

## 2 Timothy 1 Bible Study Commentary and Questions

### Outline

- I. Greetings (1-2)
- II. Affirmation of Timothy (2-7)
- III. Stand Firm in the Face of Persecution (8-18)

### Background:

2 Timothy was Paul's final epistle. Often we place special importance on people's "famous last words." These are the last recorded words of Paul. In 2 Timothy 4:6-9 he expresses his belief that he would die soon, that his journey as an apostle was almost over. Paul had been imprisoned in Rome before from around 61 to 63 AD. Most scholars believe he was temporarily released, and traveled on another missionary journey before being arrested and imprisoned again. We learn in Acts 28 that Paul's first imprisonment was akin to house arrest and he still enjoyed some amount of freedom.

Now it is likely 66-67 AD and he is in prison again. We see in 2 Timothy 2:6 that Paul is in chains, showing his second imprisonment is much more severe than his first. We see his loneliness starting in 4:9 and his longing to see his brothers and friends again. He mentions that Luke alone is with him and asks that Timothy come quickly. At the end of his life Paul is no longer allowed to travel on long missionary journeys. But his service to the Lord continues.

His heart is in making disciples. This had been the core of his ministry for decades. Nearing his death, the importance of discipleship was magnified even more. Paul's disciples would carry on the ministry of reproduction after he left. Because he had made disciples effectively and trained up men like Timothy the work could continue even without Paul. In this book we will take an in-depth look at the final instructions Paul leaves with his dearest disciple.

### I. Greetings (1-2)

#### Discussion Questions

- How and why did Paul become an apostle according to verse 1?
- Why is this significant?
- How did he view his relationship with Timothy?
- What can we learn about Timothy from the fact Paul called him his "beloved son?" Why did Paul call him this?

### Verse by Verse Commentary

1. Paul was chosen to be an apostle by God – In 1 Timothy 1:1, he says, "by the command of God." It wasn't Paul's choice. It wasn't Paul's plan. God chose Paul to do this task and Paul was compelled to obey.

What has God called you to do? Do you do it to the best of your ability?

2. To Timothy my beloved son – Paul clearly loved Timothy. Most scholars agree that Paul never married or had children. Timothy was like the son he never had. This is the kind of son every man should aspire to have. A son who loves God. A son who shares the same vision. A son who can do ministry together with the father. Paul trusted Timothy. He sent him to far away cities and gave him challenging tasks, believing that through God's grace he was up to the task.

While Paul affirms and empowers Timothy, he also continues to support him. He offers advice. He prays for Timothy. He is there for Timothy as a counselor and a mentor. If you want an example of how a father/son should relate to each other after the son has already grown up, Paul and Timothy are a good model to follow. If you have no children, you can still have the vision to raise up disciples (men or women) like Timothy.

## **II. Affirmation of Timothy (3-7)**

### **Discussion Questions**

- What do we learn in these verses about Paul's relationship with Timothy?
- Can we learn any "secret ingredients" of discipleship?
- How would you describe Paul's emotions toward Timothy?
- What did Paul's feelings of affection toward Timothy cause him to do?
- How does Paul affirm Timothy starting in verse 5
- What do we learn about how Timothy came to faith?
- What does he mean to "kindle afresh the gift of God?"
- What does the term "kindle afresh" imply about the dangers of complacency?
- Do you think believers are more excited about their faith in the first year or tenth year after believing in Christ?
- Why do new believers have that excitement and passion? Why do older believers sometimes lack that?
- How can we avoid becoming complacent in our Christian walks?
- In what ways might a timid spirit show itself? How can we demonstrate "power, love, and discipline?"

### **Cross-References**

On spiritual gifts:

Romans 12:4-8 – For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11- Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Romans 12:11 – Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Isaiah 59:17 – He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

Philippians 1:27 – Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.

Hebrews 6:12 – We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

## Verse by Verse Commentary

1. I thank God – When I grew up, my parents always told me to be thankful when people did kind things for me. Here we see that the reverse is also true. Parents should verbally express gratitude when their kids do well. They can express thanks to God for the good in their children's lives. They should also express thanks directly to their children. How is this similar or different to how parents treat their children in your culture?

Sometimes parents like to get together and complain about their children. A lot of pressure is put on children to live up to certain expectations. Pressuring, blaming, and comparing are all commonplace. Please do not follow the culture around you in raising your children. You can be an authority and discipline your children while still being kind and gracious to them.

Do you say “thank you” to your children? Do you say “please” to your children? Do you affirm your children when they do well? Do you thank God for the good in your children's lives? Or do you blame, complain, grow frustrated, and lose your temper?

**Application:** We should be polite and gracious and thankful. This applies not only to our physical children, but to our spiritual children, to disciples. Let us have a positive attitude. Let us “believe all things” and look for the best instead of focusing on the worst.

2. I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day – Discipleship (or raising children) is not easy. It takes a lot of work and effort. What kind of work goes in to discipleship? One of the most important areas about discipleship or raising children is prayer. Prayer is what goes on behind the scenes that the disciples or the children may never see or know about. But prayer is perhaps the most important ingredient of all. No matter how well you teach your children, you cannot make them believe in Christ. No matter how well you model a Christian life for your children, you cannot make them become an actual disciple of Christ. No matter how well you discipline your children and control their external behavior, you cannot control their heart.

The same applies to discipleship. You cannot make your Bible study students love God's word. You cannot make them pray. You cannot make them share the gospel. You cannot make them start fellowships. You cannot make them obey the Word. You cannot even make them do their homework. You cannot change people's hearts.

But God can. God is in the business of changing hearts. If you want someone's heart to change, pray for them. Don't just say a short prayer every now and then. Follow Paul's example to pray for that person night and day.

