accused by the Jews because of this hope. ⁸Why do any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead? ⁹In fact, I myself was convinced that it was necessary to do many things in opposition to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰I actually did this in Jerusalem, and I locked up many of the saints in prison, since I had received authority for that from the chief priests. When they were put to death, I was in agreement against them. ¹¹In all the synagogues I often punished them and tried to make them blaspheme. Since I was terribly enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

¹²"I was traveling to Damascus under these circumstances with authority and a commission from the chief priests. ¹³King Agrippa, while on the road at midday, I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun, shining around me and those traveling with me. ¹⁴We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice speaking to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

¹⁵"I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. ¹⁶But get up and stand on your feet. For I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. ¹⁷I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

¹⁹"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. ²⁰Instead, I preached to those in Damascus first, and to those in Jerusalem and in all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance. ²¹For this reason the Jews

seized me in the temple and were trying to kill me. ²²To this very day, I have had help from God, and I stand and testify to both small and great, saying nothing other than what the prophets and Moses said would take place— ²³that the Messiah would suffer, and that, as the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles.”

²⁴As he was saying these things in his defense, Festus exclaimed in a loud voice, “You’re out of your mind, Paul! Too much study is driving you mad.”

²⁵But Paul replied, “I’m not out of my mind, most excellent Festus. On the contrary, I’m speaking words of truth and good judgment. ²⁶For the king knows about these matters, and I can speak boldly to him. For I am convinced that none of these things has escaped his notice, since this was not done in a corner. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you believe.”

²⁸Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you going to persuade me to become a Christian so easily?”

²⁹“I wish before God,” replied Paul, “that whether easily or with difficulty, not only you but all who listen to me today might become as I am—except for these chains.”

³⁰The king, the governor, Bernice, and those sitting with them got up, ³¹and when they had left they talked with each other and said, “This man is not doing anything to deserve death or imprisonment.”

³²Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

How did Paul describe his life before his encounter with Jesus Christ?

How was Paul saved? What happened? _____

What did Jesus appoint Paul to do? _____

How was Paul’s life different after his encounter with Jesus? _____

What was Festus’ response to Paul’s testimony? _____

What was Agrippa’s response? _____

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from Alexander MacLaren's *Expositions of Holy Scriptures*. **Alexander MacLaren** (1826-1910) was a Baptist pastor in Manchester, England whose sermons were known for their "profundity of thought, logical arrangement, eloquence of appeal, and power over the human heart."

What is it that Paul committed to God [2 Tim. 1:12]? The answer to that is, himself, in all his complex being, with all his fears and anxieties, during the whole duration of his existence. He has done what another Apostle exhorts us to do, committed the keeping of his soul to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. Now that was a long past act at the time when Paul wrote this letter. And here he looks back upon life, and sees that all the experiences through which he has passed have but confirmed the faith which he rested in God before the experiences and that, with the axe and the block almost in sight, he is neither ashamed of his faith, nor dissatisfied with what it has brought him...

I. Notice 'the deposit' of faith.

A man has some rich treasure. He is afraid of losing it, he is doubtful of his own power to keep it; he looks about for some reliable person and trusted hands, and he deposits it there. That is about as good a description of what the New Testament means by 'faith' as you will get anywhere.

You and I have one treasure, whatever else we may have or not have; and that is ourselves. The most precious of our possessions is our own individual being.

We cannot 'keep' that. There are dangers all round us. We are like men travelling in a land full of pickpockets and highwaymen, laden with gold and precious stones. On every side there are enemies that seek to rob us of that which is our true treasure—our own souls. We cannot keep ourselves. Slippery paths and weak feet go ill together. The tow in our hearts, and the fiery sparks of temptation that

are flying all round about us, are sure to come together and make a blaze. We shall certainly come to ruin if we seek to get through life, to do its work, to face its difficulties, to cope with its struggles, to master its temptations, in our own poor, puny strength. So we must look for trusty hands and lodge our treasure there, where it is safe.

And how am I to do that? By humble dependence upon God. Our faith's feeble fingers must grasp onto the person and work of His dear Son who has died on the Cross for us all.

*Myself I cannot save,
Myself I cannot keep,
But strength in Thee I surely have,
Whose eyelids never sleep.*

And if thus, hanging upon Him, you believe that when you fling yourself into necessary temptations, and cope with appointed heavy tasks, and receive on your hearts the full blow of sent sorrows, He will strengthen you and hold you up; and if with all your hearts you bow, and you say, "Lord! keeping me is Thy business far more than mine; into Thy hands I commit my spirit," be sure that your trust will not be disappointed...

The question for us all is, have we the right to say *I have committed myself to Him?*

If you have not, you have missed the blessedness of life, and will never carry your treasure safely through the hordes of robbers that lurk upon the road, but some day you will be found there, lying beggared, bleeding, bruised. May it be that you are found there before the end, by the merciful Samaritan who alone can bind up and lead to safety.

II. Now note the serenity of faith.

What a grand picture of a peaceful heart comes out of this letter, and its companion one to the same friend, written a little before, but under substantially the same circumstances! And what a picture it is! He is *Paul the aged*; old, if not in years—and he probably was not an old man by years—yet old in thought and care and hardships and toils.

He is a prisoner, and the compulsory cessation of activity, when so much was to be done, might well have fretted a less eager spirit than that which burned in his puny frame. He is alone, but for one faithful friend; and the bitterness of his solitude is increased by the apostasy of some and the negligence of many. He is poor and thinly clad; and he wants his one cloak “before winter.” He has been before the emperor once, and though he “was delivered from the mouth of the lion” then, he knows that he cannot expect to put his head into the lion’s mouth a second time with impunity, and that his course is run.

He has made but a poor thing of life; he has disappointed all the hopes that were formed of the brilliant young disciple of Gamaliel, who was bidding fair to be the hammer of these heretical Christians. And yet there is no tremor nor despondency in this, his swansong. It goes up in a clear burst of joyful music. It is the same spirit as that of the Psalmist: *There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.* And serenely he sits there, in the midst of dangers, disappointments, difficulties, and struggles, with a life behind him stuffed full of thorns and hard work and many a care, and close before him the martyr’s death, yet he says, with a flash of legitimate pride, “I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have trusted, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

My friend, you must have Paul’s faith if you are to have Paul’s serenity. A quiet committal of yourself to God, in all the ways in which I have already described that committal as carried out, is the only thing which will give us quiet hearts, amidst the dangers and disappointments and difficulties and conflicts which we have all to encounter in this world. That trust in Him will bring, in the measure of its depth and constancy, a proportionately deep and constant calm in our hearts.

Trust is always quiet. When I can say, “I am not the master of the caravan, and it is no part of my business to settle the route, I have no responsibility for providing food or watching or anything else. All my business is to obey orders, and to take the step nearest me and wait for the light,” then I can be very quiet whatever comes. And if I have cast my burden upon the Lord, I am not delivered from responsibility but I am delivered from harassment. I still have tasks and duties, but they are all different when I think of them as His appointing. I still have difficulties and dangers but I can meet them all with a new peacefulness if I say, “God is Master here, and I am in His hands, and He will do what He likes with me.” That is not the abnegation of will, it is the vitalizing of will. And no man is ever so strong as the man who feels “it is God’s business to take care of me; it is my business to do what He tells me.”

And then, further, note how this same quiet committal of himself into the loving hands of his Father—whom he had learned to know because he had learned to trust His Son—is not only the armor against all the dangers and difficulties in life, but is also the secret of serene gazing into the eyes of close death. Paul knew that his days were nearly at an end; he was under no illusions as to that, for you remember the grand burst of confidence, even grander than this of my text, in this same letter, with which he seems to greet the

coming of the end, and exclaims, with a kind of *Hallelujah!* in his tone, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. And there is nothing left for me now, now when the struggles are over and the heat and dust of the arena are behind me, but, panting and victorious, to receive the crown.”

That is to say, true confidence in God revealed in Jesus Christ is the armor, not only against the ills of life, but against the inevitable ill of death. It changes the whole aspect of the ‘shadow feared of man.’

III. Note, further, the experience of faith.

In the first clause of our text the Apostle says: *I know whom I have trusted.* And it is because he knows Him that therefore he is persuaded that ‘He is able to keep.’

How did Paul know Him? By experience. By the experience of his daily life. By all these years of trial and yet of blessedness through which he had passed; by all the revelations that had been made to his waiting heart as the consequence and as the reward of the humble faith that rested upon God. And so the whole past had confirmed to him the initial confidence which knit him to Jesus Christ.

If you want to know the worth of Christian faith, exercise it. We must trust, to begin with, before experience. But the faith that is built upon a lifetime is a far stronger thing than the tremulous faith that, out of darkness,

stretches a groping hand, and for the first time lays hold upon God’s outstretched hand. We hope then, we tremblingly trust, we believe on the authority of His word. But after years have passed, we can say, “We have heard Him ourselves, and we know that this is the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

IV. Lastly, note here the goal of faith.

Against that day. The Apostle has many allusions to that day in this final letter. It was evidently, as was natural under the circumstances, much in his mind. And the tone of the allusions is remarkable. Remember what Paul believed that day was—a day when all men would stand before the judgment bar of an omniscient and all-righteous Divine Judge to receive “the deeds done in the body.” A solemn thought and a firm conviction, and a profound impression as to that day, were in his mind. And in the face of all this, he says, “I know that He will keep this poor soul of mine against that day.”

How? Why? Because, in patient trust, he had put his soul into God’s hands, and a lifetime had taught him that his trust was not in vain.

If you want the same peace in life, the same victory in death, the same boldness in the Day of Judgment, oh, dear friend!—friend though unknown—let me plead with you to seek it where Paul found it, and where you will find it, in simple faith on God manifest in His Son.

What thought from Alexander MacLaren’s words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE Application

Re-read 2 Timothy 1:8-12 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of 2 Timothy 1:8-12 to your life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of 2 Timothy 1:8-12? Why?

2 Timothy 1:8-12 is basically Paul's testimony of faith. He begins by emphasizing the work of God and Jesus Christ in our salvation.

- He saved us...not according to our works but according to His work.
- He called us with a holy calling...according to His own purpose and grace.
- He conquered death and brought eternal life through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In other words, our salvation is totally a work of God. It is something that He has planned from all eternity and that was made manifest through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Paul's response to Christ's work was to put His full trust in Him—*I know whom I have believed!*

Do you have a testimony like Paul's testimony?

- I know that salvation is totally God's work and not my own. Yes No
- I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sin and rose from the dead. Yes No
- I have trusted in Christ for eternal life and for my future resurrection. Yes No
- I am persuaded that my salvation is totally secure in Christ. Yes No

Because of Paul's salvation in Jesus Christ and his confidence in God's eternal plan, Paul can also say that he is willing to suffer for Christ as he fulfills his calling. *Can you say the same?*

- I believe that God's sovereign plan stretches from eternity to eternity. Yes No
- I know that God has created me and appointed me for His purpose. Yes No
- I am willing to trust God's goodness and plan even in suffering. Yes No

Reflect on your own personal testimony. Use the following questions to help you write your own testimony of faith in Jesus Christ.

What was your life like before you came to know Jesus Christ as your Savior?

How did you come to faith in Jesus Christ? (e.g., How did God get your attention? When did you first hear the gospel? Who shared it with you? What verses did you hear? How did you respond?)

How has your life changed since trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior?

What is a Bible verse or Bible promise that has meant the most to you in your Christian life?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

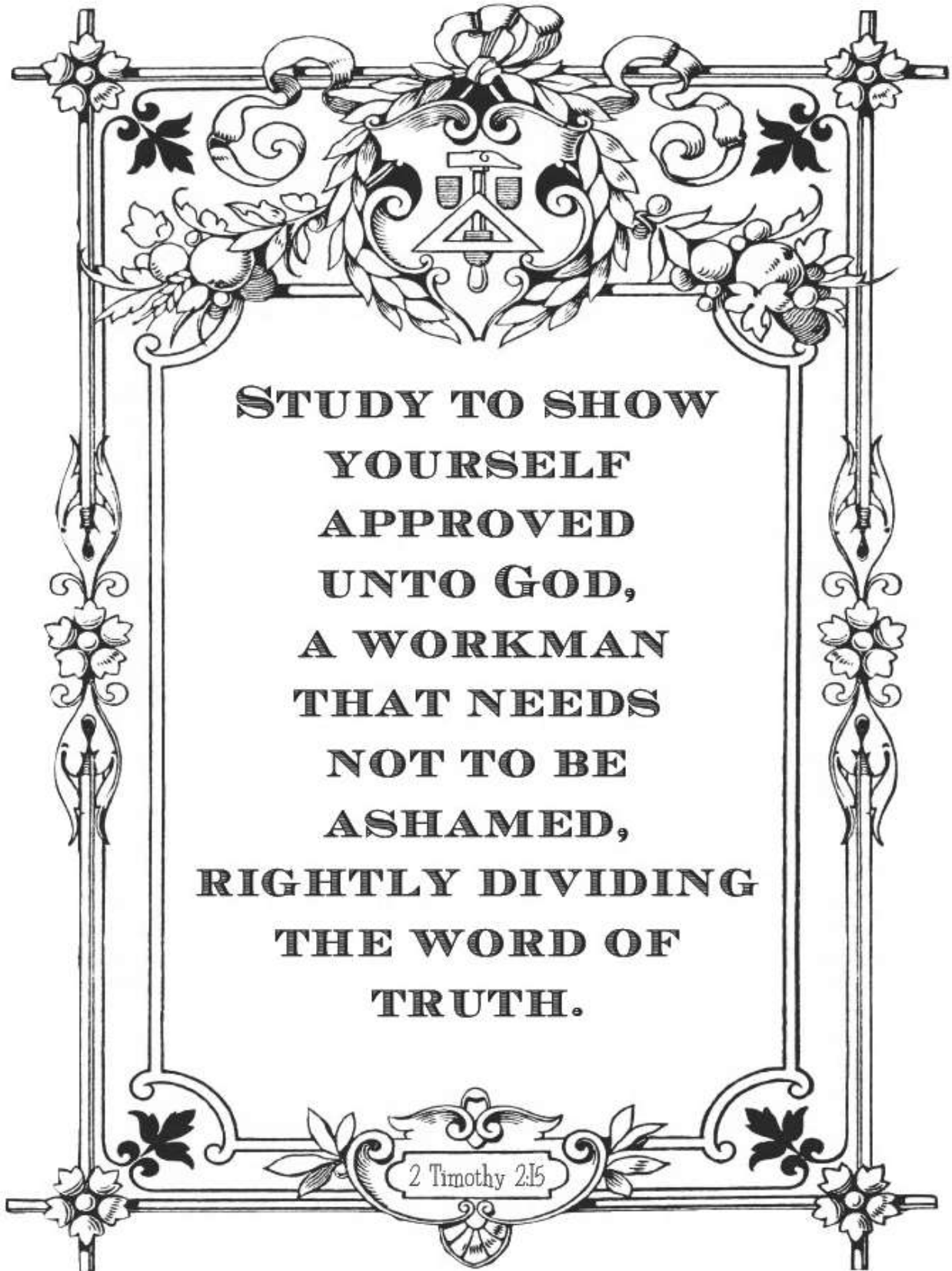
The goal is not to get through all the questions but to spark good discussion around the truth of 2 Timothy 1:8-12. Use the questions below to interact together with what you learned.

- What stands out to you about Paul's testimony in this passage? Why?
- What has God done for our salvation? What is to be our response?
- Take three minutes each to share your testimony with each other. Use the questions below to help guide your thoughts. Keep it concise so that everyone has a chance to share 😊.
 - What was your life like before Christ? (e.g., your religious background, your initial thoughts about God, your struggles or fears, etc.)
 - How did you come to know Christ as Savior? (e.g., when did you first hear the gospel, who shared with you, what was your response, etc.)
 - What has changed in your life since trusting Christ? (e.g., how have you grown in your life, what is different about you, what blessings have you experienced, what challenges or suffering have you experienced, etc.)
- What is a promise of God's Word that means the most to you right now?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Alexander MacLaren? If so, what?
- Take time to pray for one another.

*The greatest good suffering can do for me is to increase my capacity for God.
Real satisfaction comes not in understanding God's motives, but in understanding His character,
in trusting in His promises, and in leaning on Him and resting in Him as the Sovereign
who knows what He is doing and does all things well.*
Joni Eareckson Tada

*Every adversity that comes across our path, whether large or small,
is intended to help us grow in some way.
If it were not beneficial, God would not allow it or send it.*

Jerry Bridges



**STUDY TO SHOW
YOURSELF
APPROVED
UNTO GOD,
A WORKMAN
THAT NEEDS
NOT TO BE
ASHAMED,
RIGHTLY DIVIDING
THE WORD OF
TRUTH.**

2 Timothy 2:15

© 2016 by Jennifer Flanders. For more free printables, please visit www.flandersfamily.info

BE A SOLDIER—Stand Firm in the Faith!
2 Timothy 1:13-18

DAY ONE
Observation

In the face of suffering and persecution, it is easy to compromise and to turn away from God’s truth. Paul urges Timothy not to do this but to hold fast to the teachings that had been passed down to him.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read 2 Timothy 1:13-18. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

¹³ What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

¹⁵ You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.

¹⁶ May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. ¹⁷ On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. ¹⁸ May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus. (NIV)

What verse or thought stands out to you in this passage? Why?

What two main commands does Paul give to Timothy in 1:13-14?

What did Phygelus and Hermogenes do in the face of Paul’s imprisonment (1:15)?

What did Onesiphorus do in the face of Paul’s imprisonment (1:16-18)?

**DAY TWO
Meditation**

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read 2 Timothy 1:13-14 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*Follow the pattern of the sound teachings you have heard from me,
with trust and the love which is yours in the Messiah Jesus.*

*Keep safe the great treasure that has been entrusted to you,
with the help of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us. (CJB)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type “2 Timothy 1” into the “Search the Bible” box. Click on 2 Timothy 1:13 to bring up the verse in the Greek. Find the word “sound” and click on the Strong’s number (G5198) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for “sound”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*.)

What English word comes from this Greek word? _____

Next click on 2 Timothy 1:14 and find the verb “committed unto thee” and click on the Strong’s number (G3872) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for “committed”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially the Outline of Biblical Usage.)

Paul only uses this word one other time in the NT, in his final words to Timothy in 1 Timothy.

Read 1 Timothy 6:20-21. Mark key words or thoughts as you reflect on these verses.

*O Timothy, guard what has been **entrusted** to you, turning aside from godless and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”—which some, while professing, have gone astray from the faith.*

What do these verses teach you about the importance of solid, true, biblically-based doctrine?

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from Charles Spurgeon's sermon on 2 Timothy 1:13 delivered on May 11, 1856. **Charles Spurgeon** (1834-92) was known as the "prince of preachers" because of his powerful, illustrative sermons. He pastored New Park Street Chapel (later known as the Metropolitan Tabernacle) for 38 years.

MY INCESSANT anxiety for you, dearly beloved in the faith of Jesus Christ, is that I may be able, in the first place, to teach you what God's truth is; and then, trusting that I have to the best of my ability taught you what I believe to be God's most holy gospel, my next anxiety is, that you should *hold fast the form of sound words*; that whatever may occur in the future, should death snatch away your pastor, or should anything occur which might put you in perilous circumstances, so that you were tempted to embrace any system of heresy, you might every one of you stand as firm and as unmoved as rocks, and as strong as mountains, abiding in *the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*, which ye have heard, and which we have proclaimed unto you. If the gospel be worth your hearing, and if it be a true gospel, it is worth your holding, and our anxiety is, that you should be so established in the faith that you may *hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering, for he is faithful that has promised*.

