

**2 Timothy 1**  
**April 24, 2022**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: What do you think are the key elements of a discipleship relationship? Whether you are the one discipling another (like your kids), or you are the “disciplee,” what drives a healthy discipleship relationship? [Let people engage]

**Transition:**

Paul is a wonderful example of someone who has discipled many over his lifetime, and especially Timothy! As background, 2 Timothy is one of the three pastoral epistles written by Paul along with 1 Timothy and Titus. Paul wrote this letter around 64-67 AD to Timothy from the dark confines of a Roman prison. This is his second imprisonment in Rome, but this fact did not stop him from spreading the gospel! We will soon see Paul’s personal relationship with Timothy as he exhorts Timothy to endure in suffering, pursue godliness and be zealous for the gospel no matter what obstacles he may face.

Let’s begin with a reading of chapter 1 and enjoy observing a healthy discipleship relationship between Paul and Timothy. The elements you brought out at the beginning of our lesson will be seen in our reading. Would someone volunteer to read the first chapter aloud?

**BOOK:**

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

**2** To Timothy, my dear son:

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

**Encouragement to Be Faithful**

**3** I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. **4** Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. **5** I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. **6** For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. **7** For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

**8** So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, **9** who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, **10** but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. **11** And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. **12** That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I

know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

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

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

<sup>16</sup> May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. <sup>17</sup> On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. <sup>18</sup> 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.

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

- Their affection for one another
- Paul's attitude to persecution
- Paul did not fear death – his basis for confidence
- Believers' response to evil – guard the gospel!
- The call to preachers
- Paul's steadfast commitment to the Lord and gospel in spite of suffering and impending death
- The reminder that Christ conquered death, and we will live for all of eternity with Him
- The importance of trust
- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit
- Paul reminds Timothy what the mission of the church is
- His motivation for evangelism

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

- The reminder that believers will suffer as a part of serving the Lord

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn't understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

### **LOOK:**

In these difficult days, it is important that we stand true to Christ and be willing to suffer for Him and not be ashamed. We may not be put into prison, as was Paul; but we suffer in other ways: the loss of friends, being bypassed for a promotion, loss of customers, being snubbed by people, etc. It is also important that we stand by God's servants who are suffering for righteousness' sake.

### **Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

***Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 2, pp. 240–244). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.***

## **CHRISTIANS COURAGEOUS!**

### *2 Timothy 1*

When Paul wrote the letter we know as 2 Timothy, his situation had changed drastically. He was now a prisoner in Rome and was facing certain death (2 Tim. 4:6). For one reason or another, almost all of Paul's associates in the ministry were gone and only Luke was at the apostle's side to assist him (2 Tim. 4:11). It was a dark hour indeed.

But Paul's great concern was not for himself; it was for Timothy and the success of the Gospel ministry. As in his First Letter to Timothy, Paul encouraged his beloved colleague to be faithful. As we have learned, Timothy was timid, suffered from physical ailments, and was tempted to let other people take advantage of him and not assert his authority as a pastor.

Paul sent Tychicus to replace Timothy at Ephesus so that Timothy might join Paul at Rome (2 Tim. 4:9, 12). God would soon move Paul off the scene, and Timothy would take his place and continue to give spiritual leadership to the churches. It would not be an easy task, but Timothy could succeed with the Lord's help. In his first chapter, Paul gave Timothy three essentials that he must possess to have success.

### **Courageous Enthusiasm (2 Tim. 1:1–7)**

The ministry of the Gospel is no place for a "timid soul" who lacks enthusiasm. In fact, courageous enthusiasm is essential for success in *any* kind of work. Paul compared this attitude to stirring up a fire into full flame (2 Tim. 1:6). We must not conclude that Timothy was backslidden or lacked spiritual fire. Rather, Paul was encouraging his associate to keep the fire burning brightly so that it might generate spiritual power in his life. Paul gave Timothy four encouragements.

***Paul's love (vv. 1–2).*** "Timothy, my dearly beloved son" is much stronger than "Timothy, my own son in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2). It is not that Paul loved Timothy less when he wrote that first letter, but that Paul was now expressing it more. As Paul's life drew to a close, he realized in a deeper way how dear Timothy was to him.

Paul's own circumstances were difficult, and yet he was greatly encouraged. For one thing, he was Christ's ambassador ("apostle"); and he knew that his Master would care for him. Whatever happened to him was in the hands of God, so there was no need to fear. Furthermore, Paul had "the promise of life" in Jesus Christ, and Christ had defeated death (2 Tim. 1:10). No wonder Paul was able to extend to Timothy "grace, mercy, and peace." (It is worth noting that Paul added "mercy" to his greetings when he wrote to the pastors—1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4. Paul knew that pastors need mercy!)