3. Longing to see you – Paul had a close relationship with Timothy. When he didn't see Timothy, he missed him. He enjoyed being around him. He enjoyed spending time together. Discipleship is also a time investment. It is not quick. It doesn't happen automatically. We should not view it as a burden. Some of us are naturally introverts. We might find it easier to isolate ourselves and spend time with ourselves rather than others. Some have said, “I am not a people person.” Well, guess what? God wants us all to be a “people person.” We should love people. Our love for people should motivate us to spend time with them and then when we do spend time with others use that time to invest spiritually in their lives.

4. Paul understood Timothy's spiritual situation and history – If we want to disciple others we should understand their spiritual background. That might require asking questions and learning about each other. At the

same time, we should happily share our testimony with those who ask. It is important to understand someone's spiritual environment so that we can disciple that person in their real life.

5. A godly heritage is a great blessing – Timothy was blessed with a mother and grandmother who also believed in God. Some of you too may be blessed with a godly heritage. People have blazed the way before you teaching you the gospel and praying for you. Be grateful for that. Also desire to raise up your children in the same way.

6. “I am sure that it is in you as well” – While his mother and grandmother's faith was a great blessing, Timothy had to have the same faith. It wasn't enough to grow up in a family who believed in God. As a wise person once said, “God has no grandchildren.” Each person is responsible in God's sight for their own life and decisions. A child who grew up in a Christian family must not rely on that. It is impossible to be “born a Christian.”

7. I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you – Complacency can be a dangerous thing for believers, especially believers who grew up in Christian families. New believers are often very excited and zealous for Christ. But sometimes after a few years they lose some of that excitement and passion. Sometimes their relationship with God or ministry becomes stale.

Evidently Paul thought that Timothy needed a spark. Perhaps he was going through the motions. Perhaps the challenges and difficulties and difficult people he faced slowly zapped his energy and enthusiasm.

### **Application Questions:**

Have any of you ever experienced similar feelings?

What can we do about it?

How can we “kind afresh” the gift of God (and the service for God) that is in us?

### **III. Stand Firm in the Face of Persecution (8-18)**

#### **Discussion Questions**

- What is the main theme of verses 8-18?
- Why might some believers have kept their distance from Paul?
- How does Paul exhort Timothy?
- What can we learn from his challenge to “not be ashamed of our Lord or of me His prisoner?”
- Is it possible for a believer to shirk away from identifying with other believers publicly, while still being bold for Christ? Why or why not?
- For what purpose has God saved us?
- For what reason does Paul suffer these things (12)?
- Why was Paul so bold (12)?
- What had he entrusted to Christ to guard for him? Until what day?
- What are sound words?
- How can you also retain the standard of sound words?
- What treasure had been entrusted to Timothy (14)? Is it also entrusted to you?
- How had other brothers reacted to Paul's imprisonment?
- What can we learn from the different reactions of Phygelaus, Hermogenes, and Onesiphorus?
- What can you do to be more like Onesiphorus?

#### **Cross-References**

Acts 28:31 – He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

Proverbs 28:1 – The wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

2 Corinthians 3:12 – Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

Acts 4:13 – When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Romans 8:37-39 – No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Timothy 4:6 – If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

### **Verse by Verse Commentary**

1. Do not be ashamed of God or Paul – Paul was a prisoner in Rome. We see in verse 15 that a number of believers had turned away from him. It wasn't beneficial to be known as a friend of Paul's. It was dangerous. Paul was going to be executed soon. It is similar to the night of Jesus' arrest. When Jesus was arrested, most of the disciples fled in fear. Peter himself denied Jesus. They were afraid of being caught up in the same net as Jesus and being punished alongside him.

It is the same thing that some of the people around Paul were afraid of. Paul encourages Timothy not to be like them. He encourages Timothy to be brave and stand up for God and also not be ashamed of his relationship with Paul. What is the link between these two things?

Jesus said that a light on a hill cannot be hidden. He also said that whatever we do to the "least of these" we do also for Him. In 1 John 4:20 we learn that if we do not love the brother whom we see, we cannot love God whom we don't see. The way to serve God is to serve the people around us. The way to love God is to love the people around us. The way to be bold for God is to boldly identify with other believers around us.

Doing these things could result in suffering. There is no guarantee in life that you will not suffer for Christ. In fact, persecution is one of the things promised in the Bible to believers. Let us join together in standing together for Christ in a dark world and not compromising or hiding no matter what.

2. Verse 9 – God is worthy of our complete faith and commitment. He chose us. He called us. He saved us. He did all of these things for a reason. He wants us to be holy. He wants us to use our lives for Him. Hiding or running when things become difficult is a waste of the gift God has given to us.

3. Verse 10 – In the Old Testament salvation was largely a mystery. God planned it before the beginning of the world. But He did not fully reveal that plan until the time of Christ who showed us clearly just what the gospel is.

4. For which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher – Paul knew what he was called to do. He knew whom he served. His ministry was Christ focused because Christ is the central figure in God's entire plan. The Bible is important, but the Bible doesn't save us. The Holy Spirit is God, but He didn't die on the cross. Church was established by God, but it is a means to draw closer to Christ. We are not followers of a religion. We are not followers of a set of creeds or doctrines. We are followers of Christ.

When people ask you what denomination you are we should not answer “Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian...” We should answer, “I am a follower of Christ.” The greatest news on earth is that Christ “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” Telling people this was the whole purpose of Paul’s ministry.

We should not walk around with an agenda to win people to other than Christ. We should not be distracted by controversies or silly arguments. We too are called by Christ and appointed to serve Him. We have been appointed as ambassadors, heralds, evangelists, teachers, etc.

**Application:**

Are you doing your job? Are you introducing people to Christ? Is Christ the center of your life or is something else taking the priority. All of us call ourselves Christians. Does Christ come first or do y