We shall, perhaps, be asked what we regard as *a form of sound words* and what those doctrines are which are scriptural, which at the same time are healthful to the spirit and exalting to God. We answer, we believe a form of sound words must embrace, first of all, the doctrine of *God's being and nature*. We must have the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity. Any doctrine, which hath not the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as equal persons in one undivided essence, we cast aside as being unsound, for we are sure that such doctrines must be derogatory to God's glory; and if they be so it is enough for us. If any man despise either Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, we despise his teachings, and cannot even say to him, "I wish you God speed."

And next, we think that a doctrine that is sound *must have right views of salvation, as being of the Lord alone*; unless we find in it everlasting, unchanging love, working out a salvation for a people "who were not a people," but were made a people by special grace; unless we find discriminating love, others may say what they will we cannot consider such a creed to be a form of sound words, unless we discern redeeming mercy openly and boldly taught; unless we see final perseverance, and all those great and glorious truths which are the very bulwarks of our religion, others may embrace the doctrine as being a form of sound words; but we cannot, and we dare not.

We love the old system of our forefathers; we love the old truths of Scripture, not because they are old, but because we cannot consider anything to be truth which doth not hold the scriptural view of salvation. Paul himself, in this very chapter, gives us a form of sound words, where he speaks of *God who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*.

Now let me show you **THE NECESSITY OF HOLDING FAST THIS FORM OF SOUND WORD AND KEEPING IT FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, FOR THE CHURCH'S SAKE, FOR THE WORLD'S SAKE**.

Hold fast the form of sound words because it will tend very much to your growth. He who holds fast the truth will grow faster than he who is continually shifting from doctrine to doctrine. What a mighty number of spiritual weathercocks we have in this world now...

The glorious charity of the present day is such, that it believes lies to be as good as truth; and lies and truth have met together and kissed each other; and he that tells truth is called a bigot, and truth has ceased to be honorable in the world! Ah! beloved, we know better than to profess such unlimited, but false charity; the truth is, we know how to *hold fast the form of sounds words*, which has been given to us, because in this way we grow. Changeable people cannot grow much.

If you have a tree in your garden, plant it in one place today, and tomorrow place it somewhere else, how much bigger will it be in six months? It will be dead very likely; or if it does not die, it will not be very much grown; it will be marvelously stunted. So it is with some of you: you plant yourselves there; then you are persuaded that you are not quite right, and you go and plant yourself somewhere else. Why, there are men who are “anythingarians,” who go dodging about from one denomination to another, and cannot tell what they are. Our opinion is, of these people, that they believe nothing, are good for nothing, and anybody that wants them can have them. We do not consider men to be worth much, unless they have settled principles, and *hold fast the form of sound words*. You cannot grow unless you hold it fast.

How should I know any more of my faith in ten years’ time, if I allowed it to take ten forms in ten years? I should be but a smatterer in each, and know nothing thoroughly of one. But he that hath one faith, and knoweth it to be the faith of God, and holdeth it fast, how strong he becomes in his faith? Each wind or tempest doth but confirm him, as the fierce winds root the oaks, and make them strong, standing firmly in their places; but if I shift and change, I am none the better, but rather the worse. For your own peace sake then, and for your growth, *hold fast the form of sound words*.

In the first place, **every deviation from truth is a sin**. It is not simply a sin for me to do a wrong act, but it is a sin for me to believe a wrong doctrine. Lately our ministers have absolved us all from obeying God in our judgments; they have told us point blank, many of them, in their drawing-rooms, and some of them in the pulpit, that we shall never be asked in the day of judgment what we believed. We have been told that for our acts we shall be responsible, but for our faith we shall be irresponsible, or something very much like it; they have told us plainly, that the God who made us, although he has authority over our hands, our feet, our eyes and our lips, hath but little authority over our judgments; they have told us, that if we make ever such blunders in divinity, they are no sins, so long as we can live right lives. But is that true? No; the whole man is bound to serve God; and if God gives me a judgment, I am bound to employ that judgment in his service; and if that judgment receive an untruth, it has received stolen goods, and I have sinned as much as if I put forth my hand to take my neighbor's goods. There may be degrees in the sin. If it be a sin of ignorance, it is nevertheless a sin; but it is not so heinous as a sin of negligence, which I fear it is with many...

Remember, too, that error in doctrine is not only a sin, but a sin which has a great tendency to increase. When a man once in his life believes a wrong thing, it is marvelous how quickly he believes another wrong thing. Once open the door to a false doctrine, Satan says it is but a little one, but he only puts the little one in like the small end of the wedge, and he means to drive in a larger one; and he will say it is only a little more, and a little more, and a little more. The most damnable heretics who ever perverted the faith of God erred by littles and littles; those who have gone the widest from truth have only gone so by degrees...

And now, **for the good of the Church itself**, I want you all to *hold fast the form of sound words*. Would you wish to see the Church prosperous? Would you wish to see it peaceful? Then *hold fast the form of sound words*. What is the cause of divisions, schisms, quarrels, and bickerings amongst us? It is not the fault of the truth; it is the fault of the errors. There would have been peace in the Church, entire and perpetual peace, if there had been purity entire and perpetual purity in the Church. Going down to the dockyard on Friday, I was told by someone on board that during the late gale several of the ships there had their anchors rent up, and had gone dashing against the other ships, and had done considerable damage. Now, if their anchors had held fast and firm, no damage would have been done. Ask me the cause of the damage which has been done to our churches by the different denominations, and I tell you, it is because their anchors did not hold fast...

And now, I tell you of **THE GREAT HOLD-FASTS, WHEREBY YOU ARE TO HOLD FAST THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL**. I trust you will never give up that excellent puritanical habit of catechizing your children at home. Any father or mother who entirely gives up a child to the teaching of another has made a mistake. There is no teacher who wishes to absolve a parent from what he ought to do himself. He is an assistant, but he was never intended to be a substitute. Teach your children; bring up your old catechisms again, for they are a blessed means of instruction...

For the reason why many of you are weak in the faith is this, you did not receive instruction in your youth in the great things of the gospel of Christ. If you had, you would have been so grounded, and settled, and firm in the faith, that nothing could by any means have moved you. I beseech you, then, understand truth, and then you will be more likely to hold fast by it.

But the two great holdfasts are here given *faith and love*. If ye would hold the truth fast, put your faith in Jesus Christ, and have an ardent love towards him... Love Christ and love Christ's truth because it is Christ's truth, for Christ's sake, and if you love the truth you will not let it go. It is very hard to turn a man away from the truth he loves. "Oh!" says one, "I cannot argue with you about it, but I cannot give it up: I love it, and cannot live without it; it is a part of myself, woven into my very nature." That is the best thing to do, to believe the Word, to have so full a belief in it, that the enemy cannot pull you away...

And now, my brethren, stand fast, I beseech you. If my tears, if my bended knees, if my cries, yea, if my blood could prevail with you to lay to heart what I have said this morning, here should be tears, and cries, and blood too if I could but make you all hold fast in these evil, perilous times. Hold fast, ah! with the tenacity of the dying hand of the sinking mariner. *Hold fast*, I beseech you, *the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*.

What thought from Charles Spurgeon's sermon stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE Application

Re-read 2 Timothy 1:13-18 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of 2 Timothy 1:13-18 to your life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of 2 Timothy 1:13-18? Why?



What biblical truths are being attacked in today's culture?

In your own life, what biblical truths have been difficult for you to explain or defend with others? Why?

We can only stand firm in God's truth by knowing God's truth in His Word. There is no substitute for Bible study, Bible memorization, and a firm understanding of biblical theology and worldview.

Here are some suggestions for you to consider. (Mark the ones that you plan to do.)

- Continue to do this Bible study through 2 Timothy faithfully.
- Read through a good systematic theology book such as Wayne Grudem's *Bible Doctrine* or John MacArthur's *Essential Christian Doctrine*.
- Sign up for the daily Breakpoint commentary at breakpoint.org.
- Consider signing up for the Colson Fellows 10-month intensive course at CBC.
- Be part of a regular community group that can encourage you in your faith!

Onesiphorus was a huge encouragement to the apostle Paul at one of the lowest times in his life.

Who is someone who has been an "Onesiphorus" to you recently? Take time to thank them.

Who is someone that you can be an "Onesiphorus" to this week? Take time to encourage them!

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

The goal is not to get through all the questions but to spark good discussion around the truth of 2 Timothy 1:13-18. Use the questions below to interact together with what you learned.

- Describe a time in your life when you had to stand firm for something you believed in or when you had to remain faithful in the midst of a lot of opposition or challenges.
- What is the difference between standing firm and being obstinate?
- Why do you think Paul was so concerned about Timothy holding fast to biblical truth?
- What biblical truths are being attacked today? What biblical truths have you had to defend or try to explain to others who are not believers?
- What biblical truths do you think are essential for the Christian faith?
- Practically, what are some ways that we can hold fast to biblical truth?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Charles Spurgeon? If so, what?
- Take time to pray for one another.

It is the truth which is assailed in any age which tests our fidelity.

*It is to **confess** we are called, not merely to **profess**.*

If I profess, with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking,

I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christianity.

Where the battle rages the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battle-field besides is mere flight and disgrace to him if he flinches at that one point.

Elizabeth Rundle Charles

(based on various statements by Martin Luther)

BE A SOLDIER—Stay Faithful to Your Calling!
2 Timothy 2:1-7

DAY ONE
Observation

Paul continues his exhortation to Timothy to stand strong for Jesus Christ and for biblical truth—like a soldier in battle, like an athlete in competition, and like a farmer who works patiently for a future harvest.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read 2 Timothy 2:1-7. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

³ Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in the concerns of civilian life; he seeks to please the commanding officer. ⁵ Also, if anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶ The hardworking farmer ought to be the first to get a share of the crops.

⁷ Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. (CSB)

What verse or thought stands out to you in this passage? Why?

Complete the following sentences from this passage:

Be _____ in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

What you have heard from me... commit to _____ men.

Share in suffering as a good _____ of Christ Jesus.

An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the _____.

The _____ farmer ought to be first to partake of the crops.

What do you think it means to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”? Typically, we would think it would say be strong in the truth of Christ or the power of Christ.

2 Timothy 2:2 is a summary of how the Christian faith is passed from one generation to the next. Circle the verbs used in this verse. Notice that Paul gives a past, a present, and a future action.

What is the past action? _____

What is the present action? _____

What is the future action? _____

Paul uses three analogies—soldier, athlete, and farmer—to convey his exhortation to Timothy.

Beside each picture below, write down what this analogy teaches you about the Christian life.



**DAY TWO
Meditation**

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read 2 Timothy 2:1-4 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,
entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

*Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life,
so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. (NASB)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "2 Timothy 2" into the "Search the Bible" box. Click on 2 Timothy 2:1 to bring up the verse in the Greek. Find the word "strong" and click on the Strong's number (G1742) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for "strong"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine's Expository Dictionary*.)

Read the following verses which use this Greek word. Mark key words and phrases as you read.

*But Saul **kept increasing in strength** and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ. (Acts 9:22)*

*[Abraham] did not waver in unbelief at God's promise but **was strengthened** in his faith and gave glory to God, because he was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to do. (Romans 4:20-21)*

*Finally, **be strengthened** in the Lord and in the strength of his power. (Ephesians 6:10)*

*I can do all things through Christ who **strengthens** me. (Philippians 4:13)*

*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who **has enabled** me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. (1 Timothy 1:12)*

*But the Lord stood with me and **strengthened** me, so that I might fully preach the word and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. (2 Timothy 4:17)*

*What more can I say? Time is too short for me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, **gained strength** in weakness, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight. (Hebrews 11:32-34)*

What do you learn about true strength from these verses? _____

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from **Matthew Henry's *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments***. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) was a pastor, speaker, and author from Chester, England. He is best known for his exhaustive, six-volume, verse-by-verse commentary on the Scriptures. Charles Spurgeon stated that, "Every minister ought to read it entirely and carefully through once at least."

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

Here Paul encourages Timothy to constancy and perseverance in his work: *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, v. 1.

Those who have work to do for God must stir up themselves to do it, and strengthen themselves for it. Being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus may be understood in opposition to our being strong in our own strength: "Be strong, not confiding in thy own sufficiency, but in the grace that is in Jesus Christ." Compare Eph. 6:10, *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*.

When Peter promised rather to die for Christ than to deny him he was strong in his own strength; had he been strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, he would have kept his standing better. Observe,

- There is grace in Christ Jesus; for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, Jn. 1:17. There is grace enough in him for all of us.
- We must be strong in this grace; not in ourselves, in our own strength, or in the grace we have already received, but in the grace that is in him...
- As a father exhorts his son, so Paul exhorts Timothy, with great tenderness and affection: *Therefore, my son, be strong*.

I. Timothy must count upon sufferings, even unto blood, and therefore he must train up others to succeed him in the ministry of the gospel, v. 2.

He must instruct others, and train them up for the ministry, and so commit to them the things which he had heard; and he must also ordain them to the ministry, lodge the gospel as a trust in their hands, and so commit to them the things which he had heard.

Two things he must have an eye to in ordaining ministers—Their integrity ("commit them to *faithful men*, who will sincerely aim at the glory of God, the honor of Christ, the welfare of souls, and the advancement of the kingdom of the Redeemer among men"), and also their ministerial ability. They must not only be knowing themselves, but be able to teach others also, and be apt to teach.

- The things Timothy was to commit to others—what he had heard of the apostle among many witnesses; he must not deliver anything besides, and what Paul delivered to him and others he had received of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- He was to commit them as a trust, as a sacred deposit, which they were to keep, and to transmit pure and uncorrupted unto others.
- Those to whom he was to commit these things must be faithful, that is, trusty men, who were skillful to teach others.
- Though men were both faithful and able to teach others, yet these things must be committed to them by Timothy, a minister, a man in office; for none must intrude themselves into the ministry, but must have these things committed to them by those already in that office.

II. He must endure hardships, v. 3.

All Christians, but especially ministers, *are soldiers of Jesus Christ*; they fight under his banner, in his cause, and against his enemies, for he is the captain of our salvation, Heb. 2:10. The soldiers of Christ must approve themselves good soldiers, faithful to their captain, resolute in his cause, and must not give over fighting till *they are made more than conquerors, through him that loved them*, Rom. 8:37. Those who would approve themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ must endure hardship; that is, we must expect it and count upon it in this world, must endure and accustom ourselves to it, and bear it patiently when it comes, and not be moved by it from our integrity.

III. He must not entangle himself in the affairs of this world, v. 4.

A soldier, when he has enlisted, leaves his calling, and all the business of it, that he may attend his captain's orders. If we have given up ourselves to be Christ's soldiers, we must sit loose to this world; and though we must employ ourselves in the affairs of this life while we are here (we have something to do here), we must not *entangle ourselves* with those affairs, so as by them to be diverted and drawn aside from our duty to God and the great concerns of our faith...

IV. He must see to it that in carrying on the spiritual warfare he went by rule, that he observed the laws of war, v. 5.

He is not crowned, except he strive lawfully. We are striving for mastery, to get the mastery of our lusts and corruptions, to excel in that which is good, but we cannot expect the prize unless we observe the laws. In doing that which is good we must take care that we do it in a right manner, that our good may not be evil spoken of.

V. He must be willing to wait for a recompense, v. 6.

The farmer that labors must be first partaker of the fruits. If we would be partakers of the fruits, we must labor; if we would gain the prize, we must run the race. And, further, we must first labor as the farmer does, with diligence and patience, before we are partakers of the fruit; we must do the will of God before we receive the promises, for which reason we have need of patience, Heb. 10:36.

Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things, v. 7. Paul exhorts Timothy to consider those things about which he admonished him... He also prays for him: *The Lord give thee understanding in all things.* Observe—It is God who gives understanding. The most intelligent man needs more and more of this gift. If he who gave the revelation in the word does not give the understanding in the heart, we are nothing. Together with our prayers for others, that the Lord would give them understanding in all things, we must exhort and stir them up to consider what we say, for consideration is the way to understand, remember, and practice, what we hear or read.

What thought from Matthew Henry's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
Application

Re-read 2 Timothy 2:1-7 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of 2 Timothy 2:1-7 to your life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of 2 Timothy 2:1-7? Why?

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul describes four generations in the chain of discipleship.



Paul

Timothy

Faithful Men
Taught by Timothy

Those Taught by
the Faithful Men

This is how discipleship works—one person taking the things that they have learned and passing them on to others who will then pass them on to others...and so on. If this chain is broken, then there will arise a generation that does not know the Lord.

Who are some of the key people who have taught you or disciplined you in your faith?

Who is someone that you know (younger in faith or in age) whom you can encourage, teach, or disciple in their faith? What steps can you take to initiate a stronger relationship with them?

Everyone needs a Paul (someone who disciplines them) and everyone needs a Timothy (someone that they are discipling). If you are not a part of this process, then pray and seek someone to disciple you further in your faith so that you can be involved in discipling others.

*Like a soldier...*make discipleship a priority in your life.

*Like an athlete...*don't get disqualified by losing your testimony through sin.

*Like a farmer...*be patient and don't get discouraged if the fruit is not immediate.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

The goal is not to get through all the questions but to spark good discussion around the truth of 2 Timothy 2:1-7. Use the questions below to interact together with what you learned.

- Who was the person who helped you grow in your faith when you first became a Christian? In what ways did they disciple you or serve as an example to you?
- What does it mean to *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*?
- Why is 2 Timothy 2:2 so important? How can you be involved more in this process?
- What do you learn from each of three analogies that Paul uses in this passage—soldier, athlete, and farmer?
- Which of the three analogies impacts you the most? Why?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Matthew Henry? If so, what?
- Take time to pray for one another.

*We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organizations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel.
This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organization.
God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else.
Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men.*

E.M. Bounds (1835-1913)

*Find someone who knows more than you and learn from that person.
And find someone who needs what you know and teach that person.
Every Christian is a student; every Christian is a teacher.*

Grady Jolly

BE A SOLDIER—Stay Focused on Your Savior!
2 Timothy 2:8-13

DAY ONE
Observation

In encouraging Timothy to be strong like a soldier, Paul points him to the one thing that is absolutely necessary—staying focused on Jesus Christ!

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read 2 Timothy 2:8-13. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel, ⁹ for which I endure hardship even to chains as a criminal. But the word of God has not been chained. ¹⁰ For this reason I endure all things for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. ¹¹ It is a trustworthy saying:

For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;
¹² If we endure, we will also reign with Him;
If we will deny Him, He also will deny us;
¹³ If we are faithless, He remains faithful,
for He cannot deny Himself. (LSB)

What do you learn about Jesus Christ from this passage?

What do you learn about the Word of God from this passage?

What do you learn about Paul from this passage?

What do you learn about us as believers from this passage?

DAY TWO
Meditation

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read 2 Timothy 2:11-13 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

Here is a trustworthy saying:

*If we died with Him, we will also live with Him.
If we endure, we will also reign with Him.
If we disown Him, He will also disown us.
If we are faithless, He remains faithful,
for He cannot disown Himself. (NIV)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "2 Timothy 2" into the "Search the Bible" box. Click on 2 Timothy 2:8 to bring up the verse in the Greek. Find the word "remember" and click on the Strong's number (G3421) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for "remember"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially the Outline of Biblical Usage.)

Going back to the verse in Greek, look at the "Parsing" of this verb. Notice that it is a **present tense** imperative. In other words, this is not a one-time action. It is a continuous, ongoing action.

Remembering is key to the Christian life. What we focus on...what our mind chooses to dwell on... inevitably shapes who we are. **Read the following verses which use this word.** As you read these verses, underline or circle the things that we are to remember or focus on in our daily walk.