***Paul's prayers (vv. 3–4).*** What an encouragement to know that the great apostle was praying for him! Paul, who knew Timothy's weaknesses and problems, was able to pray definitely and with a real burden on his heart. His praying was not routine; it was done with compassion and

concern. Knowing that he would soon die, Paul was anxious that Timothy join him at Rome for those last days of fellowship and ministry. This would bring joy to Paul's heart.

We must not assume that Paul tried to defend his evil actions before his conversion by claiming he did it all with "a pure conscience." After all, he was guilty of causing terror among Christians, forcing people to blaspheme by denying Christ, and agreeing to the murder of Stephen! It is true that Paul thought he was serving God (see John 16:2), and that he was in spiritual ignorance (1 Tim. 1:13), but these facts cannot guarantee a pure conscience.

Paul had known God from his earliest years because he was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5). His ancestors had given him the orthodox Jewish faith. But when he met Jesus Christ, Paul realized that his Jewish faith was but preparation for the fulfillment Christ gave him in Christianity. He did not serve God with a pure conscience "from his forefathers," as the *King James Version* says. Rather, he heard about the true God from his forefathers; and *now* he was serving that God with a pure conscience. The fact that he had a pure conscience helped give power to his prayers.

***Paul's confidence in Timothy (v. 5).*** Paul did not think that Timothy's tears were evidence of failure or insincerity. Paul was sure that Timothy's faith was genuine, and that this faith would see him through in spite of the troubles he was facing. Apparently, Lois, Timothy's grandmother, was the first one in the family won to Christ; then his mother, Eunice, was converted. Timothy's father was a Greek (Acts 16:1), so Eunice had not practiced the orthodox Jewish faith. However, Timothy's mother and grandmother had seen to it that he was taught the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15); and this was great preparation for the hearing of the Gospel. When Paul came to Lystra on his first missionary journey, that was probably the occasion for Timothy's conversion. When Paul returned on his second journey, he enlisted Timothy into Christian service.

Paul had watched Timothy's life and service during those years they were together. He was certain that Timothy's faith was genuine. In fact, Timothy's heritage was a great one; for he was reared in a godly home, trained by a wonderful apostle, and given marvelous opportunities for serving the Lord.

***God's gift to Timothy (vv. 6–7).*** Paul reminded Timothy of the time God called him into service and the local church ordained him. Paul had laid his hands on Timothy (1 Tim. 4:14). Through Paul, God had imparted to Timothy the spiritual gift he needed for his ministry. The laying on of hands was a common practice in apostolic days (Acts 6:6; 13:3), but no believer today has the same authority and privileges that the Apostles did. Today, when we lay hands on people for the ministry, it is a symbolic act and does not necessarily impart any special spiritual gifts to them.

It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to serve God, and through Him we can overcome fear and weakness. The word *fear* in 2 Timothy 1:7 means "timidity, cowardice." The Holy Spirit gives us power for witness and for service (Acts 1:8). It is futile for us to try to serve God without the power of the Holy Spirit. Talent, training, and experience cannot take the place of the power of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit also gives us love. If we have love for lost souls and for the people of God, we will be able to endure suffering and accomplish the work of God. Selfishness leads to fear because, if we are selfish, we are interested only in what we will get out of serving God, and we will be afraid of losing prestige, power, or money. True Christian love, energized by the Spirit (Rom. 5:5), enables us to sacrifice for others and not be afraid. The Spirit gives love (Gal. 5:22).

He is also the One who gives self-control ("a sound mind"). This word is related to the words *sober* and *sobriety* that we often meet in the pastoral letters (1 Tim. 2:9, 15; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 4, 6,

12). “Self-discipline” is a better translation of “sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7). It describes a person who is sensibly minded and balanced, who has his life under control. The *Amplified Version* reads, “calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control.”

Timothy did not need any new spiritual ingredients in his life; all he had to do was “stir up” what he already had. Paul had written in his first letter, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee” (1 Tim. 4:14). Now he added, “Stir up—stir into flame—the gift of God.” The Holy Spirit does not leave us when we fail (John 14:16); but He cannot fill us, empower us, and use us if we neglect our spiritual lives. It is possible to grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30) and quench the Spirit (1 Thes. 5:19).

Timothy had every reason to be encouraged and to have spiritual enthusiasm in his ministry. Paul loved him and prayed for him. His experiences in life had been preparation for his ministry, and Paul was confident of the genuineness of Timothy’s faith. The Spirit within him would give all the power needed for ministry. What more could he want?

### **Shameless Suffering (2 Tim. 1:8–12)**

“Not ashamed” is a key idea in this chapter: Paul was not ashamed (2 Tim. 1:12); he admonished Timothy not to be ashamed (2 Tim. 1:8); and he reported that Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul’s chain (2 Tim. 1:16).

***Be not ashamed of the Lord’s testimony (vv. 8–10).*** Timothy’s natural timidity might make it easy for him to avoid circumstances that demanded witness and involved suffering. Once again, Paul gave his associate needed encouragement.

*God gives us power (v. 8).* By nature, none of us enjoys suffering. Even our Lord prayed, “Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me” (Luke 22:42); and Paul prayed three times for God to remove his painful thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7–8). But suffering may well be a part of a faithful Christian life. Christians should not suffer because they have done wrong (1 Peter 2:20; 3:17); rather, they sometimes suffer because they have done right and served God. When we suffer for doing good, then we are sharing Christ’s sufferings (Phil. 3:10) and suffering on behalf of the whole church (Col. 1:24).

Years ago, I read about a Christian who was in prison because of his faith. He was to be burned at the stake, and he was certain he would never be able to endure the suffering. One night, he experimented with pain by putting his little finger into the candle flame. It hurt, and he immediately withdrew it. “I will disgrace my Lord,” he said to himself. “I cannot bear the pain.” But when the hour came for him to die, he praised God and gave a noble witness for Jesus Christ. God gave him the power *when he needed it*, and not before.

*God has called us by His grace (v. 9).* We are part of a great eternal plan that God determined “before the world began.” God knows the end from the beginning. He has purposes for His people to accomplish for His glory. Suffering is a part of His plan. Jesus Christ suffered in the will of God here on earth, and all those who trust in Him will also suffer.

The emphasis in this verse is on *grace*. God saved us; we did not save ourselves (Eph. 2:8–9; Titus 3:5). He called us, not on the basis of our good works, but wholly on the basis of His grace. It is His purposes that we are to fulfill; and if these purposes include suffering, then we can accept it by faith and know that God’s will is best. This is not fatalism. It is confidence in the wise plan of our gracious Heavenly Father.

All of this grace was given to us in Jesus Christ. We could not earn it; we did not merit it. This is the grace of God!

*Christ has defeated death (v. 10).* When we are timid it is because we are afraid. Of what are we afraid? Suffering and possible death? Paul himself was facing death as he dictated this letter. But Jesus Christ has defeated our last enemy, death! By His own death and resurrection, Christ has “abolished death” (made it inoperative, taken out the sting). “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. 15:55)

Christ was not only the Destroyer of death (see Heb. 2:14–15), but He was also the Revealer of life and immortality. In the Old Testament the doctrines of eternal life, death, resurrection, and the eternal state were in the shadows. Here and there you find glimpses of light; but for the most part, the picture is dark. But then Jesus Christ shone His light on death and the grave. Through the Gospel, He has given us assurance of eternal life, resurrection, and the hope of heaven.

Religious groups that teach “soul sleep” and other strange doctrines usually get their ideas from the Psalms and Ecclesiastes. Instead of allowing the clear light of the New Testament to shine on the Old, they look at the New through the shadows of the Old! If you turn your back on the light of the Gospel, you will only cast another shadow and make the scene darker.

“Immortality” (2 Tim. 1:10, KJV) means “incorruptibility,” and refers to the resurrection body. The present body is corruptible; it dies and decays. But the glorified body we shall have when we see Christ will not be subject to decay or death (1 Cor. 15:49–58; Phil. 3:21). In fact, the heavenly inheritance that we share will be “incorruptible and undefiled, and [one] that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 1:4).

***Be not ashamed of the Lord’s prisoner (vv. 11–12).*** Though a prisoner, Paul was still bearing witness for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sad to say, the people in Ephesus had deserted Paul in his time of need (2 Tim. 1:15). Many of them could have come to Rome to witness on Paul’s behalf, but they did not. They were even ashamed to be identified with the apostle! It would have made Timothy’s ministry in Ephesus (and in the surrounding cities; see 2 Tim. 4:13) much easier if he had gone along with the crowd; but Paul admonished him to remain true. He gave four reasons why Timothy should not be ashamed of his association with Paul, the prisoner.