*Some trust in chariots, and some in horses;
But we will **remember** the name of the Lord our God. (Psalm 20:7)*

*O my God, my soul is cast down within me;
Therefore I will **remember** You from the land of the Jordan,
And from the heights of Hermon, from the Hill Mizar. (Psalm 42:6)*

*I will **remember** the works of the Lord;
Surely I will **remember** Your wonders of old. (Psalm 77:11)*

*Seek the Lord and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth. (Psalm 105:4-5)*

*So **remember** your Creator in the days of your youth: Before the days of adversity come, and the years approach when you will say, "I have no delight in them." (Ecclesiastes 12:1)*

*I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And **remember** the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)*

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in **remembrance** of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in **remembrance** of Me." (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

Therefore, **remember** that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:11-13)

Remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)

Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love. **Remember** therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. (Revelation 2:4-5)

Write down the things that we are to remember from these verses.

Next find the word "deny" in 2 Timothy 2:12 and click on the Strong's number (G720) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for "deny"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note IV. in Outline of Biblical Usage and "refuse" definition in *Vine's*.)

Read the verses in the Concordance Results that use this word. This word is used to describe Peter's verbal denial of the Lord (John 18:25, 27) as well as the denial of the Lord by false teachers and those who reject His identity and saving grace (2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 1:16; 1 Jn. 2:22-23; Jude 4). Thus, there is a distinction between denying Him in our weakness and faithlessness (like Peter in a moment of crisis) and denying Him in one's heart (refusing to trust in Him for one's salvation).

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from William Barclay's *Daily Study Bible*. **William Barclay** (1907-78) was a Scottish minister, Greek scholar, and theological professor at the University of Glasgow. Though liberal in some of his beliefs, his *Daily Study Bible* is considered a masterpiece of scholarly and biblical insight.

THE ESSENTIAL MEMORY (2:8)

Right from the beginning of this letter Paul has been trying to inspire Timothy to his task. He has reminded him of his own belief in him and of the godly parentage from which he has come; he has shown him the picture of the Christian soldier, the Christian athlete and the Christian toiler. And now he comes to the greatest appeal of all—*Remember Jesus Christ!* Falconer calls these words: “The heart of the Pauline gospel.” Even if every other appeal to Timothy's gallantry should fail, surely the memory of Jesus Christ cannot. In the words which follow, Paul is really urging Timothy to remember three things.

1. Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead. The tense of the Greek does not imply one definite act in time, but a continued state which lasts forever. Paul is not so much saying to Timothy: “Remember the actual resurrection of Jesus”; but rather: “Remember your risen and ever-present Lord.” Here is the great Christian inspiration. We do not depend on a memory, however great. We enjoy the power of a presence. When a Christian is summoned to a great task that he cannot but feel is beyond him, he must go to it in the certainty that he does not go alone, but that there is with him forever the presence and the power of his risen Lord. When fears threaten, when doubts assail, when inadequacy depresses, remember the presence of the risen Lord.

2. Remember Jesus Christ born of the seed of David. This is the other side. “Remember,” says Paul to Timothy, “the humanity of the Master.” We do not remember one who is only a spiritual presence; we remember one who trod this road, and lived this life, and

faced this struggle, and who therefore knows what we are going through. We have with us the presence not only of the glorified Christ, but also of the Christ who knew the desperate struggle of being a man and followed to the bitter end the will of God.

3. Remember the gospel, the good news. Even when the gospel demands much, even when it leads to an effort which seems to be beyond human ability and to a future which seems dark with every kind of threat, remember that it is good news, and remember that the world is waiting for it. However hard the task the gospel offers, that same gospel is the message of liberation from sin and victory over circumstances for us and for all...

THE CRIMINAL OF CHRIST (2:9a)

When Paul wrote these words he was in a Roman prison, bound by a chain. This was literally true, for all the time he was in prison night and day he would be chained to the arm of a Roman soldier. Rome took no risks that her prisoners should escape.

Paul was in prison on the charge of being a criminal. It seems strange that even a hostile government should be able to regard a Christian, and especially Paul, as a criminal...

The first persecution of the Christians was intimately connected with one of the greatest disasters which ever befell the city of Rome. On 19 July AD 64, the great fire broke out. It burned for six days and seven nights and devastated the city. The most sacred shrines and the most famous buildings perished in the flames. But worse—the homes of the common people were destroyed. By far the

greater part of the population lived in great tenements built largely of wood and they went up like tinder. People were killed and injured; they lost their nearest and dearest; they were left homeless and destitute. The population of Rome was reduced to what someone has called “a vast brotherhood of hopeless wretchedness.”

It was believed that Nero, the emperor, himself was responsible for the fire. It was said that he had watched the fire from the Tower of Maecenas and declared himself charmed with “the flower and loveliness of the flames.” It was said that when the fire showed signs of dying down men were seen rekindling it with burning brands, and that these men were the servants of Nero. Nero had a passion for building, and it was said that he had deliberately fired the city so that from the ruins he might build a new and nobler Rome. Whether the story was true or not—the chances are that it was—one thing was certain. Nothing would kill the rumor. The destitute citizens of Rome were sure that Nero had been responsible.

There was only one thing for the Roman government to do; they must find a scapegoat. And a scapegoat was found. Let Tacitus, the Roman historian, tell how it was done:

But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace (*Annals*, 15:44).

Obviously slanders were already circulating regarding the Christians...and the hated Christians were saddled with the blame for the disastrous fire of Rome. It was from that

event that the first great persecution sprang. Paul was a Christian. Moreover, he was the great leader of the Christians. And it may well be that part of the charge against Paul was that he was one of those responsible for the fire of Rome and the resulting misery of the populace.

So, then, Paul was in prison as a criminal, a political prisoner, member of an illegal association and leader of that hated sect of incendiaries, on whom Nero had fastened the blame for the destruction of Rome. It can easily be seen how helpless Paul was in face of charges like that.

FREE YET IN FETTERS (2:9b-10)

Even though he was in prison on charges which made release impossible, Paul was not dismayed and was very far from despair. He had two great uplifting thoughts.

1. He was certain that, though he might be bound, nothing could bind the word of God. ...You can exile a man, but you cannot exile the truth. You can imprison a preacher, but you cannot imprison the word he preaches. The message is always greater than the man; the truth is always mightier than the bearer. Paul was quite certain that the Roman government could never find a prison which could contain the word of God. And it is one of the facts of history that if human effort could have obliterated Christianity, it would have perished long ago; but men cannot kill that which is immortal.

2. Paul was certain that what he was going through would in the end be a help to other people. His suffering was not pointless and profitless. The blood of the martyrs has ever been the seed of the Church; and the lighting of the pyre where Christians were burned has always been the lighting of a fire which could never be put out. When anyone has to suffer

for his Christianity, let him remember that his suffering makes the road easier for someone else who is still to come. In suffering we bear our own small portion of the weight of the Cross of Christ and do our own small part in the bringing of God's salvation to men.

THE SONG OF THE MARTYR (2:11-13)

This is a peculiarly precious passage because in it is enshrined one of the first hymns of the Christian Church. In the days of persecution the Christian Church put its faith into song. It may be that this is only a fragment of a longer hymn. Polycarp (5:2) seems to give us a little more of it, when he writes:

If we please Christ in the present world, we shall inherit the world to come; as he has promised to raise us from the dead...

If we die with him, we shall also live with him. It is the thought of martyrdom that is in Paul's mind. Luther, in a great phrase, said: *Ecclesia haeres crucis est*, "The Church is the heir of the Cross." The Christian inherits Christ's Cross, but he also inherits Christ's Resurrection. He is partner both in the shame and in the glory of his Lord.

The hymn goes on: *If we endure, we shall also reign with him.* It is he who endures to the end who will be saved. Without the Cross there cannot be the Crown.

Then comes the other side of the matter: *If we deny him, he too will deny us.*

That is what Jesus himself said: "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32-33). Jesus Christ cannot vouch in eternity for a man who has refused to have anything to do with him in time; but he is forever true to the man who, however much he has failed, has tried to be true to him.

These things are so because they are part of the very nature of God. A man may deny himself, but God cannot. "God is not man that he should lie, or a son of man that he should repent" (Numbers 23:19).

God will never fail the man who has tried to be true to him, but not even he can help the man who has refused to have anything to do with him.

What thought from William Barclay's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
Application

Re-read 2 Timothy 2:8-13 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of 2 Timothy 2:8-13 to your life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of 2 Timothy 2:8-13? Why?

Most religions focus on outward actions and rituals. The Christian faith focuses on the changing of the heart and the mind. Christianity is a relationship with Jesus Christ not a formalistic religion. Ultimately, God wants our hearts.

“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.” (Matthew 15:8; cf. Isaiah 29:13).

When Paul exhorts Timothy to “remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead and descended from David,” he is not telling him simply to know a doctrine, he is telling him to know Christ! The only way we will stand strong in our faith and resist the pull of sin is to have a greater affection and desire for Jesus Christ and to keep Him at the forefront of our thoughts.

Honestly take a look at your heart, what do you really want? What really motivates you?

What thoughts tend to dominate your mind during the day? What captures your attention?

What dominates your heart and your mind is not always easy to face. But, like David, we need to honestly ask God to search out our hearts and reveal what is going on inside (Ps. 139:23-24).

Remembering Jesus Christ is a present imperative action. It is fixing our eyes on Him (Heb. 12:2). It is beholding His glory (2 Cor. 3:18). It is gazing upon His beauty (Psalm 27:4).

Take a moment to reflect on the following names and attributes of Jesus Christ. Read each one. Contemplate who Jesus is. Behold Him. And allow your heart to be loved and encouraged.

I am always with you (Matt. 28:20).

I am your bridegroom, the One who loves you more than you can fathom (Eph. 3:19; 5:32).

I am the chief cornerstone, the Rock on whom you can rely (Ps. 118:22; Matt. 7:23-24).

I am your deliverer from sin and judgment (1 Th. 1:10).

I am your everlasting Father (Is. 9:6).

I am your faithful friend (Prov. 18:24; John 15:15).

I am the good shepherd who gives His life for you (John 10:11; Psalm 23).

I am the humble and gentle One (Matt. 11:29).

I am Immanuel, the God who is with you (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23).

I am the just One who will right every wrong (Is. 11:3-5).

I am the King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14; 19:16).

I am the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

I am your merciful and faithful High Priest (Heb. 2:17).

I will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5).

I am the overcomer of this world (John 16:33).

I am your Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6).

I am the quieter of your soul (Zeph. 3:17; Matt. 11:28).

I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25).

I am your Savior and Redeemer (1 Tim. 4:10; 1 Jn. 4:14).

I am the truth who will set you free (John 8:31-32).

I am united to you and you are united to Me (John 17:20-23).

I am the vine that sustains you and nourishes you (John 15:1)

I am your wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6).

I can do exceedingly, abundantly above all that you ask or think (Eph. 3:20-21).

I am Yahweh, the Eternal I AM (John 8:58).

I am the Alpha & Omega, the Beginning and End! (Rev. 22:13)

Which name or attribute of Jesus Christ do you need to remember today? Why?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

The goal is not to get through all the questions but to spark good discussion around the truth of 2 Timothy 2:8-13. Use the questions below to interact together with what you learned.

- Talk about a time in your life when you forgot something that was important. Why did you forget? What were the results of forgetting?
- What does it mean to “remember” Jesus Christ? What does this look like practically?
- What do you learn about Jesus Christ from this passage? About the apostle Paul? About the Word of God? About us as believers?
- 2 Timothy 2:11-13 was most likely a hymn in the early church. This was something that they sang in order to remember its message. What is the message of this song? How do you think it would have encouraged the believers in the early church facing persecution?
- What is a Christian song or hymn that strengthens you in your faith today?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of William Barclay? If so, what?
- Take time to pray for one another.

*O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free.*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*

Helen Lemmel (1863-1961)

BE A SERVANT—Serve Others in Love!
2 Timothy 2:14-26

DAY ONE
Observation

Paul encourages Timothy to be a soldier—to stand firm in his faith. But now he shifts gears to remind Timothy also to be a servant—to lead the local church through humility, purity, patience, gentleness, and love.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read 2 Timothy 2:14-26. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to fight about words. This is useless and leads to the ruin of those who listen. ¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.

¹⁶ Avoid irreverent and empty speech, since those who engage in it will produce even more godlessness, ¹⁷ and their teaching will spread like gangrene. Hymenaeus and Philetus are among them. ¹⁸ They have departed from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and are ruining the faith of some.

¹⁹ Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, bearing this inscription: **The Lord knows those who are His**, and let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness.

²⁰ Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also those of wood and clay; some for honorable use and some for dishonorable. ²¹ So if anyone purifies himself from anything dishonorable, he will be a special instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

²² Flee from youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. ²³ But reject foolish and ignorant disputes, because you know that they breed quarrels.

²⁴ The Lord's servant must not quarrel, but must be gentle to everyone, able to teach, and patient, ²⁵ instructing his opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant them repentance leading them to the knowledge of the truth. ²⁶ Then they may come to their senses and escape the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (CSB)

What verse or thought stands out to you in this passage? Why?

In 2:14-26, Paul contrasts God’s Word with the words that often come out of people’s mouths. As a wise servant, Timothy needed to know how to respond. **Fill in the chart below.**

Vs.	Paul’s Command to Timothy	The Reason for the Command
14		
16-18		
23		

Instead of getting caught up in these kinds of quarrels and “word games,” Paul encourages Timothy to focus on what is important. **What does Paul tell Timothy to do in 2 Timothy 2:15?**

Write down three observations that you can make from 2 Timothy 2:22.

Write down five characteristics of a “servant of the Lord” in 2:24-26.

DAY TWO
Meditation

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read 2 Timothy 2:24-26 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome,
but be kind to all,
able to teach,
patient when wronged,
with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition,
if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,
and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil,
having been held captive by him to do his will. (NASB)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Paul uses a lot of unique Greek words and phrases in this passage. Let's look up three of them.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "2 Timothy 2" into the "Search the Bible" box. Click on 2 Timothy 2:14 to bring up the verse in the Greek. Find the phrase "strive about words" and click on the Strong's number (G3054) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the NT.

What is the Greek word for this phrase? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its etymology—what two words does it combine together? (See Root Word.)

Next click on 2 Timothy 2:15 and find the word "rightly dividing" and click on the Strong's number (G3718) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for "rightly dividing"? _____ (Use transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially the long explanation in *Vine's Expository Dictionary*.)

Next click on 2 Timothy 2:24 and find the word "patient" and click on the Strong's number (G420) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for "patient"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine's Expository Dictionary* and the Etymology.)

As we study Scripture, we need to walk through it carefully and prayerfully. We need to “cut it straight,” not taking verses out of context, misapplying it for our own interests, or coming up with our own individual interpretations. We are to handle God’s Word with humility and diligence. And we also need the instruction, correction, and encouragement from other believers in Christ.

Let’s walk through this passage slowly and take note of what it teaches.

Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.

What is Timothy to charge his local church not to do?

¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

What is Timothy (as pastor) to do instead?

¹⁶ But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

What is Timothy to avoid?

¹⁷ And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

What example does Paul use of a false teaching? And what is the danger of such a false teaching?

¹⁹ Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

BUT even though false teachers may affect the church, what truths does Paul confidently know?

²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

Paul uses the analogy of a “great house.” This analogy could refer to the visible church (all professing Christians) or to the world in general. In context, it seems to refer to the church.

What two types of vessels are in this great house?

²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

How does one become a “vessel for honor”?

²² Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

What must Timothy specifically do in order to continue to be a “vessel for honor” in God’s house?

²³ But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

What could get Timothy off track?

²⁴ And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition,

What must Timothy do as a pastor in order to help those in his church to become vessels for honor?

if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

What is the goal of Timothy’s patient, gentle teaching of those who oppose him?

There are many interpretive challenges in almost every passage of Scripture. But working through it slowly and prayerfully, and in context, is the best way to handle the Word of God accurately.

In this passage, Paul seems to be preparing Timothy to know how to handle several different types of people in the local church.

- **Word Fighters.** People who like to argue over minor details of doctrine.
- **False Teachers.** People who actually begin to teach things that are damaging and detrimental to other believers in the church.
- **Common Vessels.** People who are apathetic in their faith, constantly swayed by every wind of doctrine, or caught up in some kind of besetting sin.
- **Deceived Critics.** People who get caught up in some kind of deceptive doctrine or mindset that causes them to be difficult to deal with in the local church.

Paul tells Timothy that only God knows who is truly a believer in the church and who is playing a game. BUT a true believer should have a desire to grow in the Lord and depart from iniquity. As the pastor, Timothy has to be ready both to confront false teachers and to rescue those deceived.

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from John Calvin's *Commentary on the Bible*. **John Calvin** (1509-64) was a key figure in the Protestant Reformation. He was a pastor in Geneva, Switzerland and a theologian who shaped much of the theology of the Protestant church. Though "Calvinism" can be controversial in the church today, there is no question that Calvin was a man who loved Christ and taught the Word of God.

14 Remind them of these things. The expression *these things* is highly emphatic. It means that the summary of the gospel which he gave, and the exhortations which he added to it, are of so great importance, that a good minister ought never to be weary of exhibiting them; for they are things that deserve to be continually handled, and that cannot be too frequently repeated. "They are things" (he says) "which I wish you not only to teach once, but to take great pains to impress on the hearts of men by frequent repetition." A good teacher ought to look at nothing else than edification, and to give his whole attention to that alone.

Solemnly charging them before the Lord, not to dispute about words. This Greek word (*λογομαχεῖν*) means to engage earnestly in contentious disputes, which are commonly produced by a foolish desire of being ingenious. Solemn charging before the Lord is intended to strike terror; and from this severity we learn how dangerous to the Church is that knowledge which leads to debates, that is, which disregards piety, and tends to ostentation; of this nature is the whole of speculative theology...

For no use. On two grounds "disputing about words" is condemned. It is of no advantage, and it is exceedingly hurtful, by disturbing weak minds...

Let us remark, first, that, when a manner of teaching does no good, for that single reason it is justly disapproved; for God does not wish to indulge our curiosity, but to instruct us in a useful manner. Away with all speculations, therefore, which produce no edification!

But the second is much worse, when questions are raised, which are not only unprofitable, but tend to the subversion of the hearers. I wish that this were attended to by those who are always armed for fighting with the tongue, and who, in every question are looking for grounds of quarreling, and who go so far as to lay snares around every word or syllable. But they are carried in a wrong direction by ambition, and sometimes by an almost fatal disease; which I have experienced in some. What the Apostle says about subverting is shown, every day, by actual observation, to be perfectly true; for it is natural, amidst disputes, to lose sight of the truth; and Satan avails himself of quarrels as a presence for disturbing weak persons, and overthrowing their faith.

When any person comes to the sermon, let it not be to hear something that tickles the ears, or that gives pleasure; but let it be to make progress in the fear of God, and in humility, and to excite to prayer, and to confirm him in patience. If we have heard an exhortation today, and if tomorrow it is repeated to us, let us not think that this is superfluous, let us not be annoyed at it; for every person who carefully examines this subject will find it to be highly necessary for him to be reminded of the lesson which he had learned, that he may practice it well. If, therefore, God refreshes our memory with it, he has conferred on us a great favor. When it is said, "We have heard this before." Such things are said by those who wish to be fed with useless questions. But here the Holy Spirit desires that what is useful should be brought forward every day, because we have not sufficiently understood it, and because it must be put in practice.

15 Study to shew thyself to be approved by God. Since all disputes about doctrine arise from this source, that men are desirous to make a boast of ingenuity before the world, Paul here applies the best and most excellent remedy, when he commands Timothy to keep his eyes fixed on God; as if he had said; “Some aim at the applause of a crowded assembly, but do thou study to approve thyself and thy ministry to God.” And indeed there is nothing that tends more to check a foolish eagerness for display, than to reflect that we have to deal with God...

First, he bids them be not lazy disputants, but workmen. By this term he indirectly reproves the foolishness of those who so greatly torment themselves by doing nothing. Let us therefore be *workmen* in building the Church, and let us be employed in the work of God in such a manner that some fruit shall be seen then we shall have no cause to “blush;” for, although in debating we be not equal to talkative boasters, yet it will be enough that we excel them in the desire of edification, in industry, in courage, and in doctrine...

Dividing aright the word of truth. This is a beautiful metaphor, and one that skillfully expresses the chief design of teaching. “Since we ought to be satisfied with the word of God alone, what purpose is served by having sermons every day, or even the office of pastors? Has not every person an opportunity of reading the Bible?” But Paul assigns to teachers the duty of dividing or cutting, as if a father, in giving food to his children, were dividing the bread, by cutting it into small pieces...

By this term I understand, generally, an allotment of the word which is judicious, and which is well suited to the profit of the hearers. Some mutilate it, others tear it, others torture it, others break it in pieces, others, keeping by the outside, never come to the soul of doctrine. To all these faults he

contrasts “dividing aright,” that is, the manner of explaining which is adapted to edification; for that is the rule by which we must try all interpretation of Scripture.

16 But avoid profane and unmeaning noises for they will grow to greater ungodliness. That he may more effectually deter Timothy from that profane and noisy talkativeness, he states that it is a sort of labyrinth, or rather a deep whirlpool, from which they cannot go out, but into which men plunge themselves more and more.

17 And their word will eat as a gangrene... All physicians pronounce the nature of the disease to be such, that, if it be not very speedily counteracted, it spreads to the adjoining parts, and penetrates even to the bones, and does not cease to consume, till it has killed the man. Since, therefore, *gangrene* is immediately followed by mortification, which rapidly infects the rest of the members till it end in the universal destruction of the body; to this mortal contagion Paul elegantly compares false doctrines; for, if you once give entrance to them, they spread till they have completed the destruction of the Church. The contagion being so destructive, we must meet it early, and not wait till it has gathered strength by progress; for there will then be no time for rendering assistance. The dreadful extinction of the gospel among the Papists arose from this cause, that, through the ignorance or slothfulness of the pastors, corruptions prevailed long and without control, in consequence of which the purity of doctrine was gradually destroyed.

Of the number of whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus. He points out with the finger the plagues themselves, that all may be on their guard against them; for, if those persons who aim at the ruin of the whole Church are permitted by us to remain concealed, then to some extent we give them power to do injury.

It is true that we ought to conceal the faults of brethren, but only those faults the contagion of which is not widely spread. But where there is danger to many, our dissimulation is cruel, if we do not expose in proper time the hidden evil. And why? Is it proper, for the sake of sparing one individual, that a hundred or a thousand persons shall perish through my silence? Besides, Paul did not intend to convey this information to Timothy alone, but he intended to proclaim to all ages and to all nations the wickedness of the two men, in order to shut the door against their base and ruinous doctrine.

18 *Who, concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is already past.*

After having said that they had departed from *the truth*, he specifies their error, which consisted in this, that they gave out that *the resurrection was already past*. In doing this, they undoubtedly contrived a sort of allegorical resurrection, which has also been attempted in this age by some filthy dogs. By this trick Satan overthrows that fundamental article of our faith concerning the resurrection of the flesh... When we learn that, from the very beginning of the gospel, the faith of some was subverted, such an example ought to excite us to diligence, that we may seize an early opportunity of driving away from ourselves and others so dangerous a plague; for, in consequence of the strong inclination of men to vanity, there is no absurdity so monstrous that there shall not be some men who shall lend their ear to it.

19 *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth firm.*

We know too well, by experience, how much scandal is produced by the apostasy of those who at one time professed the same faith with ourselves. This is especially the case with those who were extensively known, and who had a more brilliant reputation than others; for, if any of the common people apostatize, we are not so deeply

affected by it. But they who in the ordinary opinion of men held a distinguished rank, having been formerly regarded as pillars, cannot fall in this manner, without involving others in the same ruin with themselves; at least, if their faith has no other support. This is the subject which Paul has now in hand; for he declares that there is no reason why believers should lose heart, although they see those persons fall, whom they were wont to reckon the strongest.

He makes use of this consolation, that the levity or treachery of men cannot hinder God from preserving his Church to the last. And first he reminds us of the election of God, which he metaphorically calls a foundation, expressing by this word the firm and enduring constancy of it. Yet all this tends to prove the certainty of our salvation, if we are of the elect of God. As if he had said, “The elect do not depend on changing events, but rest on a solid and immovable foundation; because their salvation is in the hand of God.”

The Lord knoweth who are his. This clause, together with the word seal, reminds us, that we must not judge, by our own opinion, whether the number of the elect is great or small; for what God hath sealed he wishes to be, in some respect, shut up from us. Besides, if it is the prerogative of God to know who are his, we need not wonder if a great number of them are often unknown to us, or even if we fall into mistakes in making the selection.

Let everyone that calleth on the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

As he formerly met the scandal by saying, “Let not the revolt of any man produce excessive alarm in believers;” so now, by holding out this example of hypocrites, he shews that we must not sport with God by a feigned profession of Christianity. As if he had said, “Since God thus punishes hypocrites by exposing their wickedness, let us learn to fear him with a

sincere conscience, lest anything of that kind should happen to us. Whoever, therefore, calls upon God, that is, professes to be, and wishes to be reckoned, one of the people of God, let him keep a distance from all iniquity.”

20 *In a great house.* He now goes farther, and demonstrates by a comparison, that when we see some who, for a time, made a show of distinguished piety and zeal, fall back shamefully, so far from being troubled on account of it, we ought rather to acknowledge that this arrangement is seemly and adapted to the providence of God. Who will find fault with a large house, in which there is abundance of every kind of furniture, and which accordingly contains not only those articles which are fitted for purposes of display, but likewise those which are of a meaner sort? This diversity is even ornamental, if, while the sideboard and the table glitter with gold and silver, the kitchen is furnished with vessels of wood and of earthenware. Why then should we wonder if God, the head of the family, so rich and so abundantly supplied with everything, has in this world, as in a large house, various kinds of men, as so many parts of furniture?

Commentators are not agreed, however, whether the *great house* means the Church alone, or the whole world. And, indeed, the context rather leads us to understand it as denoting the Church; for Paul is not now reasoning about strangers, but about God’s own family... There can be no doubt that Paul’s object is to show that we ought not to think it strange that bad men are mixed with the good...in the Church.

21 *If any man shall cleanse himself from these...* Beyond all controversy, we are called to holiness. But the question about the calling and duty of Christians is totally different from the question about their power or ability. We do not deny that it is demanded

from believers that they purify themselves; but elsewhere the Lord declares that this is their duty, while he promises by Ezekiel that *he will send clean waters, that we may be cleansed.* (Ezekiel 36:25). Wherefore we ought to supplicate the Lord to cleanse us, instead of vainly trying our strength in this matter without his assistance.

A vessel sanctified for honor means, set apart for honorable and magnificent purposes. In like manner, what is useful to the head of the family is put for that which is applied to agreeable purposes. He afterwards explains the metaphor, when he adds, that we must be *prepared for every good work.*

22 *Flee youthful desires.* This is an inference from what goes before; for, after mentioning useless questions, and having been led by this circumstance to censure Hymenaeus and Philetus, whose ambition and vain curiosity had led them away from the right faith, he again exhorts Timothy to keep at a distance from so dangerous a plague, and for this purpose he advises him to avoid *youthful desires.*

By this term he does not mean either a propensity to uncleanness, or any of those licentious courses or sinful lusts in which young men frequently indulge, but any impetuous passions to which the excessive temper of that age is prone. If some debate has arisen, young men more quickly grow angry, are more easily irritated, more frequently blunder through want of experience, and rush forward with greater confidence and rashness than men of riper age. With good reason, therefore, does Paul advise Timothy, being a young man, to be strictly on his guard against the vices of youth, which otherwise might easily drive him to useless disputes.

But follow righteousness. He recommends the opposite feelings, that they may restrain his mind from breaking out into any youthful

excesses; as if he had said, “These are the things to which thou oughtest to give thy whole attention, and thy whole exertions.” And first he mentions righteousness, that is, the right way of living; and afterwards he adds faith and love, in which it principally consists. Peace is closely connected with the present subject; for they who delight in the questions which he forbids must be contentious and fond of debating.

With all that call on the Lord. Here, by a figure of speech, in which a part is taken for the whole, *calling on God* is taken generally for worship, if it be not thought preferable to refer it to profession. But this is the chief part of the worship of God, and for that reason *calling on God* often signifies the whole of religion or the worship of God... He ought to pursue this in common with all the true worshippers of God...

23 *But avoid foolish and uninformative questions.* He calls them foolish, because they are uninformative; that is, they contribute nothing to godliness, whatever show of acuteness they may hold out. When we are wise in a useful manner, then alone are we truly wise. This ought to be carefully observed; for we see what foolish admiration the world entertains for silly trifles, and how eagerly it runs after them. That an ambition to please may not urge us to seek the favor of men by such display, let us always remember this remarkable testimony of Paul, that questions, which are held in high estimation, are nevertheless foolish, because they are unprofitable.

Knowing that they beget quarrels. Next, he expresses the evil which they commonly produce. And here he says nothing else than what we experience every day, that they give occasion for jangling and debates. And yet the greater part of men, after having received so many instructions, do not at all profit by them.

24 *But the servant of the Lord must not fight.* Paul’s argument is to this effect: “The servant of God must stand aloof from contentions; but foolish questions are contentions; therefore whoever desires to be a *servant of God*, ought to shun them.” And if superfluous questions ought to be avoided on this single ground, that it is unseemly for a servant of God to fight, how impudently do they act, who have the open effrontery of claiming applause for raising incessant controversies?

But gentle towards all, able to teach. When he bids the servant of Christ be “gentle,” he demands a virtue which is opposite to the disease of contentions. To the same purpose is what immediately follows, that he be able to teach... The better a man is qualified for teaching, the more earnestly does he keep aloof from quarrels and disputes.

Patient to the bad. The importunity of some men may sometimes produce either irritation or weariness; and for that reason he adds, “bearing with them,” at the same time pointing out the reason why it is necessary; namely, because a godly teacher ought even to try whether it be possible for him to bring back to the right path obstinate and rebellious persons, which cannot be done without the exercise of gentleness...

Those things are connected with each other, gentleness and skill in teaching. The reason is, if a man be fierce and inaccessible, it will never be possible for us to receive instruction from him. He who wishes to be a good teacher must conduct himself with civility, and must have some way of drawing those who come to him, so as to gain their affections; and that cannot be, unless he have that *gentleness* of which Paul speaks. Thus we see how he intended to confirm what he had briefly stated, that a man who is quarrelsome, and addicted to disputes and contentions, is in no degree a servant of God. And why? As

servants of God, must we not labor to gain poor ignorant persons? And that cannot be, unless we are mild, unless we hear patiently what they say, unless we bear with their weakness, until by little and little they are edified. If we have not that, it is like casting them off.

25 *If sometime God grant to them repentance.* This expression, “If sometime,” or “If perhaps,” points out the difficulty of the case, as being nearly desperate or beyond hope. Paul therefore means that even towards the most unworthy we must exercise meekness; and although at first there be no appearance of having gained advantage, still we must make the attempt. For the same reason he mentions that “God will grant it.” Since the conversion of a man is in the hand of God, who knows whether they who today appear to be unteachable shall be suddenly changed by the power of God into other men? Thus, whoever shall consider that repentance is the gift and work of God, will cherish more earnest hope, and, encouraged by this confidence, will bestow more toil and exertion for the instruction of rebels. We should view it thus, that our duty is, to be employed in sowing and watering, and, while we do this, we must look for the increase from God (1 Cor 3:6). Our labors and exertions are thus of no advantage in themselves; and yet, through the grace of God, they are not fruitless.

To the knowledge of the truth. We may learn from this what is the actual repentance of those who for a time were disobedient to

God; for Paul declares that it begins with “the knowledge of the truth.” By this he means that the understanding of man is blinded, so long as it stands out fiercely against God and his doctrine.

26 *And deliverance from the snare of the devil.* Illumination is followed by deliverance from the bondage of the devil; for unbelievers are so intoxicated by Satan, that, being asleep, they do not perceive their distresses. On the other hand, when the Lord shines upon us by the light of his truth, he wakens us out of that deadly sleep, breaks asunder the snares by which we were bound, and, having removed all obstacles, trains us to obedience to him.

By whom they are held captive. A truly shocking condition, when the devil has so great power over us, that he drags us, as captive slaves, here and there at his pleasure. Yet such is the condition of all those whom the pride of their heart draws away from subjection to God. And this tyrannical dominion of Satan we see plainly, every day, in the reprobate; for they would not rush with such fury and with brutal violence into every kind of base and disgraceful crimes, if they were not drawn by the unseen power of Satan... Yet a captivity of this nature does not excuse wicked men...for, although their being carried along so resistlessly to that which is evil proceeds from the dominion of Satan, yet they do nothing by constraint, but are inclined with their whole heart to that to which Satan drives them. The result is, that their captivity is voluntary.

What thought from John Calvin’s words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE Application

Re-read 2 Timothy 2:14-26 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of 2 Timothy 2:14-26 to your life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of 2 Timothy 2:14-26? Why?

Do you tend to be a “word fighter”? Yes No Sometimes

If you really want to know, then ask someone in your family or a close friend who knows you well...or perhaps someone who has been offended by you in the past.

Are you actively and consistently studying God’s Word? Yes No Sometimes

What things keep you from working hard at studying the Word of God?

Paul did not say that studying the Word of God would be easy. It takes diligence and hard work!

Do you tend to get caught up in debates, conspiracy theories, or novel teachings?

Yes No Sometimes

If you are finding yourself becoming increasingly angry, cynical, or argumentative, then take a step back and consider what (or whom) you are listening to on a regular basis.

Are you actively pursuing righteousness, faith, love, and peace with other believers in Christ?

Yes No Sometimes

Instead of getting caught up in arguments, pursue what makes for peace and builds up others.

Which quality of a servant of the Lord do you need to live more consistently in your life?

- A servant of the Lord is not quarrelsome.
- A servant of the Lord is gentle to all.
- A servant of the Lord is able to teach others.
- A servant of the Lord is patient, even when opposed by others.
- A servant of the Lord seeks to deliver others from Satan’s lies, with gentleness and love.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

The goal is not to get through all the questions but to spark good discussion around the truth of 2 Timothy 2:14-26. Use the questions below to interact together with what you learned.

- What is one of the first arguments that you can remember getting into as a child or teenager? What was the argument over? What were the results?
- Why do you think people have a tendency to be “word fighters” or to get into arguments over minor things or to run after novel teachings?
- As the pastor of the church at Ephesus, what challenges did Paul expect Timothy to face? What commands did Paul give to Timothy in the midst of these challenges?
- What things do you think people expect from their pastor? Are these expectations valid?
- Which quality of a servant of the Lord do you need to live more consistently in your life? How do you plan on doing this?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of John Calvin? If so, what?
- How can you encourage each other to be more accountable to study the Word of God?
- Pray for one another...and pray for your pastors!

In the end disputing about words seeks not the victory of truth but the victory of the speaker.

R. W. Ward

*Usually we think of methods of Bible intake as falling into four categories –
hearing the Word taught by our pastors and teachers (Jeremiah 3:15),
reading the Bible ourselves (Deuteronomy 17:19),
studying the Scriptures intently (Proverbs 2:1-5),
and memorizing key passages (Psalm 119:11).
All of these methods are needed for a balanced intake of the Word...
But we must do more than hear, read, study, or memorize Scripture.
We must also meditate on it (Joshua 1:8).*

Jerry Bridges

BE A STUDENT—Be Discerning of the World
2 Timothy 3:1-9

DAY ONE
Observation

Paul has encouraged Timothy to be a **soldier** and to be a **servant**. Now, he encourages him to be a **student**—to know what is going on in the world and to be committed to knowing and teaching the Word of God.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read 2 Timothy 3:1-9. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

But know this: Hard times will come in the last days. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, demeaning, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, ⁴traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these people.

⁶For among them are those who worm their way into households and deceive gullible women overwhelmed by sins and led astray by a variety of passions, ⁷always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

⁸Just as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth. They are men who are corrupt in mind and worthless in regard to the faith. ⁹But they will not make further progress, for their foolishness will be clear to all, as was the foolishness of Jannes and Jambres. (CSB)

What verse or thought stands out to you from this passage? Why?

What is Timothy to know for certain (3:1)? _____

List the 19 characteristics of people in the last days (3:2-5).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____

How is Timothy to respond to such people (3:5)? _____

Do you think Paul is encouraging Timothy to join a monastery? Yes No

If not, then what do you think Paul is warning Timothy about? (e.g., see 1 Corinthians 15:33)

What are the dangers of allowing people of this nature to have inroads into the local church?

DAY TWO Meditation

2 Timothy 3:1-5 is not necessarily a passage that is easy to meditate on. Yet it is vital to know that we should not be surprised by what we may see in the world. Difficult times will come. As followers of Jesus Christ, we will often face the opposition and hatred of the culture around us.

Read through this passage slowly and consider each characteristic that is listed. Circle or mark any characteristics of the world that you have particularly confronted in your own life. Write any thoughts or images that come into your mind as you read these characteristics.

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

For men will be lovers of self,

lovers of money,

boastful,

arrogant,

revilers,

disobedient to parents,

ungrateful,

unholy,

unloving,

irreconcilable,

malicious gossips,

without self-control,

brutal,

haters of good,

treacherous,

reckless,

conceited,

lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power.

Avoid such men as these. (NASB)

Take time to pray to the Lord that none of these characteristics would describe your own life. Also pray for anyone in your family or someone you know who is succumbing to our culture.

DAY THREE Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Paul lists nineteen characteristics of people in the last days. This “vice list” resembles several other vice lists in the NT (e.g., Romans 1:29-31; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; and Galatians 5:19-21).

The first characteristic—*lovers of themselves*—seems to set the tone for the rest of these sins. Indeed, many of these sins are related to self-centeredness and pride.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type “2 Timothy 3” into the “Search the Bible” box. Click on 2 Timothy 3:2 to bring up the verse in the Greek. Find the word “proud” and click on the Strong’s number (G5244) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for “proud”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine’s* and the Outline of Biblical Usage.)

Next find the word “highminded” in 2 Timothy 3:4 and click on the Strong’s number (G5187) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for “highminded”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine’s* and the Outline of Biblical Usage.)

Read through the following verses on pride. Mark key words or phrases as you read.

*In his **pride** the wicked man does not seek Him;
In all his thoughts there is no room for God. (Psalm 10:4)*

*Where there is strife, there is **pride**,
But wisdom is found in those who take advice. (Proverbs 13:10)*

***Pride** goes before destruction,
A haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18)*

*Do you see a person wise in their own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for them. (Proverbs 26:12)*

*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled,
and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Matt. 23:12; also Luke 14:11; 18:12)*

*Live in harmony with one another. Do not be **proud**, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. (Romans 12:16)*

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not **proud**. (1 Cor. 13:4)*

*But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says,
“God is opposed to the **proud**, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)*

*All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another,
because God resists the **proud** but gives grace to the humble. (1 Peter 5:5b)*

Write down what you learn about the characteristics and consequences of pride.

Scripture indicates that the first sin of Satan was pride (cf. Isaiah 14:12-15; 1 Tim. 3:6). This kind of self-centered focus tends to show up often in our words—how we speak about other people.

Find the word “false accusers” in 2 Timothy 3:3 and click on the Strong’s number (G1228) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for “false accusers”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

How is this word normally translated? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine’s* and the Outline of Biblical Usage.)

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from William Barclay's *Daily Study Bible*. **William Barclay** (1907-78) was a Scottish minister, Greek scholar, and theological professor at the University of Glasgow. Though liberal in many of his beliefs, his *Daily Study Bible* is considered a masterpiece of scholarly and biblical insight.