*Paul was called by God (v. 11).* Jesus Christ had met Paul on the Damascus road (Acts 9) and had personally called him into the ministry. Paul was a *herald* (“preacher”) of the Gospel. In ancient times, a “herald” was the official messenger of the king or emperor, and his message was treated with great respect. The fact that professed believers in Asia were rejecting Paul did not change his calling or his message.

Paul was not only a herald; he was also *an apostle*, “one sent with a commission.” Not every Christian was an apostle of Jesus Christ, for a person had to meet certain qualifications and be chosen by the Lord personally, or through His Spirit (see Acts 1:15–26; 1 Cor. 9:1; 2 Cor. 12:12). An apostle represented Jesus Christ. To reject an apostle was to reject the Lord.

*Paul was a teacher of the Gentiles.* This meant that he shepherded local churches. It was this word *Gentiles* that put him into prison in Rome the first time (Acts 22:21ff). The Gentile believers in Asia should have shown their appreciation of Paul by rallying to his support, for after all, it was Paul who brought them the Good News of salvation. But instead they were ashamed of him and tried not to get involved.

*Paul was confident in Christ (v. 12).* Paul was not ashamed! Why? Because he knew that Christ was faithful and would keep him. Note his emphasis on the person of Christ: “I know *whom* I have believed.” Salvation is not the result of believing certain doctrines, though doctrines are important. A sinner is saved because he believes in a Person—Jesus Christ the Saviour. Paul had deposited his soul in the care and keeping of the Saviour, and Paul was sure that Jesus Christ would faithfully guard that deposit. What difference did it make to Paul what happened on any

certain day? What really mattered is what will happen on “that day” when Jesus Christ rewards His servants (see 2 Tim. 1:18; 4:8).

In these difficult days, it is important that we stand true to Christ and be willing to suffer for Him and not be ashamed. We may not be put into prison, as was Paul; but we suffer in other ways: the loss of friends, being bypassed for a promotion, loss of customers, being snubbed by people, etc. It is also important that we stand by God’s servants who are suffering for righteousness’ sake.

### **Spiritual Loyalty (2 Tim. 1:13–18)**

Throughout the centuries God’s work has been done by men and women who stood steadfast in their hours of trial. It would have been convenient for them to have compromised, but they stood firm. Paul was such a man, and he encouraged Timothy to follow his example in a twofold loyalty.

***Be loyal to God’s Word (vv. 13–14).*** God had given the deposit of spiritual truth to Paul (1 Tim. 1:11), and he had given it to Timothy (1 Tim. 6:20). It was now Timothy’s solemn responsibility to “hold fast” (2 Tim. 1:13) and “guard” (2 Tim. 1:14, NIV) the precious deposit of Christian truth, and to pass it along to others (2 Tim. 2:2).

The word *form* (2 Tim. 1:13) means “a pattern, an architect’s sketch.” There was a definite outline of doctrine in the early church, a standard by which teaching was tested. If Timothy changed this outline or abandoned it, then he would have nothing by which to test other teachers and preachers. We today need to hold fast to what Paul taught for the same reason.

However, note that Timothy’s orthodoxy was to be tempered with “faith and love.” “Speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15) is the divine pattern. How easy it is to become pugnacious in our desire to defend the faith, or a witch-hunter who creates problems.

It was the Holy Spirit who committed the truth to Timothy, and He would help him guard it. Apart from the ministry of the Spirit, we are in the dark when it comes to understanding the Word of God. It is He who must teach us (John 16:13) and enable us to guard the truth and share it with others.

From the beginning of human history, Satan has opposed God’s Word. “Yea, hath God said?” was Satan’s first word to mankind (Gen. 3:1), and he continues to ask that question. Throughout the history of the church, the Word of God has been attacked, often by people *within* the church; yet it still stands today. Why? Because dedicated men and women have (like Paul and Timothy) guarded the deposit and faithfully handed it to a new generation of Christians. When a church or any other Christian organization goes liberal, it usually starts with a weakening of their leaders’ convictions about the Word of God.

***Be loyal to God’s servant (vv. 15–18).*** The province of Asia in that day comprised the Roman districts of Lydia, Mysia, Caria, and Phrygia. Paul was forbidden to minister in this area on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:6); but on his third journey, he stayed nearly three years in Ephesus, the capital of Asia, and evangelized the entire area (Acts 19; 20:31). The seven churches of Asia were all in this area (Rev. 1:4, 11).

We do not know who Phygelus and Hermogenes (2 Tim. 1:15) were. It is likely that they were leaders in the church who opposed Paul and would not come to his defense in Rome. You would think that the Asian believers would have stood by Paul; but, instead, they were ashamed of him and at the same time (whether they knew it or not) ashamed of Christ (see 2 Tim. 4:16).