TIMES OF TERROR (3:1)

In the last days difficult times will set in... Difficult is the Greek word *chalepos*. It is the normal Greek word for difficult, but it has certain usages which explain its meaning here. It is used in Mt. 8:28 to describe the two Gergesene demoniacs who met Jesus among the tombs. They were violent and dangerous. There is the idea of menace and of danger in this word. In the last days there would come times which would menace the very existence of the Christian Church and of goodness itself, a kind of last tremendous assault of evil before its final defeat.

In the Jewish pictures of these last terrible times we get exactly the same kind of picture as we get here. There would come a kind of terrible flowering of evil, when the moral foundations seemed to be shaken.

QUALITIES OF GODLESSNESS (3:2-5)

Here is one of the most terrible pictures in the NT of what a godless world would be like, with the terrible qualities of godlessness set out in a ghastly series. Let us look at them one by one.

It is no accident that the first of these qualities will be a life that is centered in self. The adjective used is *philautos*, which means **self-loving**. Love of self is the basic sin from which all others flow. The moment a man makes his own will the center of life, divine and human relationships are destroyed, obedience to God and charity to men both become impossible. The essence of Christianity is not the enthronement but the obliteration of self.

Men would become **lovers of money**. We must remember that Timothy's work lay in Ephesus, perhaps the greatest market in the ancient world. In those days, trade tended to flow down river valleys; Ephesus was at the mouth of the River Cayster, and commanded the trade of one of the richest hinterlands in all Asia Minor. At Ephesus some of the greatest roads in the world met. Ephesus was called "The Treasure-House of the Ancient World"... Ephesus was the town of a prosperous, materialistic civilization; it was the kind of town where a man could so easily lose his soul.

There is peril when men assess prosperity by material things. It is to be remembered that a man may lose his soul far more easily in prosperity than in adversity; and he is on the way to losing his soul when he assesses the value of life by the number of things which he possesses.

In these terrible days, men would be **braggarts and arrogant**. In Greek writings these two words often went together; and they are both picturesque.

Braggart has an interesting derivation. It is the word *alazon*... which means a wandering about. Originally the *alazon* was a wandering quack. Plutarch uses the word to describe a quack doctor... We can still see this kind of man in fairs and market-places shouting the virtues of a patent medicine which will act like magic. Then the word went on to widen its meaning until it meant any braggart. Aristotle defined the *alazon* as "the man who pretends to creditable qualities that he does not possess, or possesses in a lesser degree than he makes out."

The world is full of these braggarts; the clever know-it-all's who deceive people into thinking that they are wise, the politicians who claim that their parties have a program which will bring in the Utopia and that they alone are born to be leaders of men, the people who crowd the advertisement columns with claims to give beauty, knowledge or health by their system, the people in the Church who have a kind of ostentatious goodness.

Closely allied with the braggart, but—as we shall see—even worse, is the man who is arrogant. The word is *huperephanos*. It is derived from two Greek words which mean to show oneself above. The man who has a kind of contempt for everyone except himself... He is the man whom God resists, for it is repeatedly said in Scripture, that God receives the humble but resists the man who is proud, *huperephanos* (Jm. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5).

The difference between the braggart and the man who is arrogant is this. The braggart is a swaggering creature, who tries to bluster his way into power and eminence. No one can possibly mistake him. But the sin of the man who is arrogant is in his heart. He might even seem to be humble; but in his secret heart there is contempt for everyone else. He nourishes an all-consuming, all-pervading pride; and in his heart there is a little altar where he bows down before himself.

These twin qualities of the braggart and the arrogant man inevitably result in **love of insult**. Pride always begets insult. It begets disregard of God, thinking that it does not need him and that it knows better than he. It begets a contempt of men which can issue in hurting actions and in wounding words. The Rabbis ranked high in the list of sins what they called the sin of insult. The insult which comes from anger is bad but it is forgivable, for it is launched in the heat of the moment; but the cold insult which comes from arrogant pride is an ugly thing.

Men will be **disobedient to their parents**. The ancient world set duty to parents very high. To strike a father was in Roman law as bad as murder; in the Jewish law honor for father and mother comes high in the list of the Ten Commandments. It is the sign of a supremely decadent civilization when youth loses all respect for age and fails to recognize the unpayable debt and the basic duty it owes to those who gave it life.

Men will be **thankless**. They will refuse to recognize the debt they owe both to God and to men. The strange quality of ingratitude is that it is the most hurting of all sins because it is the blindest. Lear's words remain true:

*How sharper than a serpent's tooth
it is to have a thankless child!*

Unholy. The Greek word is *anosios*. *Anosios* does not so much mean that men will break the written laws; it means that they will offend against the unwritten laws which are part and parcel of the essence of life. The man who is *anosios* offends against the fundamental decencies of life. The man who is mastered by his lower passions will gratify them in the most shameless way as the streets of any great city will show when the night is late. The man who has exhausted the normal pleasures of life and is still unsated, will seek his thrill in pleasures which are abnormal.

Men will be **without human affection** (*astorgos*). *Storge* is the word used especially of family love, the love of child for parent and parent for child. If there is no human affection, the family cannot exist. In the terrible times men will be so set on self that even the closest ties will be nothing to them.

Men will be **implacable** in their hatreds (*aspondos*). *Sponde* is the word for a truce or an agreement. *Aspondos* can mean two things. It can mean that a man is so bitter in his

hatred that he will never come to terms with the man with whom he has quarreled. Or it can mean that a man is so dishonorable that he breaks the terms of the agreement he has made. In either case, it describes a certain harshness of mind which separates a man from his fellow-men in unrelenting bitterness.

Slanderers. The Greek for slanderer is *diabolos* which is precisely the English word devil. The devil is the patron saint of all slanderers and of all slanderers he is chief. There is a sense in which slander is the most cruel of all sins. If a man's goods are stolen, he can set to and build up his fortunes again; but if his good name is taken away, irreparable damage has been done... Many men and women, who would never dream of stealing, think nothing—even find pleasure—in passing on a story which ruins someone else's good name, without even trying to find out whether or not it is true. There is slander enough in many a church to make the recording angel weep as he records it.

Men will be **ungovernable** in their desires (*akrates*). The Greek verb *kratein* means to control. A man can reach a stage when, so far from controlling it, he can become a slave to some habit or desire. That is the inevitable way to ruin, for no man can master anything unless he first masters himself.

Men will be **savage**. The word is *anemos* and would be more fittingly applied to a wild beast than to a human being. It denotes a savagery which has neither sensitiveness nor sympathy. Men can be savage in rebuke and savage in pitiless action. Even a dog may be sorry when he has hurt his master, but there are people who, in their treatment of others, can be lost to human sympathy and feeling.

In these last terrible days, men will come to have **no love for good things or good persons**. There can come a time in a man's life when the company of good people and

the presence of good things is simply an embarrassment. He who feeds his mind on cheap literature can in the end find nothing in the great masterpieces. His mental palate loses its taste. A man has sunk far when he finds even the presence of good people something which he would only wish to avoid...

Treacherous. We must remember that this was written just at the beginning of the years of persecution, when it was becoming a crime to be a Christian. At this particular time in the ordinary matters of politics one of the curses of Rome was the existence of informers. Things were so bad that Tacitus could say: "He who had no foe was betrayed by his friend." There were those who would revenge themselves on an enemy by informing against him. What Paul is thinking of here is more than faithlessness in friendship—although that in all truth is wounding enough. He is thinking of those who to pay back an old score would inform against the Christians to the Roman government.

Men would be **headlong in words and action** (*propetes*). It describes the man who is swept on by passion and impulse to such an extent that he is totally unable to think sensibly. Far more harm is done from lack of thought than almost anything else. Many and many a time we would be saved from hurting ourselves and from wounding other people, if we would only stop to think.

Men will be **inflated with conceit** (*tuphoo*). The word is almost exactly the English swell-headed. They will be inflated with a sense of their own importance. There are still Church dignitaries whose main thought is their own dignity; but the Christian is the follower of him who was meek and lowly in heart.

Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Here we come back to where we started. Such men place their desires in the center of life. They worship self instead of God.

The final condemnation of these people is that **they retain the outward form of religion but deny its power**. That is to say, they go through all the correct movements and maintain all the external forms of religion; but they know nothing of Christianity as a dynamic power which changes the lives of men. It may well be that the greatest handicap to Christianity is not the scarlet sinner but the sleek devotee of an unimpeachable orthodoxy and dignified demeanor who is horrified when it is suggested that real faith is a dynamic power which changes a man's personal life.

SEDUCTION IN RELIGION (3:6-7)

The Christian emancipation of women inevitably brought its problems. We have already seen how secluded the life of the respectable Greek woman was, how she was brought up under the strictest supervision, how she was not allowed *to see anything, to hear anything, or to ask any questions*, how she never appeared, even on a shopping expedition, alone on the streets, how she was never allowed even to appear at a public meeting. Christianity changed all that and a new set of problems arose. It was only to be expected that certain women would not know how to use their new liberty. There were false teachers who were quick to take advantage of that.

Irenaeus draws a vivid picture of the methods of just such a teacher in his day. True, he is telling of something which happened later than this, but the wretched story would be the same (*Against Heresies*). There was a certain heretic called Marcus who dealt in magic. "He devotes himself specially to women, and those such as are well-bred, and elegantly attired, and of great wealth." He tells such women that by his spells and incantations he can enable them to prophesy. The woman protests that she has never done so and cannot do so. He says: "Open thy mouth, speak whatsoever occurs to thee, and thou shalt

prophesy." The woman, thrilled to the heart, does so and is deluded into thinking that she can prophesy. "She then makes the effort to reward Marcus, not only by the gift of her possessions (in which way he has collected a very large fortune), but also by yielding up to him her person, desiring in every way to be united to him..." The technique would be the same in the days of Timothy as it was in the later days of Irenaeus.

There would be two ways in which these heretics in the days of Timothy could exert an evil influence. We must remember that they were Gnostics and that the basic principle of Gnosticism was that spirit was altogether good and matter altogether evil. We have already seen that that teaching issued in one of two things. The Gnostic heretics taught, either that, since matter is altogether evil, a rigid asceticism must be practiced and all the things of the body as far as possible eliminated, or that it does not matter what we do with the body and its desires can be indulged in to the limit because they do not matter. The Gnostic insinulators would teach these doctrines to impressionable women. The result would often be either that the woman broke off married relationships with her husband in order to live the ascetic life, or that she gave the lower instincts full play and abandoned herself to promiscuous relationships. In either case home and family life were destroyed.

It is still possible for a teacher to gain an undue and unhealthy influence over others, especially when they are impressionable.

It is Paul's charge that such people are *willing to learn from anyone, and yet never able to come to a knowledge of the truth*. E. F. Brown has pointed out the danger of what he calls "intellectual curiosity without moral earnestness." There is a type of person who is eager to discuss every new theory, who is always to be found deeply involved in the latest

fashionable religious movement, but who is quite unwilling to accept the day-to-day discipline of living the Christian life. No amount of intellectual curiosity can ever take the place of moral earnestness. We are not meant to titillate our minds with the latest intellectual crazes; we are meant to purify and strengthen ourselves in the moral battle to live the Christian life.

THE OPPONENTS OF GOD (3:8-9)

In the days between the Old and the New Testaments many Jewish books were written which expanded the Old Testament stories. In certain of these books Jannes and Jambres figured largely. These were the names given to the court magicians of Pharaoh who opposed Moses and Aaron, when Moses was leading the children of Israel out of their slavery in Egypt. At first these magicians were able to match the wonders which Moses and Aaron did, but in the end they were defeated and discredited. In the OT they are not named, but they are referred to in Exodus 7:11; Exodus 8:7; Exodus 9:11.

A whole collection of stories gathered round their names. They were said to be the two servants who accompanied Balaam when he was disobedient to God (Numbers 22:22); they were said to have been part of the great mixed multitude who accompanied the children of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 12:38); some said that they perished at the

crossing of the Red Sea; other stories said that it was Jannes and Jambres who were behind the making of the golden calf and that they perished among those who were killed for that sin (Exodus 32:28); still other stories said that in the end they became proselytes to Judaism. Amidst all the stories one fact stands out—Jannes and Jambres became legendary figures typifying all those who opposed the purposes of God and the work of his true leaders.

The Christian leader will never lack his opponents. There will always be those who have their own twisted ideas of the Christian faith, and who wish to win others to their mistaken beliefs. But of one thing Paul was sure—the days of the deceivers were numbered. Their falsity would be demonstrated and they would receive their appropriate reward.

The history of the Christian Church teaches us that falsity cannot live. It may flourish for a time, but when it is exposed to the light of truth it is bound to shrivel and die. There is only one test for falsity—*You will know them by their fruits*. The best way to overcome and to banish the false is to live in such a way that the loveliness and the graciousness of the truth is plain for all to see. The defeat of error depends not on skill in controversy but in the demonstration in life of the more excellent way.

What thought from William Barclay’s words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
Application

Re-read 2 Timothy 3:1-9 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of 2 Timothy 3:1-9 to your life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of 2 Timothy 3:1-9? Why?

Looking at a long list of vices can be a little overwhelming. But take time to review this list again.

As you look over this list, circle three or four that seem to be particularly prevalent today.

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Lovers of self | Unholy | Traitors |
| Lovers of money | Unloving | Reckless |
| Boastful | Irreconcilable | Conceited |
| Proud | Slanderers | Lovers of pleasure rather than
lovers of God |
| Demeaning | Without self-control | Having a form of godliness but
denying its power |
| Disobedient to parents | Brutal | |
| Ungrateful | Without love for what is good | |

It is easy to see many of these godless characteristics in our own culture. We practically see all of them every day in the news! What is harder to discern is how breathing in this kind of culture day in and day out begins to slowly shape our own way of thinking, speaking, or living.

Go back over this list and put a (*) by one or two that you particularly struggle with.

What influences of the world are you regularly inputting into your mind? _____

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

What specific steps can you take to renew your mind so that you do not conform to the world's way of thinking, speaking, or living?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

The goal is not to get through all the questions but to spark good discussion around the truth of 2 Timothy 3:1-9. Use the questions below to interact together with what you learned.

- What recent news story has overwhelmed you or disturbed you the most? Why? Does this particular news story display some of the qualities that Paul mentions in 2 Timothy 3:1-9?
- Paul specifically told Timothy that there would be difficult seasons of time that Christians would go through in the last days. Why do you think Paul told Timothy this fact?
- Which of the nineteen characteristics that Paul lists stands out to you the most? Why?
- We breathe in the air of this culture. In what ways has our culture affected the Christian church? In what ways has it affected your family? In what ways has it affected you?
- What is the balance between avoiding these kind of people in the world and being a witness to people in the world as well?
- Why do you think Paul singles out women in verse 6? Do you think he was just being misogynistic or was there a particular danger to women in this culture?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of William Barclay? If so, what?
- When it comes to the 24/7 news media, we often “watch” the news without “praying.” Take some of the recent news stories that you have heard and instead of getting overwhelmed or angry, take time to think through how to pray for this situation. Pray together as a group for what is going on in the world. Pray also for believers to stand strong in their faith without resorting to anger, compromise, or isolation.

To be in the world, and yet not of the world; to use it for our temporal necessities, and yet not to abuse it for carnal purposes, is a high Christian attainment. May we be graciously delivered from a worldly spirit, which can assume a thousand forms to allure and to deceive.

Thomas Reade (1612-62)

Christ's kingdom people are not to reflect the world but they are to influence the world; they are to be in it but not of it.

John MacArthur, Jr.

BE A STUDENT—Be Devoted to the Word
2 Timothy 3:10-17

DAY ONE
Observation

Paul warns Timothy that Christians can expect things in the world to get worse and worse. So how are believers to live in light of this reality? Paul exhorts Timothy (and us today) to be devoted to the Word of God.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read 2 Timothy 3:10-17. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra— what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NKJV)

What verse or thought stands out to you from this passage? Why?

What nine things in Paul's life had Timothy carefully followed (3:10-11)?

Write out the promise that Paul gives to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:12.

What will grow “worse and worse” in the world (3:13)? _____

In light of this reality in the world, what does Paul tell Timothy to do (3:14-15)?

Why is this so important? _____

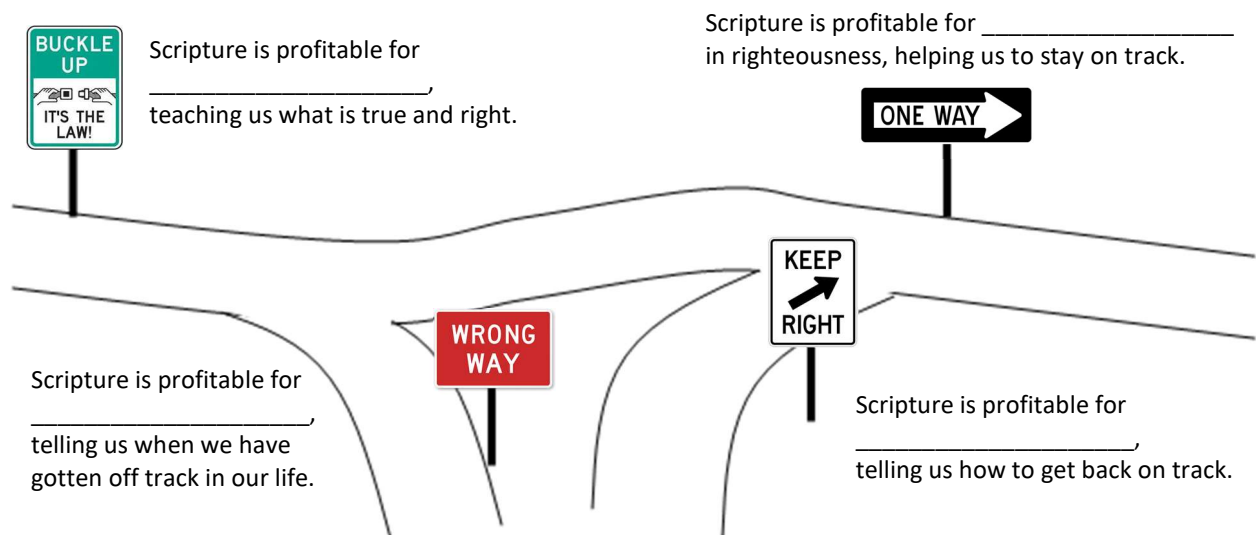
2 Timothy 3:16-17 are key verses in the Bible.

How much of Scripture is inspired (“breathed out”) by God? _____

What is Scripture profitable for? _____

What is the goal of Scripture in a person’s life (3:17)? _____

Fill out the illustration below based on 2 Timothy 3:16.



**DAY TWO
Meditation**

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read 2 Timothy 3:14-17 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*But as for you,
continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of,
because you know those from whom you learned it,
and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures,
which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

*All Scripture is God-breathed
and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,
so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NIV)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type “2 Timothy 3” into the “Search the Bible” box. Click on 2 Timothy 3:16 to bring up the verse in Greek. Find the phrase “given by inspiration of God” and click on the Strong’s number (G2315) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the NT.

What is the Greek word for this phrase? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine’s* and the two Greek words that form this word.)

The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is one of the most important doctrines of the Christian faith. *Why?* Because if Scripture is not God’s Word...or if we can pick and choose what is God’s Word within the Bible...then suddenly every Christian doctrine is suspect. We have no standard of truth. Each individual person becomes the determiner of what is true in the Bible and what is not. Thus, the ultimate authority is no longer the Bible but each individual’s personal opinions.

Read the following excerpt from Ligonier Ministries on the inspiration of Scripture.

When we talk about the inspiration of Scripture, we’re not using the word in quite the same way that you and I usually speak of inspiration.

I might say (for example) that I felt “inspired” as I wrote a book or composed a piece of music. And all I would be saying is simply that I felt particularly animated or motivated or fired up as I worked.

But when we say that the writers of Scripture were “inspired,” we’re saying much more than that. The King James Bible translates 2 Timothy 3:16 like this:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

This is what theologians are referring to when they talk about the “inspiration” of Scripture: the idea that God “breathed into” the biblical writers. He did this by His Spirit: “Spirit” being the Greek word *pneuma*, meaning “breath.” So when God “breathed into” the writers of Scripture in this way, God was ensuring that what they wrote was what He wanted to say—and nothing else.

In other words, if we really wanted to hear God speaking, we should open our Bibles. The English Standard Version gets even closer to the original Greek when it says that:

All Scripture is breathed out by God.

That translation nicely captures the reality that what we have on the page has come directly from God, and therefore each word carries the weight of His authority.

That phrase “all Scripture” is also significant. Because all Scripture is breathed out by God, it means that all of it is completely trustworthy. This is what theologians mean when they talk about the “plenary” inspiration of Scripture—plenary meaning “full” or “complete.” There are no particular bits of Scripture that are more or less God-breathed than other bits. Red-letter Bibles, when they put Jesus’ words in red, can imply that Christ’s words are more authoritative than the surrounding ones, that they carry particular weight—but that is not the case at all. All Scripture is God-breathed. All of it has the authority of God and of His Christ.

That’s because every word was inspired by the Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21 puts it like this:

*No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man,
but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

And this is true for the New Testament as well as the Old.

By the way, the inspiration of Scripture needn’t imply some kind of mechanical “dictation” from God, as if the minds and personalities of the biblical authors were somehow hijacked and overridden by God. On the contrary, the varying personalities and writing styles of the biblical authors do come through in Scripture.

At the same time, the concept of the inspiration of Scripture extends to what theologians call “verbal” inspiration. It’s not that God gave the biblical writers a general impression of the kind of concepts He wanted them to include and then told them to run with it. God’s inspiration actually extends to the very words they chose.

The teaching of Jesus shows this principle in action. Think about the way He debated His opponents. Often, Jesus’ argument depends on a single word—or even on the tense of a particular word—in Scripture. If God’s inspiration of Scripture did not extend to the specifics of individual words and tenses, then Jesus’ appeal to them would have been meaningless.

You see the principle of verbal inspiration again when the Apostle Paul argues in Galatians:

*The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed.
Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people,
but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)*

Again, if the Holy Spirit had not inspired the biblical writers to the extent of ensuring the use of a singular word rather than a plural, then Paul’s argument in Galatians would be meaningless.

So that is the inspiration of Scripture. When we open God’s Word, we can be sure that what we’re reading was breathed out by God. Not just in general, but right down to the specifics.

www.ligonier.org/podcasts/simply-put/the-inspiration-of-scripture

Read the following verses regarding the Bible. Mark key words or phrases as you read.

*The words of the Lord are pure words,
Like silver refined in an earthen furnace, purified seven times. (Psalm 12:6)*

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. (Psalm 119:105)

*The grass withers, the flowers fade,
But the word of our God remains forever. (Isaiah 40:8)*

*So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
It will not return to Me empty,
Without accomplishing what pleases Me,
And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)*

But Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." (Matthew 5:17-18)

Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. (John 17:17)

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

Write down seven things that you learn about the Word of God from these verses.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from John Calvin's *Commentary on the Bible*. **John Calvin** (1509-64) was a key figure in the Protestant Reformation. He was a pastor in Geneva, Switzerland and a theologian who shaped much of the theology of the Protestant church. Though "Calvinism" can be controversial in the church today, there is no question that Calvin was a man who loved Christ and taught the Word of God.

10 *But thou hast followed.* In order to urge Timothy, he employs this argument also, that he is not an ignorant and untaught soldier, because Paul carried him through a long course of training. Nor does he speak of doctrine only; for those things which he likewise enumerates add much weight, and he gives to us, in this sentence, a very lively picture of a good teacher, as one who does not, by words only, train and instruct his disciples, but, so to speak, opens his very breast to them, that they may know, that whatever he teaches, he teaches sincerely...

He likewise adds other proofs of sincere and unfeigned affection, such as *faith, mildness, love, patience*. Such were the early instructions which had been imparted to Timothy in the school of Paul. Yet he does not merely bring to remembrance what he had learned from him, but bears testimony to his former life, that in this manner he may urge him to perseverance; for he praises him as an imitator of his own virtues...and for that reason he dwells chiefly on his persecutions, which were best known to him.

11 *But out of them all the Lord delivered me.* It is consolation which mitigates the bitterness of afflictions, that they always have a happy and joyful end. If it be objected, that the success of which he boasts is not always visible, I acknowledge that this is true, so far as relates to the feeling of the flesh; for Paul had not yet been delivered. But when God sometimes delivers us, he testifies, in this manner, that he is present with us, and will always be present; for from the feeling, or actual knowledge, of present aid, our confidence ought to be extended to the future.

12 *And all who wish to live a godly life.* Having mentioned his own persecutions, he likewise adds now, that nothing has happened to him which does not await all the godly. And he says this, partly that believers may prepare themselves for submitting to this condition, and partly that good men may not view him with suspicion on account of the persecutions which he endures from wicked persons; as it frequently happens that the distresses to which men are subjected lead to unfavorable opinions concerning them; for he whom men regard with aversion is immediately declared by the common people to be hated by God.

By this general statement, therefore, Paul classes himself with the children of God, and, at the same time, exhorts all the children of God to prepare for enduring persecutions; for, if this condition is laid down for *all who wish to live a godly life in Christ*, they who wish to be exempt from persecutions must necessarily renounce Christ. In vain shall we endeavor to detach Christ from his cross; for it may be said to be natural that the world should hate Christ even in his members. Now hatred is attended by cruelty, and hence arise persecutions...

But it is asked, *Must all men be martyrs?* for it is evident that there have been many godly persons who have never suffered banishment, or imprisonment, or flight, or any kind of persecution. I reply, it is not always in one way that Satan persecutes the servants of Christ. But yet it is absolutely unavoidable that all of them shall have the world for their enemy in some form or other, that their faith may be tried and their steadfastness proved.

13 *But wicked men and impostors.* This is the most bitter of all persecutions, when we see wicked men, with their sacrilegious hardihood, with their blasphemies and errors, gathering strength. Thus Paul says elsewhere, that Ishmael persecuted Isaac, not by the sword, but by mockery (Gal. 4:29). Hence also we may conclude, that in the preceding verse, it was not merely one kind of persecution that was described, but that the Apostle spoke, in general terms, of those distresses which the children of God are compelled to endure, when they contend for the glory of their Father.

They shall grow worse and worse; for he foretells not only that they will make obstinate resistance, but that they will succeed in injuring and corrupting others. One worthless person will always be more effectual in destroying, than ten faithful teachers in building, though they labor with all their might. Nor are there ever wanting the tares which Satan sows for injuring the pure corn; and even when we think that false prophets are driven away, others continually spring up in other directions.

Again, as to the power of doing injury, it is not because falsehood, in its own nature, is stronger than truth, or that the tricks of Satan exceed the energy of the Spirit of God; but because men, being naturally inclined to vanity and errors, embrace far more readily what agrees with their natural disposition.

14 *But as for thee, continue in those things which thou hast learned.* Although wickedness prevail, and push its way forward, he advises Timothy nevertheless to stand firm. And undoubtedly this is the actual trial of faith, when we offer unwearied resistance to all the contrivances of Satan, and do not alter our course for every wind that blows, but remain steadfast on the truth of God, as on a sure anchor.

Knowing from whom thou hast learned them. This is said for the purpose of commending the certainty of the doctrine; for, if anyone has been wrong instructed, he ought not to persevere in it. On the contrary, we ought to unlearn all that we have learned apart from Christ, if we wish to be his disciples...

And which have been entrusted to thee. When he adds, that the doctrine had been entrusted to Timothy, this gives additional force to the exhortation; for to “commit a thing in trust” is something more than merely to deliver it. Now Timothy had not been taught as one of the common people, but in order that he might faithfully deliver into the hands of others what he had received.

15 *And that from childhood.* This was also no ordinary addition, that he had been accustomed, from his infancy, to the reading of the Scripture; for this long habit may make a man much more strongly fortified against every kind of deception. It was therefore a judicious caution observed in ancient times, that those who were intended for the ministry of the word should be instructed, from their infancy, in the solid doctrine of godliness, that, when they came to the performance of their office, they might not be untried apprentices. And it ought to be reckoned a remarkable instance of the kindness of God, if any person, from his earliest years, has thus acquired a knowledge of the Scriptures.

Which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. It is a very high commendation of the Holy Scriptures, that we must not seek anywhere else the wisdom which is sufficient for salvation. But he states, at the same time, *what* we ought to seek in the Scripture; for the false prophets also make use of it as a pretext; and therefore, in order that it may be useful to us for salvation, it is necessary to understand the right use of it.

Through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. What if any one give his whole attention to curious questions? What if he adhere to the mere letter of the law, and do not seek Christ? What if he pervert the natural meaning by inventions that are foreign to it? For this reason, he directs us to the faith of Christ as the design, and therefore as the sum, of the Scriptures; for on faith depends also what immediately follows.

16 *All Scripture.* He follows out that commendation which he had glanced at briefly. First, he commends the Scripture on account of its authority; and secondly, on account of the utility which springs from it. In order to uphold the authority of the Scripture, he declares that *it is divinely inspired*; for, if it be so, it is beyond all controversy that men ought to receive it with reverence. This is a principle which distinguishes our religion from all others, that we know that God hath spoken to us, and are fully convinced that the prophets did not speak at their own suggestion, but that, being organs of the Holy Spirit, they only uttered what they had been commissioned from heaven to declare. Whoever then wishes to profit in the Scriptures, let him first of all, lay down this as a settled point, that the Law and the Prophets are not a doctrine delivered according to the will and pleasure of men, but dictated by the Holy Spirit.

If it be objected, “How can this be known?” I answer, both to disciples and to teachers, God is made known to be the author of it by the revelation of the same Spirit. Moses and the prophets did not utter at random what we have received from their hand, but, speaking at the suggestion of God, they boldly and fearlessly testified, what was actually true, that it was the mouth of the Lord that spake. The same Spirit, therefore, who made Moses and the prophets certain of their calling, now also testifies to our hearts, that he has em-

ployed them as his servants to instruct us. Accordingly, we need not wonder if there are many who doubt as to the Author of the Scripture; for, although the majesty of God is displayed in it, yet none but those who have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit have eyes to perceive what ought, indeed, to have been visible to all, and yet is visible to the elect alone. This is the first clause, that we owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God; because it has proceeded from him alone, and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it.

And is profitable. Now follows the second part of the commendation, that the Scripture contains a perfect rule of a good and happy life. When he says this, he means that it is abused when this usefulness is not sought. And thus he indirectly censures those unprincipled men who fed the people with vain speculations, as with wind. For this reason, we may condemn all who, disregarding edification, agitate questions which, though they are ingenious, are also useless. Whenever ingenious trifles of that kind are brought forward, they must be warded off by this shield, that *Scripture is profitable*. Hence it follows, that it is unlawful to treat it in an unprofitable manner; for the Lord, when he gave us the Scriptures, did not intend to gratify our curiosity or to give occasion for chatting and talking, but to do us good; and, therefore, the right use of Scripture must always tend to what is profitable.

For instruction. Here he enters into a detailed statement of the various and manifold advantages derived from the Scriptures. And, first of all, he mentions *instruction*, which ranks above all the rest; for it will be to no purpose that you exhort or reprove, if you have not previously instructed. But because “instruction,” taken by itself, is often of little avail, he adds *reproof* and *correction*.

Reproof and *correction* differ little from each other, except that the latter proceeds from the former; for the beginning of repentance is the knowledge of our sinfulness, and a conviction of the judgment of God. *Instruction in righteousness* means the rule of a good and holy life.

Who is it that by nature will not desire his happiness and his salvation? And where could we find it but in the Holy Scripture, by which it is communicated to us? Woe to us if we will not listen to God when he speaks to us, seeing that he asks nothing but our advantage. He does not seek his own profit, for what need has he of it? We are likewise reminded not to read the Holy Scripture so as to gratify our fancies, or to draw from it useless questions. Why? Because it is profitable for salvation, says Paul.

Thus, when I expound the Holy Scripture, I must be guided by this consideration, that those who hear me may receive profit from the doctrine which I teach, that they may be edified for salvation. If I have not that desire, and do not aim at the edification of those who hear me, I am a sacrilegious person, profaning the word of God. On the other hand, they who read the Scripture, or who come to the sermon to listen, if they are in search of some foolish speculation, if they come here

to take their amusement, are guilty of having profaned a thing so holy.

17 *That the man of God may be perfect.* *Perfect* means here a blameless person, one in whom there is nothing defective; for he asserts absolutely, that the Scripture is sufficient for perfection. Accordingly, he who is not satisfied with Scripture desires to be wiser than is either proper or desirable.

But here an objection arises. Seeing that Paul speaks of the Scriptures, which is the name given to the Old Testament, how does he say that it makes a man thoroughly perfect? for, if it be so, what was afterwards added by the apostles may be thought superfluous. I reply, so far as relates to the substance, nothing has been added; for the writings of the apostles contain nothing else than a simple and natural explanation of the Law and the Prophets, together with a manifestation of the things expressed in them. This eulogium, therefore, is not inappropriately bestowed on the Scriptures by Paul; and, seeing that its instruction is now rendered more full and clear by the addition of the Gospel, what can be said but that we ought assuredly to hope that the usefulness, of which Paul speaks, will be much more displayed, if we are willing to make trial and receive it?

What thought from John Calvin’s words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE Application

Re-read 2 Timothy 3:10-17 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of 2 Timothy 3:10-17 to your life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of 2 Timothy 3:10-17? Why?

Read Psalm 19 slowly and prayerfully. Reflect and meditate on the words of this psalm.

¹ The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

² Day to day pours forth speech,
And night to night reveals knowledge.

³ There is no speech, nor are there words;
Their voice is not heard.

⁴ Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their utterances to the end of the world.
In them He has placed a tent for the sun,

⁵ Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber;
It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.

⁶ Its rising is from one end of the heavens,
And its circuit to the other end of them;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

⁸ The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

⁹ The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.

¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover, by them Your servant is warned;
In keeping them there is great reward.

¹² Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.

¹³ Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous *sins*;
Let them not rule over me;
Then I will be blameless,
And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.

Psalm 19 reminds us that the Word of God is always speaking to us both in creation and in Scripture. Our problem is that we often do not have eyes to see or ears to listen to His Word.

What blessings from the Word of God are mentioned in Psalm 19:7-11?

Circle the blessing in Psalm 19:7-11 that you most desire in your own life right now.

Psalm 119 is the longest psalm in the Bible. It is written as an acrostic poem in Hebrew. There are 22 sections in Psalm 119 corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Based on one of the initials of your name, select one of the sections of Psalm 119 to read and meditate on. Ask God to speak to your heart before you read.

- A** 119:1-8 **B** 119:9-16 **C** 119:17-24 **D** 119:25-32 **E** 119:33-40 **F** 119:41-48
 G 119:49-56 **H** 119:57-64 **I** 119:65-72 **J** 119:73-80 **K** 119:81-88 **L** 119:89-96
 M 119:97-104 **N** 119:105-112 **O** 119:113-120 **P** 119:121-128 **QR** 119:129-136
 S 119:137-144 **T** 119:145-152 **UV** 119:153-160 **W** 119:161-168 **XYZ** 119:168-176

How has God spoken to you from His Word? Respond back to Him in prayer.

Take a walk today and look at creation around you. Consider the handiwork of God around you and thank Him for His power, His beauty, His providence, and His grace.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

The goal is not to get through all the questions but to spark good discussion around the truth of 2 Timothy 3:10-17. Use the questions below to interact together with what you learned.

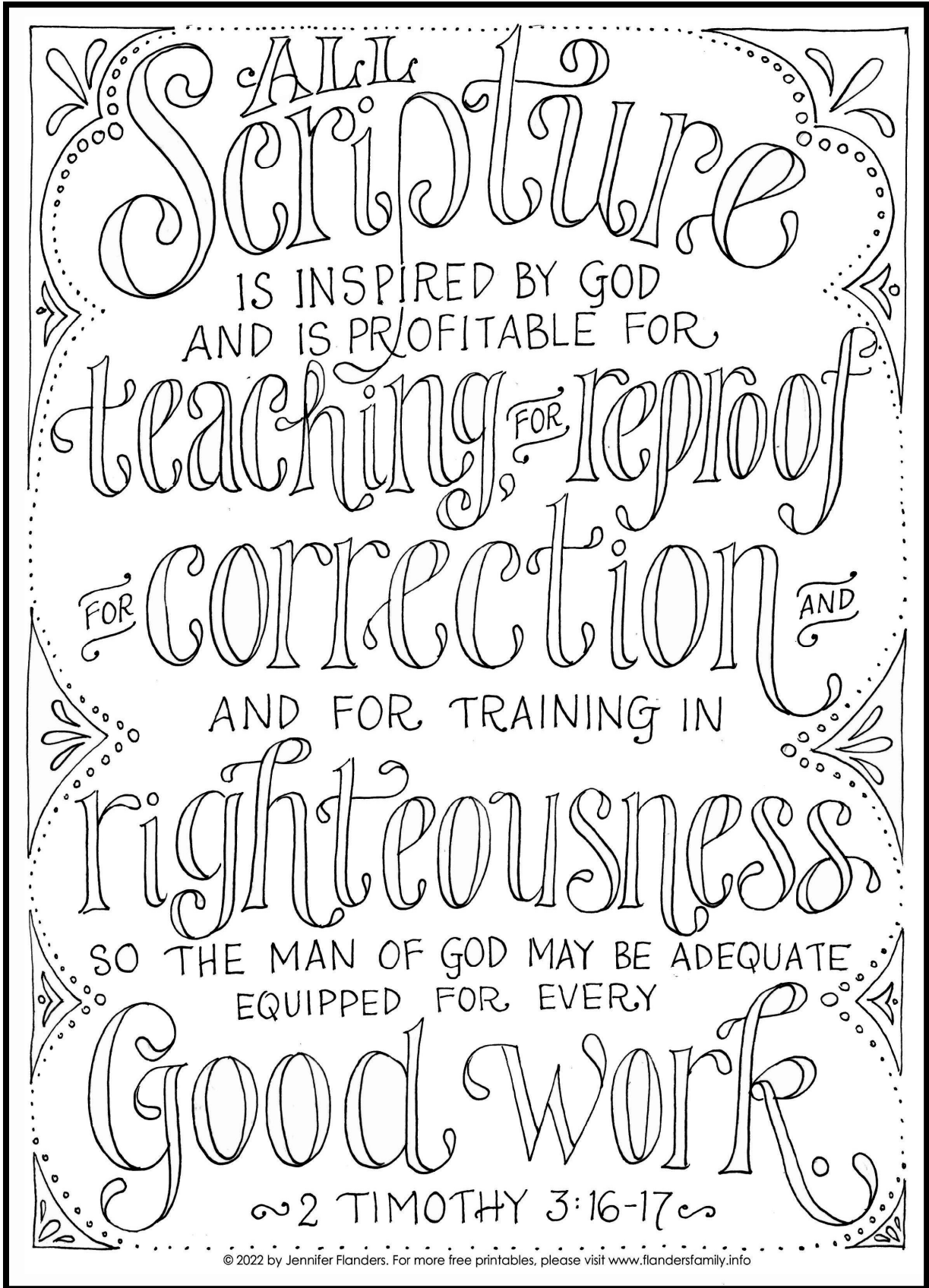
- What is one of the first Bible verses or Bible stories that you can remember hearing as a child? How did this Bible verse or story impact you?
- Who was someone older in your life who exhibited some of the qualities of Paul to you—teaching, good example, purpose, faith, patience, love, or perseverance in the face of trials? How has their life impacted you?
- What promise does Paul give in 2 Timothy 3:12? How have you seen this in your own life?
- How can a person know if they are deceived or not?
- What does Paul exhort Timothy to do in the face of an increasingly deceptive world? What do these verses teach us in our own present culture?
- What do you learn from 2 Timothy 3:16-17? Take time to examine every word in these verses.
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of John Calvin? If so, what?
- Read through Psalm 19 together as a group. Spend time sharing what impacts you from this psalm. Then pray together using the words of this psalm as a guide.