It was certainly a dark hour for Paul. Demas had forsaken him (2 Tim. 4:10). His other associates had been sent to distant places of ministry. False doctrines were spreading in the

church (2 Tim. 2:17–18). How Paul would have loved to be free to preach the Word and defend the faith—but he was in a Roman prison. It was up to Timothy to get the job done.

But there was one man who dared to leave Ephesus and come to Rome to assist Paul—Onesiphorus. His name means “profit-bearing,” and he certainly was a profitable friend to Paul. It is possible that he was a deacon in the church at Ephesus (“ministered” in 2 Tim. 1:18 comes from the word that gives us “deacon”). During Paul’s ministry at Ephesus, Onesiphorus was a faithful minister, along with his household. Since Timothy had pastored the Ephesian church, he would know this choice saint.

Let me add here that every pastor is thankful for those faithful members who assist him in the work of the Lord. My wife and I have found choice saints in each of the three churches we have served — people whose homes were open to us (and they didn’t tell the whole church we were there!), whose hearts felt our burdens and needs, and whose prayers sustained us in difficult times. These believers minister behind the scenes, but the Lord will reward them openly “in that day” (2 Tim. 1:18).

Onesiphorus traveled from Ephesus to Rome and diligently looked for Paul so he might minister to the prisoner’s needs. It seemed difficult for him to find his former pastor (2 Tim. 1:17). Perhaps some of the Roman Christians were still opposed to Paul as they had been during his first imprisonment (see Phil. 1:12–17). Perhaps the Roman officials were not cooperative and did not want their choice prisoner to receive any help. In his first imprisonment, Paul was in his own house (Acts 28:30); but now he was in a Roman prison under careful guard.

But Onesiphorus persisted! He located Paul and risked his own life to stand with him and assist him. Some students believe that Onesiphorus was also arrested and possibly executed. They base this on the fact that Paul greeted the “household of Onesiphorus” in 2 Timothy 4:19, but not the man himself. Also, Paul asked for *present* mercies for the household, but *future* mercies for Onesiphorus (2 Tim. 1:16, 18).

But the problem is this: If Onesiphorus was dead, then Paul prayed for the dead (2 Tim. 1:18); and we have no authorization in the Bible to pray for the dead.

We have no proof that Onesiphorus was dead when Paul wrote this letter. The fact that Paul asked God to bless the man’s household, but that he did not mention the man, simply means that at the time Onesiphorus was not with his household. “When he *was* in Rome” (2 Tim. 1:17) suggests that, at that writing, Onesiphorus was not in Rome. Therefore, he was somewhere between Rome and Ephesus; so Paul prayed for him and his household. There was no need to greet Onesiphorus, for Paul had just spent much time with him; so Paul only greeted his household.

Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul’s chain. The apostle was manacled to a Roman soldier twenty-four hours a day. Onesiphorus could have invented many excuses for staying in Ephesus. But instead he made the dangerous journey to Rome and ministered to Paul. “He often refreshed me” was Paul’s description of this man’s ministry. The Greek word means “to cool again.” “Bracing me like fresh air” is the way the *Amplified Bible* translated it. How we thank God for Christians who are “a breath of fresh air” in our hours of trial!

Were it not for Paul’s letter, we would never know that Onesiphorus had served Paul and the church. But the Lord knew and will reward him “on that day.”

The essentials for a successful ministry have not changed: courageous enthusiasm, shameless suffering, and spiritual loyalty.



**Litfin, A. D. (1985). 1 Timothy. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 749-752) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books**

## I. Salutation (1:1–2).

1:1–2. In his typical fashion **Paul** began this letter identifying himself as **an apostle of Christ Jesus**, a reminder Timothy hardly needed. No doubt this is another indication that Paul knew he was writing first to Timothy but ultimately to a much wider audience. In his first letter to the young pastor Paul said his apostleship was “by the command of God” (1 Tim. 1:1). Here Paul said it was **by the will of God**. The two are essentially synonymous. The words **according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus** are intentionally vague. They relate to Paul’s apostleship (not the will of God), but did they refer to a promise of life Paul personally received, or to a promise he was to proclaim to others? In other words was his apostleship “because of” the promise or “in conformity to” the promise? The Greek word *kata* (here ambiguously translated “according to”) allows the two to merge. The promise of life in Christ, the gospel, was the reason for and the yardstick of Paul’s apostleship (cf. Titus 1:2–3). **To Timothy, my dear son** (lit., “child”) once again (cf. “my true son” in 1 Tim. 1:2) emphasizes the close fatherly relationship Paul maintained with his *protégé*, if not his convert. The remainder of the greeting duplicates 1 Timothy exactly (cf. 1 Tim. 1:2). (See the chart, “Paul’s Introductions to His Epistles” at Rom. 1:1–7.)