The amazing thing is that everyone who reads the Bible has the same joyful thing to say about it. In every land, in every language, it is the same tale: where that Book is read, not with the eyes only, but with the mind and heart, the life is changed. Sorrowful people are comforted, sinful people are transformed, peoples who were in the dark walk in the light. Is it not wonderful to think that this Book, which is such a mighty power if it gets a chance to work in an honest heart, is in our hands today?

Amy Carmichael (1867-1951)

*An honest man with an open Bible and a pad and pencil
is sure to find out what is wrong with him very quickly.*

A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)



© 2022 by Jennifer Flanders. For more free printables, please visit www.flandersfamily.info

BE A TEACHER OF THE WORD!
2 Timothy 4:1-5

DAY ONE
Observation

Paul brings his letter to a conclusion with nine urgent commands to his son, his successor, and his friend, Timothy. These commands represent the passion of Paul’s heart as he faces execution under the reign of Nero.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read 2 Timothy 4:1-5. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: ² Preach the word! Be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

³ For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

⁵ But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship; do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. (NIV)

What verse or thought stands out to you in this passage? Why?

Circle the nine imperative verbs (commands) in this passage. Write them each below.

Paul’s primary command to Timothy is to _____ (4:2).

Why would this become so difficult in the days ahead? _____

**DAY TWO
Meditation**

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read 2 Timothy 4:2-4 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

Preach the word!

Be ready in season and out of season.

Reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (ESV)

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE
Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

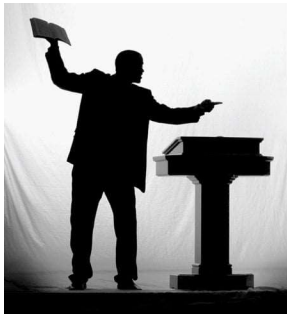
The primary imperative in this passage is *preach the Word!*

Go to blueletterbible.org and type “2 Timothy 4” into the “Search the Bible” box. Click on 2 Timothy 4:2 to bring up the verse in the Greek. Find the verb “preach” and click on the Strong’s number (G2784) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for “preach”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? _____



When you hear the word “preach,” what images come into your mind?

Though there can be a formal aspect to preaching the Word, Paul is talking about more than just giving a sermon behind a pulpit. Timothy is to proclaim God’s Word wherever he is. He is to speak of Christ and His kingdom in everyday speech. Perhaps “proclaim the Word” or “speak openly or publicly about the Word” better conveys the sense because this is something all of us can do.

Read the following passages that use this Greek word. Mark key words or phrases as you read.

These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, “Do not go on a road to Gentiles, and do not enter a city of Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, **preach**, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’” (Matthew 10:5-7)

This good news of the kingdom will be **proclaimed** in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)

“For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is **proclaimed** in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.” (Matthew 26:12-13)

Then a man with leprosy came to him and, on his knees, begged him, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched him. “I am willing,” he told him. “Be made clean.” Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. Then he sternly warned him and sent him away at once, telling him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go and show yourself to the priest, and offer what Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.” Yet he went out and began to **proclaim it widely** and to spread the news, with the result that Jesus could no longer enter a town openly. (Mark 1:40-45a)

As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged him earnestly that he might remain with him. Jesus did not let him but told him, “Go home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.” So he went out and began to **proclaim** in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed. (Mark 5:18-20)

A deaf man with a speech impediment was brought to him, and the people begged Jesus to lay his hands on the man to heal him. Jesus led him away from the crowd so they could be alone. He put his fingers into the man’s ears. Then, spitting on his own fingers, he touched the man’s tongue. Looking up to heaven, he sighed and said, “*Ephphatha*,” which means, “Be opened!” Instantly the man could hear perfectly, and his tongue was freed so he could speak plainly! Jesus told the crowd not to tell anyone, but the more he told them not to, the more they **spread the news**. (Mark 7:32-36)

He said to them, “Go into all the world and **preach** the gospel to all creation.” (Mark 16:15)

Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be **proclaimed** on the housetops. (Luke 12:3)

How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone **preaching**? And how are they to **preach** unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” (Romans 10:14-15)

If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was **proclaimed** in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. (Colossians 1:23)

And I saw a strong angel **proclaiming** with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?” (Revelation 5:2)

What observations can you make about the Greek word, *kerusso*, from these verses?

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from H.A. Ironside's *Notes on the Bible*. **H. A. Ironside** (1876-1951) was the pastor of Moody Church in Chicago for twenty years. Though he only had an eighth grade education, he wrote more than eighty books and was considered one of the best Bible teachers of the 20th century.

PAUL'S LAST CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

As we read this letter we need to remind ourselves again and again that it came from one who was about to die for Christ's sake, a man who was under no delusion as to his future. He knew that within a little while he would end his long career at the executioner's block, yet there was no fear on his part, no regrets that he had given himself to that ministry which was to close so tragically, as far as this world is concerned.

He wrote this letter, as we have seen, to one whom he loved, whom he had the privilege of leading to Christ many years before, and who had then gone out with him in the Lord's work and was now ministering in various places where Paul himself had labored for some time. He does not for a moment intimate to the younger preacher that perhaps, after all, it would be better not to give oneself so drastically to the work of the Lord, not to be so self-sacrificing—that perhaps it would be better to compromise to some extent, and thus avoid persecution for Christ's name's sake. No, there is nothing like that in Paul's exhortation to Timothy. He exhorts him to endure his share of suffering and persecution for Christ's sake. It is a poor kind of Christianity that rejoices in the fact that Christ has purchased for us eternal life through His death on the cross yet refuses to identify oneself with Him in suffering and persecution.

Here we have the Apostle's last charge to the younger preacher. Notice the things he stresses: ***I charge thee therefore before God,*** who in infinite grace had sent His Son to redeem sinners to Himself, ***and the Lord Jesus Christ,*** whose Timothy was and whom

he served. Notice how he gives our blessed Savior His full title. He is Lord. He is Jesus. He is the Savior. He is the Anointed of God the Father, ***who shall judge the quick and the dead [the living and the dead] at his appearing and his kingdom...***

Believers are to look forward to the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. At that time, He is going to give rewards to those who have labored for Him down here, who have been ready to suffer with and for Him, and have held the things of this world with a loose hand while fixing their affection on things above.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:4).

In both the Old and New Testaments we have promises of the coming kingdom. That golden age is still in the future to be ushered in when the Lord Jesus returns from heaven in power and glory, to put down iniquity, and to reign over this lower universe for a thousand wonderful years. This is the kingdom for which we pray when we join together in saying, "Thy kingdom come," when, "Thy will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven." So it is in view of the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ and the setting up of His kingdom that Paul stresses the importance of faithfulness to Christ while we await the fulfillment of His promise.

He says to Timothy first of all, ***Preach the word.*** He did not tell him to preach philosophy, nor preach politics, nor preach some system of morals, but preach the Word! And that takes in the entire Bible, for our commission is not only to preach the gospel that

tells us how lost sinners may be saved, but we are to proclaim the whole truth of God which not only gives us the way of salvation but also shows how we ought to live after we are redeemed. The servant of Christ who preaches the Word will never be at a loss for subjects, for he has the whole Bible from which to choose.

There are many ministers of Christ who have never learned that it is their business to preach the entire Word, and they are always trying to think up topics that may thrill, charm, and entertain the people. But the servant of God is not called to do these things. He is to seek to make people acquainted with the mind of God, to preach the gospel to the unsaved, to show them their lost condition, and then to set before them the remedy that God has provided. He is to open up God's Word to Christian people, showing them how they may be kept from sin and live daily in this life to the glory of God. This is the charge of the Holy Spirit to every minister of the gospel: Preach the Word! He who does this may never be highly esteemed among men as a great orator or declaimer, but he should not mind that. His one object should be to glorify God in setting forth His truth in the way He Himself directs.

Observe the next charge: ***Be instant in season, out of season.*** Paul is really saying, "Be constantly on the lookout for opportunities to glorify God and to make Him known to others."

You remember when William Haslam, that English church clergyman, was converted. He preached with such power that he won every member in his own parish to Christ. There was not a person living in the Baldhu section of Cornwall who had not confessed the Lord. Then he became greatly concerned about his neighbors, so he began preaching in adjoining parishes and winning souls there.

The other ministers became upset over it, and sent in their objections to the Bishop, saying, "Mr. Haslam is interfering with our work. He is poaching in our parishes, telling our people that they have to be converted and need to be born again."

The Bishop sent for Haslam and said, "I understand you are preaching all the time. You don't seem to be doing anything else."

Haslam replied, "My lord bishop, I assure you I preach only in two seasons of the year."

"Oh," said the Bishop, "I am glad to know that. And what seasons are they?"

"In season and out of season," he replied.

That is the charge that comes to everyone of us if we really know Christ. It is not just for official proclaiming of the Word, not just for pastors and elders, but for all Christians. Let us be instant in season and out of season in winning precious souls to Jesus Christ.

Then there will be occasions when we will have to ***reprove, rebuke, exhort.*** The last word has really the thought of comfort. So we are to comfort those who need help, assuring those who have sinned of pardon and restoration if they will turn to the blessed Lord and make confession of their failures and wrongdoing. But we must do this with all longsuffering and tenderness. The preacher of grace must not behave in an ungracious manner. I am afraid that when many of us try to reprove we get in a bad spirit ourselves and forget that the servant of the Lord should not strive, but should be characterized by longsuffering, by patience, by tender consideration even of those whom he has to rebuke or reprove.

Note the emphasis put upon teaching sound doctrine. Some people say, "I am not

interested in doctrine. I like practical preaching not doctrine.” But we need to know the great truths of Scripture in order that we may learn how to behave in accordance with the revelation God has given. Sincerity of purpose is not enough. We are to be sanctified by the truth. David prayed, “Order my steps in thy word” (Psalm 119:133). We must know the Word in order that our lives may be as God would have them. The servant of Christ is therefore responsible to give out sound teaching.

Paul knew that the day would come when people would not want this kind of ministry, when they would prefer to hear smooth things. He says, ***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.***

It is not that the teachers have itching ears. The teachers in this instance generally have itching palms! They are in the business for filthy lucre. But the people have itching ears. They want preachers who will say things to them that will not trouble their consciences but will tickle their fancy.

I never feel worried when people write me letters, saying, “I resent your personal attack on me last Sunday.” They always come from people I do not know. If I do know something bad about a person, I am careful never to refer to it in a public address. I would rather see him privately. But every little while I receive a letter, saying, “I don’t like your preaching, and I don’t think you had any right to expose me in the way you did. I don’t know who has been talking to you about me.” And they always end up by saying, “It is not true.” So whatever made them think I was talking about them, I do not know. I am never concerned about such letters, for when the preacher presents God’s Word it is bound to speak to some people. You remember what

Sam Jones said, “If you throw a stone into a pack of dogs and one of them yelps, you know who got hit.”

We should so walk before God and so live in fellowship with God that the Holy Spirit can speak directly through us. Many will not like this kind of preaching because they have itching ears. They want people to say nice things to them so that they can go away feeling good.

Then we read, ***They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.***

Some years ago two gentlemen were sitting opposite one another in a railway car. One was reading his Bible. The other looked across and said, “Pardon me. Is that a Bible you are reading?”

The man looked up and said, “Yes, this is the Bible, God’s Word.”

“Well, well,” said the other, “that really astonishes me. You look to me like an intelligent man. I didn’t know that intelligent persons ever read the Bible anymore. I used to believe in that when I was a child, but after I became somewhat educated I found there was nothing to it. I believe the day will soon come when civilized people will have no more confidence in the Bible than they have in the old idea of ghosts.”

This Christian gentleman looked up quietly and said, “You may be right, but when the day comes that people no longer believe in the Bible they will believe in ghosts again!”

And we see the evidence of that on every hand. People turn away from the truth and take up with what? With Spiritism, Theosophy, and all kinds of other weird systems and strange cults. They turn away from the

truth to satanic doctrines that lead men down to perdition.

Paul says to Timothy, **Watch thou in all things.** The Christian life is a warfare. We are in conflict with three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the Devil. We need to be on our guard continually, watching in all things.

Endure affliction, that is, be willing to suffer for faithfulness to the truth.

*Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?*

He adds, **Do the work of an evangelist.**

Now I do not think Timothy was an evangelist. I think, as I read over the passages of Scripture that give information regarding the character of his work, that he was a pastor. He had a shepherd's heart. He cared for the sheep and the lambs of Christ's flock. But Paul says to him, "Do not forget the gospel. Men are dying in their sins. Do not be so occupied with feeding the flock that you

overlook the need of those who are out of Christ. Do the work of an evangelist."

Some ministers say, "I don't feel I have any evangelistic gift, so I never preach to the unsaved." It is not necessary to have any special gift to preach to the unsaved. Just give them what God says in His Word about the salvation He has provided in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The last exhortation is, **Make full proof of thy ministry.** In other words, Paul is saying to Timothy, "Do not be half-hearted, Timothy, and do not be content with halfway measures. Give your whole soul, all your strength, all your ability, all your talents, all your heart, your whole life to the great work to which God has called you."

Although these words were addressed directly to Timothy, they have been preserved by the Spirit of God Himself in order that they may come home to every one of us, that we may seek to act upon them in our day and generation even as he was responsible to do in his.

What thought from H. A. Ironside's words stands out to you the most? Why?

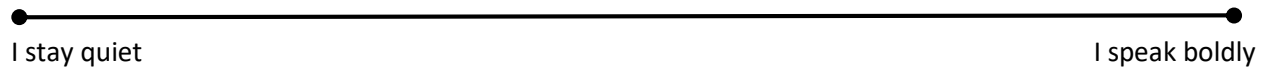
DAY FIVE Application

Re-read 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of 2 Timothy 4:1-5 to your life.

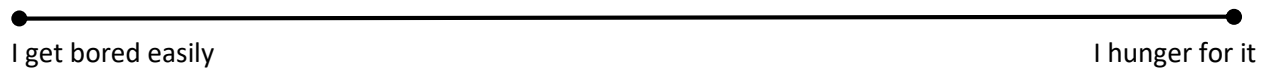
What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of 2 Timothy 4:1-5? Why?

How would you evaluate your life in the following areas? Place an (X) on the spectrum.

When it comes to speaking the Word of God to others...



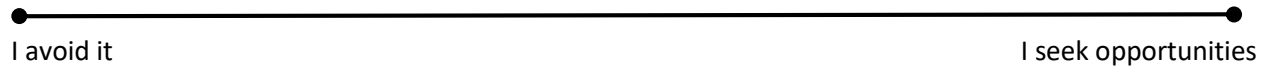
When it comes to listening to the Word of God being taught...



When it comes to exhorting and encouraging my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ...



When it comes to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the lost...



What changes do you need to make in your mindset, your words, or your actions?

Who is someone that you can speak the Word to today? _____

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

The goal is not to get through all the questions but to spark good discussion around the truth of 2 Timothy 4:1-5. Use the questions below to interact together with what you learned.

- Write down four names in your life. Who is someone who shared the gospel with you? Who is someone who has taught you the Word of God? Who is someone who has rebuked or corrected you (for the good)? Who is someone who has encouraged you in your faith?
- What does it mean to “preach the Word”? Is this only for “preachers” behind a pulpit? What did you learn from your study of the Greek word, *kerusso*?
- What is the role of a pastor according to these verses? What other expectations are often placed upon pastors beyond these biblical responsibilities?
- Describe an audience with “itching ears.” What are they like? What are they looking for?
- In what ways has the American church exhibited the characteristics mentioned in 4:3-4? In what ways have you exhibited any of these characteristics?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of H. A. Ironside? If so, what?
- Share your thoughts from the personal evaluation on page 100. What changes do you need to make in your Christian walk? How can your community group help you in this regard?
- Pray for one another!

*The first mark of a healthy church is expositional preaching.
It is not only the first mark; it is far and away the most important of them all,
because if you get this one right, all of the others should follow...*

*If you get the priority of the Word established,
then you have in place the single most important aspect of the church's life,
and growing health is virtually assured,
because God has decided to act by His Spirit through His Word...*

*The congregation's commitment to the centrality of the Word coming from the front,
from the preacher, the one specially gifted by God and called to that ministry,
is the most important thing you can look for in a church.*

Mark Dever

PAUL'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO TIMOTHY

2 Timothy 4:6-22

DAY ONE Observation

Paul gives Timothy his final words and instructions. Paul knows that his time is short...and he is ready to meet his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. These final instructions reveal Paul's heart and his practical needs.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read 2 Timothy 4:6-22. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; ⁸ in the future there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

⁹ Make every effort to come to me soon; ¹⁰ for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ Only Luke is with me. Take along Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. ¹² But I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³ When you come, bring the overcoat which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. ¹⁴ Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. ¹⁵ Be on guard against him yourself too, for he vigorously opposed our teaching.

¹⁶ At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁹ Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus remained at Corinth, but I left Trophimus sick at Miletus. ²¹ Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers and sisters.

²² The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (NASB)

What verse or thought stands out to you in this passage? Why?

What three things can Paul say at the end of his life (4:7)?

Who receives the “crown of righteousness” (4:8)?

Write down one thing that you learn about each of the following people in 2 Timothy 4:9-17.

- Demas _____
 - Luke _____
 - Mark _____
 - Carpus _____
 - Alexander _____
 - The Lord Jesus _____
-

What promise of God does Paul hold onto at the end of his life (4:18)?

Who else was at the church in Ephesus ministering along with Timothy (4:19)?

Write Paul’s final words (4:22).

**DAY TWO
Meditation**

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read 2 Timothy 4:6-8 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering,
and the time for my departure is close.
I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith.*

*There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness,
which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day,
and not only to me, but to all those who have loved His appearing. (CSB)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE Interpretation

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Paul compares his life to a drink offering. **Read the following verses regarding a drink offering.**

And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. (Genesis 35:14)

The Lord instructed Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you enter the land I am giving you to settle in, and you make a food offering to the Lord from the herd or flock—either a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow, or as a freewill offering, or at your appointed festivals—to produce a pleasing aroma for the Lord, the one presenting his offering to the Lord is also to present a grain offering of two quarts of fine flour mixed with a quart of oil. Prepare a quart of wine as a drink offering with the burnt offering or sacrifice of each lamb. (Numbers 15:4-5)

What imagery or thought do you think Paul was conveying in his analogy of a drink offering?

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "2 Timothy 4" into the "Search the Bible" box. Click on 2 Timothy 4:6 to bring up the verse in the Greek. Find the word "departure" and click on the Strong's number (G359) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the New Testament.

What is the Greek word for "departure"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially *Vine's Expository Dictionary*.)

Next click on 2 Timothy 4:7 to bring up the verse in the Greek. Find the verb "fought" and click on the Strong's number (G75) to bring up the Greek word, its definition, and its usage in the NT.

What is the Greek word for "fought"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? _____

What English word comes from this Greek word? _____

Paul says that the **crown of righteousness** is reserved for him in heaven ... and that same crown is also rewarded to all those who love Christ's appearing. Paul is probably not just referring to the return of Christ but also that moment when we see Jesus at the time of our death (Acts 7:56).

Read the following passages that also mention "crowns." Mark key words/phrases as you read.

Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable **crown**. So I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air. (1 Corinthians 9:24-26)

So we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. For who is our hope or joy or **crown** of boasting in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? Indeed you are our glory and joy! (1 Thessalonians 2:18-20)

Blessed is the one who endures trials, because when he has stood the test he will receive the **crown** of life that God has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:12)

I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading **crown** of glory. (1 Peter 5:1-4)

Don't be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Look, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison to test you, and you will experience affliction for ten days. Be faithful to the point of death, and I will give you the **crown** of life. (Revelation 2:10)

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the One seated on the throne, the One who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before the One seated on the throne and worship the One who lives forever and ever. They cast their **crowns** before the throne and say,

Our Lord and God,
You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power,
because You have created all things,
and by Your will they exist and were created. (Revelation 4:9-11)

What observations can you make about our future crowns and rewards in heaven?

DAY FOUR Devotion

Read the following excerpt from Alexander MacLaren's *Expositions of Holy Scriptures*. **Alexander MacLaren** (1826-1910) was a Baptist pastor in Manchester, England whose sermons were known for their "profundity of thought, logical arrangement, eloquence of appeal, and power over the human heart."

A PRISONER'S DYING THOUGHTS

PAUL'S long day's work is nearly done. He is a prisoner in Rome, all but forsaken by his friends, in hourly expectation of another summons before Nero. To appear before him was, he says, like putting his head into 'the mouth of the lion.' His horizon was darkened by sad anticipations of decaying faith and growing corruptions in the Church. What a road he had travelled since that day when, on the way to Damascus, he saw the living Christ, and heard the words of His mouth!

It had been but a failure of a life, if judged by ordinary standards. He had suffered the loss of all things, had thrown away position and prospects, had exposed himself to sorrows and toils, had been all his days a poor man and solitary, had been hunted, despised, laughed at by Jew and Gentile, worried and badgered even by so-called brethren, loved the less, the more he loved. Now the end is near. A prison and the headsman's sword are the world's wages to its best teacher. When Nero is on the throne, the only possible place for Paul is a dungeon opening on to the scaffold. Better to be the martyr than the Caesar!

These familiar words of our text bring before us a very sweet and wonderful picture of the prisoner, so near his end. How beautifully they show his calm waiting for the last hour and the bright forms which lightened for him the darkness of his cell! Many since have gone to their rest with their hearts stayed on the same thoughts, though their lips could not speak them to our listening ears. Let us be thankful for them, and pray that for ourselves, when we come to that hour, the same quiet heroism and the same sober hope mounting to calm certainty may be ours.

These words refer to the past, the present, the future. *I have fought — the time of my departure is come — henceforth there is laid up.*

I. So we notice, first, the quiet courage which looks death full in the face without a tremor.

The language implies that Paul knows his death hour is all but here. *I am already being offered*—the process is begun, his sufferings at the moment are, as it were, the initial steps of his sacrifice—and *the time of my departure is come*. The tone in which he tells Timothy this is very noticeable. There is no sign of excitement, no tremor of emotion, no affectation of stoicism in the simple sentences. He is not playing up to a part, nor pretending to be anything which he is not. If ever language sounded perfectly simple and genuine, this does.

And the occasion of the whole section is as remarkable as the tone. He is led to speak about himself at all, only in order to enforce his exhortation to Timothy to put his shoulder to the wheel, and do his work for Christ with all his might. All he wishes to say is simply, do your work with all your might, for I am going off the field. But having begun on that line of thought, he is carried on to say more than was needed for his immediate purpose, and thus inartificially to let us see what was filling his mind.

And the subject into which he subsides after these lofty thoughts is as remarkable as either tone or occasion. Minute directions about such small matters as books and parchments, and perhaps a warm cloak for winter, and homely details about the movements of the

little group of his friends immediately follow. All this shows with what a perfectly unforced courage Paul fronted his fate, and looked death in the eyes. The anticipation did not dull his interest in God's work in the world, as witness the warnings and exhortations of the context. It did not withdraw his sympathies from his companions. It did not hinder him from pursuing his studies and pursuits, nor from providing for small matters of daily convenience. If ever a man was free from any taint of fanaticism or morbid enthusiasm, it was this man waiting so calmly in his prison for his death.

There is great beauty and force in the expressions which he uses for death here. He will not soil his lips with its ugly name, but calls it an *offering* and a *departure*. There is a widespread unwillingness to say the word, *death*. It falls on men's hearts like clods on a coffin. So all people and languages have adopted euphemisms for it, fair names which wrap silk round its dart and somewhat hide its face. But there are two opposite reasons for their use—terror and confidence.

Some men dare not speak of death because they dread it so much, and try to put some kind of shield between themselves and the very thought of it, by calling it something less dreadful to them than itself.

Some men, on the other hand, are familiar with the thought, and though it is solemn, it is not altogether repellent to them. Gazing on death with the thoughts and feelings which Jesus Christ has given them concerning it, they see it in new aspects, which take away much of its blackness. And so they do not feel inclined to use the ugly old name, but had rather call it by some which reflect the gentler aspect that it now wears to them. So 'sleep,' and 'rest' and the like are the names which have almost driven the other out of the NT—witness of the fact that in inmost reality Jesus

Christ *has abolished death*, however the physical portion of it may still remain master of our bodies.

But looking for a moment at the specific metaphors used here, we have first, that of an offering, or more particularly of a drink offering, *I am already being poured out*. No doubt the special reason for the selection of this figure here is Paul's anticipation of a violent death. The shedding of his blood was to be an offering poured out like some costly wine upon the altar, but the power of the figure reaches far beyond that special application of it. We may all make our deaths a sacrifice, an offering to God, for we may yield up our will to God's will, and so turn that last struggle into an act of worship and self-surrender. When we recognize His hand, when we submit our wills to His purposes, when 'we live unto the Lord,' if we live, and 'die unto Him,' if we die, then Death will lose all its terror and most of its pain, and will become for us what it was to Paul, a true offering up of self in thankful worship...

Another more familiar and equally striking figure is next used, when Paul speaks of the time of his *departure*. The thought is found in most tongues. Death is a going away, or, as Peter calls it with a glance...an *exodus*. But the well-worn image receives new depth and sharpness of outline in Christianity. To those who have learned the meaning of Christ's resurrection, and feed their souls on the hopes which it warrants, death is merely a change of place or state, an accident affecting locality, and little more. We have had plenty of changes before. Life has been one long series of departures. This is different from the others mainly in that it is the last, and that to go away from this visible and fleeting show, where we wander aliens among things which have no true kindred with us, is to go home, where there will be no more pulling up the tent-pegs, and toiling across the deserts in

monotonous change. How strong is the conviction, spoken in this name for death, that the essential life lasts on quite unaltered through it all! We may change climates...but we do not change ourselves. We lose nothing worth keeping when we leave behind the body, as a dress not fitted for home, where we are going... Some pass over it as in a fiery chariot, like Paul and many a martyr. Some have to toil through it with slow steps and bleeding feet and fainting heart; but all may have a Brother with them, and, holding His hand, may find that the journey is not so hard as they feared, and the home from which they shall remove no more, better than they hoped when they hoped the most.

II. We have the peaceful look backwards.

Paul thinks of life as a contest, as a race, as a stewardship. The first image suggests the tension of a long struggle with opposing wrestlers who have tried to throw him, but in vain. The world, both of men and things, has had to be grappled with and mastered. His own sinful nature and especially his animal nature has had to be kept under by sheer force, and every moment has been resistance to subtle omnipresent forces that have sought to thwart his aspirations and hamper his performances. His successes have had to be fought for, and everything that he has done has been done after a struggle. So is it with all noble life; so will it be to the end.

He thinks of life as a race. That speaks of continuous advance in one direction, and more emphatically, of effort that sets the lungs panting and strains every muscle to the utmost.

He thinks of it as a stewardship. He has kept the faith whether by that word we are to understand the body of truth believed or the act of believing as a sacred deposit committed to him, of which he has been a good steward, and which he is now ready to return to his Lord...

Life was full of voices urging him to give up the faith. Bribes and threats, and his own sense-bound nature, and the constant whispers of the world had tempted him all along the road to fling it away as a worthless thing, but he had kept it safe; and now, nearing the end, he can put his hand on the secret place near his heart where it lies, and feel that it is there, ready to be restored to his Lord, with the thankful confession, 'Thy talents hath gained five more.'

So life looks to this man in his retrospect as mainly a field for struggle, effort, and fidelity. This world is not to be for us an enchanted garden of delights, any more than it should appear a dreary desert of disappointment and woe. But it should be to us mainly a gymnasium and exercising ground. You cannot expect many flowers or much grass in the place where men wrestle and run. We need not much mind though it be bare, if we can only stand firm on the hard earth, nor lament that there are so few delights to stay our eyes from the goal. We are here for serious work; let us not be too eager for pleasures that may hinder our efforts and weaken our vigor, but be content to lap up a hasty draught from the brooks by the way, and then on again to the fight.

Such a view of life makes it radiant and fair while it lasts, and makes the heart calm when the hour comes to leave it all behind. So thinking of the past, there may be a sense of not unwelcome lightening from a load of responsibility when we have got all the stress and strain of the conflict behind us, and have at any rate not been altogether beaten. We may feel like a captain who has brought his ship safe across the Atlantic, through foul weather and past many an iceberg, and gives a great sigh of relief as he hands over the charge to the pilot, who will take her across the harbor bar and bring her to her anchorage in the landlocked bay where no tempests rave any more forever.

The one question for us all, then, will be, Have I lived for Christ, and by Him? Let it be the one question for us now, and let it be answered, Yes. Then we shall have at the last a calm confidence, equally far removed from presumption and from dread, which will let us look back on life with peace, though it be full of failures and sins, and forward with humble hope of the reward which we shall receive from His mercy.

III. The climax of all is the triumphant look forward. ‘Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.’

In harmony with the images of the conflict and the race, the crown here is not the emblem of sovereignty, but of victory, as indeed is almost without exception the case in the New Testament. *A man is not crowned, except he strive.*

That crown, according to other words of Scripture, consists of ‘life,’ or ‘glory’—that is to say, the issue and outcome of believing service and faithful stewardship here is the possession of the true life, which stands in union with God, in measure so great, and in quality so wondrous that it lies on the pure locks of the victors like a flashing diadem, all ablaze with light in a hundred jewels... It is Christ’s own life which they share; it is Christ’s own glory which irradiates them.

That crown is a *crown of righteousness* in another sense from that in which it is a *crown of life*. The latter expression indicates the material, if we may say so, of which it is woven, but the former rather points to the character to which it belongs or is given. Righteousness alone can receive that reward. It is not the struggle or the conflict which wins it, but the character evolved in the struggle, not the works of strenuous service, but the moral nature expressed in these. There is such a congruity between righteousness

and the crown of life, that it can be laid on none other head but that of a righteous man, and if it could, all its amarantine flowers would shrivel and fall when they touched an impure brow. It is, then, the crown of righteousness, as belonging by its very nature to such characters alone...

We have to remember too that, according to this Apostle’s constant teaching, the righteousness which clothes us in fair raiment, and has a natural right to the wreath of victory, is a gift, as truly as the crown itself, and is given to us all on condition of our simple trust in Jesus Christ... *We must be found in Him, not having our own righteousness, but that which is ours through faith in Christ.* Toil and conflict and anxious desire to be true to our responsibilities will do much for a man, but they will not bring him that righteousness which brings down on the head the crown of life. We must trust to Christ to give us the righteousness in which we are justified, and to give us the righteousness by the working out of which in our life and character we are fitted for that great reward. He crowns our works and selves with exuberant and unmerited honors, but what he crowns is His Own gift to us, and His great love must bestow both the righteousness and the crown.

The crown is given at a time called—by Paul *at that day*, which is not the near day of his martyrdom, but that of His Lord’s appearing. He does not speak of the fullness of the reward as being ready for him at death, but as being *henceforth laid up for him in heaven*. So he looks forward beyond the grave. The immediate future after death was to his view a period of blessedness indeed, but not yet full. The state of the dead in Christ was a state of consciousness, a state of rest, a state of felicity, but also a state of expectation... What perfect repose, perfect fruition of all desires, perfect union with the perfect End and Object of all their being, perfect exemption from all

sorrow, tumult, and sin can bring of blessedness, that they possess in over measure unfailingly. And, in addition, they still know the joy of hope, and have carried that jewel with them into another world, for they wait for *the redemption of the body*, in the reception of which, *at that day*, their life will be filled up to a yet fuller measure, and gleam with a more lustrous ‘glory.’ Now they rest and wait. Then shall they be crowned.

Nor must self-absorbed thoughts be allowed to bound our anticipations of that future. It is no solitary blessedness to which Paul looked forward Alone in his dungeon, alone before his judge when ‘no man stood by’ him, soon to be alone in his martyrdom, he leaps up in spirit at the thought of the mighty crowd among whom he will stand in that day, on every head a crown, in every heart the same love to the Lord whose life is in them all and makes them all one. So we may cherish the hope of a social heaven. Man’s course begins in a garden, but it ends in a city. The final condition will be the perfection of human society. There all who love Christ will be drawn together, and old ties, broken for a little while here, be reknit in yet holier form, never to be sundered more.

Ah, friends, the all-important question for each of us is how may we have such a hope, like a great sunset light shining into the western windows of our souls? There is but one answer—Trust Christ! That is enough. Nothing else is. Is your life built on Jesus

Christ? Are you trusting your salvation to Him? Are you giving Him your love and service? Does your life bear looking at today? Will it bear looking at in death? Will it bear His looking at in Judgment?

If you can humbly say, *To me to live is Christ*, then is it well. Living by Him we may fight and conquer, may win and obtain. Living by Him, we may be ready quietly to lie down when the time comes, and may have all the future filled with the blaze of a great hope that glows brighter as the darkness thickens. That peaceful hope will not leave us till consciousness fails, and then, when it has ceased to guide us, Christ Himself will lead us, scarcely knowing where we are, through the waters, and when we open our half-bewildered eyes in brief wonder, the first thing we see will be his welcoming smile, and His voice will say, as a tender surgeon might to a little Child waking after an operation, ‘It is all over.’ We lift our hands wondering and find wreaths on our poor brows. We lift our eyes, and lo! all about us a crowned crowd of conquerors,

*And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!*

*Meantime, along the narrow rugged path,
Thyself hast trod,
Lead, Savior, lead me home in childlike faith,
Home to my God.*

*To rest forever after earthly strife
In the calm light of everlasting life!*

What thought from Alexander MacLaren’s words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
Application

Re-read 2 Timothy 4:6-22 and consider the truths that you have learned this week. Seek to apply the message of 2 Timothy 4:6-22 to your life.

What thought or truth impacted you this week from your study of 2 Timothy 4:6-22? Why?

Like Paul, we should live with the end in mind. We should live our lives with an eternal focus. What do you want to be able to say about your life when you are in your last moments on earth?

Write your own epitaph.



SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

The goal is not to get through all the questions but to spark good discussion around the truth of 2 Timothy 4:6-22. Use the questions below to interact together with what you learned.

- Talk about a funeral that you have attended in which the person truly had a life well lived. What did people say about this person's life? What impact did he/she have on others?
- How did Paul describe death? What can you learn from this?
- How did Paul describe his life? What can you learn from this?
- How did Paul describe his future? What can you learn from this?
- Paul lists a lot of different people in 2 Timothy 4:9-22. Who is someone who stands out to you in this list of names? Why?
- What do you learn about Jesus Christ from this passage?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Alexander MacLaren? If so, what?
- What do you want to be able to say about your life in your last moments on earth? Share what you would want to be in your epitaph.
- Pray for one another and encourage one another to live with an eternal perspective!

Weep not for me, but for yourselves. I go to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will through the mediation of His blessed son receive me though a sinner; there we shall meet to sing the new song and remain everlasting happy, world without end.

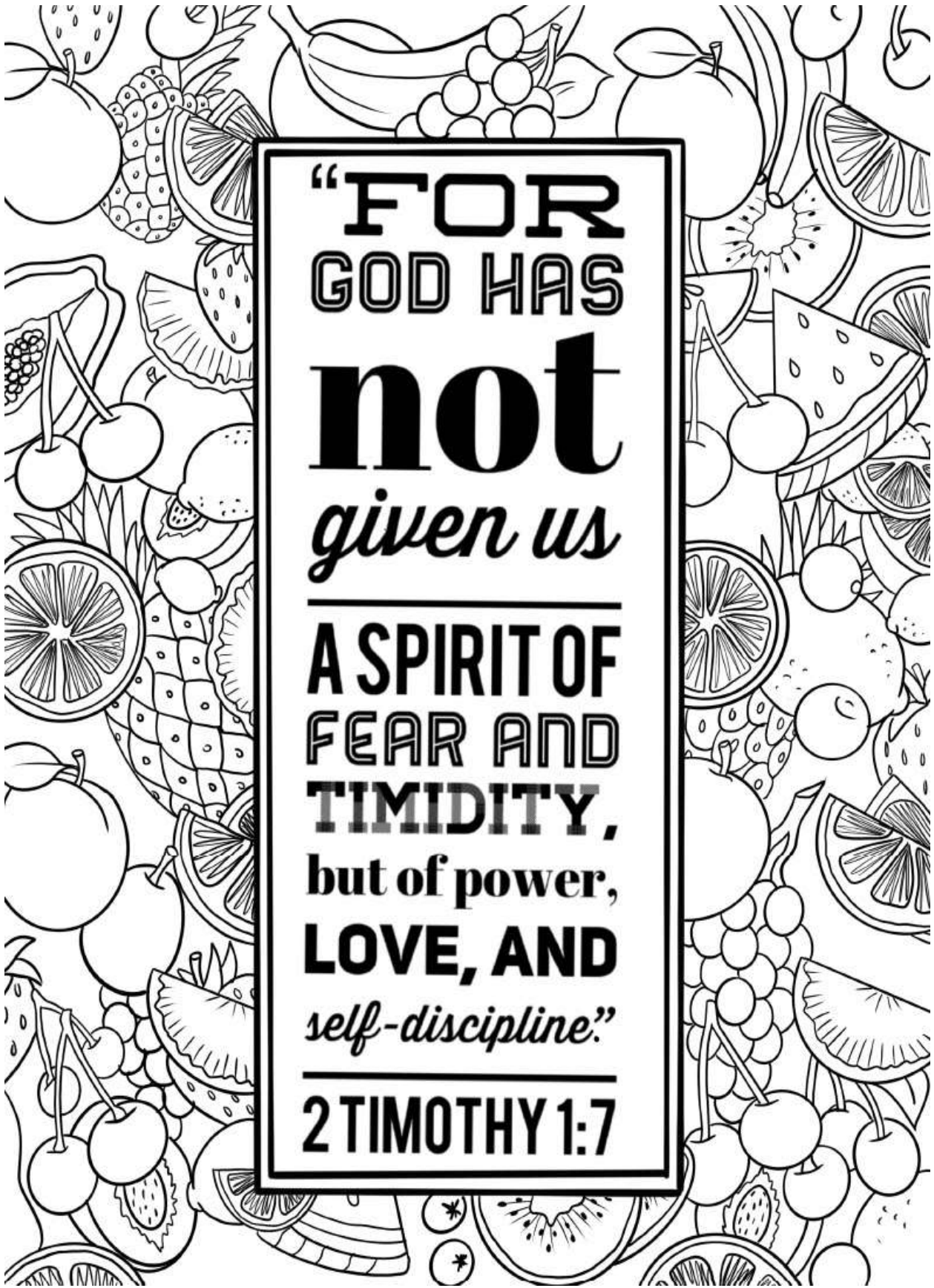
John Bunyan (1628-88)

You have been used to take notice of the sayings of dying men. This is mine: that a life spent in the service of God, and communion with Him, is the most beautiful and pleasant life that anyone can live in this world.

Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

*Earth recedes. Heaven opens before me. If this is death, it is sweet!
There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go.*

Dwight L. Moody (1837-99)



**“FOR
GOD HAS
not
*given us***

**A SPIRIT OF
FEAR AND
TIMIDITY,
but of power,
LOVE, AND
*self-discipline.”***

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