## II. Call to Faithfulness (1:3–18).

### A. Thanksgiving for Timothy (1:3–7).

1:3. In 1 Timothy Paul expressed thanks for his own salvation and ministry (1 Tim 1:12); here he began by expressing thanks for Timothy’s salvation and ministry. In passing, Paul referred to his own upbringing, just before he turned to Timothy’s (2 Tim. 1:5). The apostle viewed his own faith in Christ, not as a break with his Jewish **forefathers**, but in continuity with their faith. (Cf. **a clear conscience** with 1 Tim. 1:5, “a good conscience.”) As Paul prayed for Timothy **night and day**, his gratitude for Timothy kept welling up anew. Sitting chained in a Roman prison there was little else Paul could do but pray; and Timothy, perhaps Paul’s closest companion, ministering to the church that Paul probably knew best, was no doubt the single most common object of his petitions.

1:4. Paul remembered Timothy’s **tears** on their last parting, possibly at Paul’s second Roman arrest. In this letter he would ask Timothy to join him in Rome (cf. 4:9, 21). Paul had longed for Timothy’s companionship which was such a **joy** to him. Even the great apostle at times became lonely, discouraged, and in need of support from fellow Christians.

1:5. So many, it seems, had opposed or deserted Paul (cf. 1:15; 2:17; 3:1–9, 13; 4:3–4, 10–21) that Timothy’s **sincere** (*anypokritou*, “unhypocritical”; cf. 1 Tim. 1:5) **faith** stood out in bold relief. Paul attributed Timothy’s faith to the influence of his Jewish **mother Eunice** and **grandmother Lois**, both of whom were believers (cf. Acts 16:1). Timothy’s father was a Gentile and probably an unbeliever; hence no mention of him is made here. According to this verse, Paul seems to attribute Timothy’s conversion to his mother and grandmother (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15).

References to Timothy as Paul's son in the faith (cf. 1:2; 2:1; 1 Tim. 1:2) could therefore probably be understood to mean a mentor-*protégé* relationship.

1:6. Because Paul was persuaded that Timothy possessed true faith (v. 5), something he often refused to take for granted in others (e.g., 1 Thes. 3:5), he urged the young minister **to fan into flame** (or perhaps, “keep at full flame”) his God-given ability for ministry. God's gifts must be used if they are to reach and maintain their full potential. In Timothy's case, Paul wrote (1 Tim. 4:14) that his **gift** (*charisma*) had come “through” (*dia*) a prophetic message, “with” (*meta*) the laying on of the elder board's hands. Here Paul stated that the gift came “through” (*dia*) **the laying on of his own hands**. The language is highly imprecise and may reflect nothing more in the apostle's thinking than a general association between Timothy's ordination (which involved both a prophetic message and the laying on of hands by Paul and the elders) and the young man's awareness of his own abilities. Surely the language does not bear the weight of any detailed conclusions about how spiritual gifts are bestowed, much less full-blown theories of apostolic succession or of ordination as a means of grace.

1:7. Why Timothy needed this reminder of his ordination, and the confidence in his own gifts he developed as a result of it, is not clear. In 1 Timothy the reference to Timothy's ordination is associated with problems stemming from his youthfulness (cf. 1 Tim. 4:12). Perhaps he had become somewhat intimidated by the opposition to both Paul and the gospel, even in some ways threatened, defensive, and ashamed (cf. 2 Tim. 1:8) at having to defend a prisoner (cf. 2:9) and the “foolishness” which they both preached about a despised and crucified Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18–2:5). But such **timidity** (*deilias*, lit., “cowardice,” used only here in the NT) has no place in God's service. Instead **God** gives **a spirit of power** (cf. 1 Cor. 2:4), **of love** (cf. 1 Tim. 1:5), **and of self-discipline** (cf. 1 Tim. 4:7). These three virtues, each supplied by the Holy Spirit, should characterize Timothy.

#### *B. Call to courage (1:8–12).*

1:8. If Timothy's ministry were marked by power, love, and self-discipline, he would be able to stand tall against his opponents, and would **not be ashamed to testify about our Lord** (cf. 1 Cor. 1:6), **or ashamed of Paul His prisoner**. Though Paul was held in a Roman prison (cf. 2 Tim. 1:16; 2:9), yet he called himself Christ's prisoner—that is, a prisoner for Christ's sake and purpose (cf. Eph. 3:1; Phil. 1:12–14; Phile. 1, 9). With this reminder of his own condition, which was far graver than Timothy's, Paul exhorted Timothy to **join** courageously **with him in suffering for the gospel** (cf. 2 Tim. 2:3), for it is just in such circumstances that **the power of God** is made manifest (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9–10).

1:9–10. Having mentioned the gospel, Paul spelled out some of its most important details. God **saved us and called us to a holy life**. This is an accomplished fact, not something yet to come. Timothy could therefore count on God's power in his daily ministry. Moreover, this salvation had nothing to do with a believer's merits **but** was purely **because of His own purpose** (*prothesin*; cf. Rom. 8:28; 9:11; Eph. 1:11; 3:11) **and grace** (cf. 1 Tim. 1:14). This is the very core of the gospel (cf. Eph. 2:8–10). **Before the beginning of time** Christians were granted this unmerited favor, but were only made aware of it **through the appearing** (*epiphaneias*; 2 Thes. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13) **of our Savior, Christ Jesus**. Here and in Titus 1:4; 2:13; and 3:6 *Christ* is called Savior; in 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 2:10; and 3:4 *God* is titled Savior (cf. 2 Peter 1:1 with 3:18). Clearly both are in different senses true. Christ the Son embodied God the Father's saving purpose and plan, by which **death**, the product of sin (cf. Gen.

2:17; Rom. 5:12; 6:23), would be **destroyed** (1 Cor. 15:26), and **life and immortality** (lit., “incorruptibility”; cf. 1 Peter 1:4) would be brought into view.

1:11–12. Little wonder that Paul called this **gospel** “glorious” (1 Tim. 1:11). It is the most important message ever told. Paul had been **appointed** to serve as **a herald and an apostle and a teacher** of this message (cf. 1 Tim. 2:7), three roles which merely reflect different facets of the stewardship entrusted to him (1 Tim. 1:11). Carrying out his stewardship had brought Paul much **suffering**, including his present imprisonment. In the eyes of the world he was a common criminal (cf. 2 Tim. 2:9). Yet he was able to say, **I am not ashamed**. He was trusting his own destiny to the same One who had **entrusted** him with the stewardship of the gospel. Thus, even though he was suffering abuse and humiliation, he was confident of God’s complete vindication in the end (cf. 1:18; 4:8). Throughout, of course, Paul was using his own example to bolster Timothy’s perhaps flagging courage.

### *C. Call to guard the truth (1:13–14).*

1:13. From the example of his life, Paul turned to the example or **pattern** (*hypotypōsin*; cf. 1 Tim. 1:16) of his teaching. Timothy was to view what he had **heard from** Paul as the essential outline or sketch of **sound teaching** (lit., “healthy doctrine”; cf. 1 Tim. 1:10) and was to **keep** or maintain it. Timothy was to hold the truth **with faith and love in Christ Jesus**. To be balanced, a commitment to the truth always requires faith and love, virtues which ultimately come only from being “in Christ” (1 Tim. 1:14).

1:14. Paul used the notion of a “trust” (*parathēkēn*; cf. 1 Tim. 5:21; 6:20) in two ways in the Pastorals. First, he had been given a trust or stewardship from God (cf. 1 Tim. 1:11); second, he had in turn **entrusted** himself and his destiny to God (2 Tim. 1:12). Here Paul spoke of the first of these two. The stewardship of the truth he had received had now been passed along into the hands of Timothy, who was to pass it on yet again to other faithful Christians, who were to pass it on to still others (2:2). While it was in Timothy’s possession, however, he was to **guard** (*phylaxōn*; cf. 1 Tim. 5:21; 6:20) **it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us**. It was Timothy’s responsibility to preserve sound teaching from becoming corrupted through distortion, dilution, deletion, and addition. Heretical teaching was not only a possibility to Paul; it was a constant threat to be guarded against. Moreover, Timothy could count on the assistance of the indwelling Spirit of God (cf. 1 John 3:24; 4:13) who desires to promote the truth about Christ (John 16:13).

### *D. Examples of unfaithfulness and faithfulness (1:15–18).*

1:15. Nothing is known of **Phygelus and Hermogenes** beyond this single reference. It is fair to conjecture that theirs may have been the most unexpected defections among the group represented by **everyone in the province of Asia**, of which Ephesus was the leading city. (See the location of Asia and of Ephesus on the map between Acts and Rom.) Perhaps they were leaders of some sort. Timothy certainly knew their situation well, in any case, and Paul singled them out. It is unnecessary to assume either (a) that “everyone” means literally every Christian, or (b) that their failure consisted of a total defection from the faith. Verses 16–18 suggest rather that there was a general failure to support the apostle in his personal time of need.

1:16–18. From these sad examples of unfaithfulness, Paul turned to the sparkling instance of **Onesiphorus** (mentioned elsewhere only in 4:19), who had supported Paul not only **in Ephesus** but also **in Rome**. Repeatedly he had gone out of his way to help Paul, even to the point of

following him to Rome and painstakingly seeking out his whereabouts. There, despite Paul's imprisonment and the stigma attached to it, Onesiphorus remained unfazed, continuing his faithful ministry without hesitation. For all of this Paul commended him, twice invoking God's **mercy** (1:16, 18) on both the faithful servant and his **household**.

The contrast between the faithful and the unfaithful, the strong and the weak, the trustworthy and the unreliable, is striking. The many in Asia (v. 15) portray the very things Paul had been warning Timothy against—cowardice, shame, self-indulgence, infidelity. Onesiphorus, on the other hand, demonstrated the characteristics Paul had been recommending to Timothy—courage, love, self-discipline, boldness, and faithfulness. Clearly the negative and the positive examples were designed to strengthen Timothy's resolve to be counted among those who were willing to stand shoulder to shoulder with the apostle.

*Dockery, D. S. (1998). The Pauline Letters. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (p. 608). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.*

## INTRODUCTION (1:1–7)

Paul began this letter in a similar way to 1 Timothy. In the first letter Paul greeted Timothy as “my true son in the faith.” Here it is “my dear son.”

Paul offered thanks for Timothy's heritage and for God's gift to Timothy. Paul appealed to helpful reminiscences and urged Timothy to stir up his gift. Gifts are not given fully developed; they need to be strengthened and matured through use.

## KEEP THE FAITH (1:8–18)

In light of the gift that had been divinely given to Timothy, Paul urged him not to be ashamed “to testify about our Lord.” Paul also urged Timothy not to be ashamed of “me his prisoner.” The aged apostle wanted to strengthen the courage of his young colleague.

Paul offered a strong admonition to Timothy to keep the faith in the midst of suffering. The apostle's appeal was based on his testimony of God's grace in his own experience. Timothy was to guard the gospel that Paul had entrusted to him. This was possible only through the enabling “help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”

During this time the apostle had been deserted by Phygelus and Hermogenes. Perhaps this took place when Paul was arrested and taken to Rome for his final imprisonment. In contrast to the actions of the majority, some, such as Onesiphorus, helpfully befriended Paul. Those must have been difficult days for Paul, forsaken by friends and facing imminent death. It is hard to understand why God's servants suffer like this, but for Paul it was a privilege not only to believe in Christ “but also to suffer for him” (Phil. 1:29).

*Fields, W. C. (1972). 1 Timothy. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (pp. 766–767). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.*

## INTRODUCTION

Rome burned in July, A.D. 64. Needing a scapegoat, Emperor Nero blamed the Christians. Persecution began. From that time onward until the days of Constantine and A.D. 325, Christianity was an illegal religion. To complicate matters further, the Jewish rebellion against

Rome was rising. Christianity's connection with the Jews was well known, a fact which added to the guilt of every Christian in the eyes of the imperial authorities.

Paul was known widely as a leader of the Christians. When the Christians were branded as public enemies, Paul's name would be first on the list for extermination. Nero's administration would be aware of his long prison record—in Rome, Philippi, Caesarea, and elsewhere. It would not take them long to track him down and on a charge of sedition or treason get court orders for his execution.

*Occasion:* Paul had expected to spend the winter at Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). His arrest may have occurred there. We do not know what the actual charge was, but this time he has no hope of release (2 Tim. 4:18). It is dangerous for anyone to be associated with him (3:11). The letter may have been written from either Nicopolis or Rome. He was executed, according to tradition, on the Ostian Way outside the walls of the city of Rome. This was his last letter.

*Author:* the apostle Paul.

*Date:* probably the fall of A.D. 64, although some scholars argue for a later time.

*Purpose:* He wants Timothy and John Mark to visit him as quickly as possible, before winter (4:21). In case they do not arrive in time, he has some final requests about the churches. We do not know if they saw him before his death.

*Central message:* "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ..." (4:7–8).

### **Salutation (2 Tim. 1:1–2)**

The affectionate greeting to Timothy as "my dearly beloved son" emphasizes the bond between them which lasted to the end.

### **Charge to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:3–18)**

A recurring note in Paul's epistles is his remembrance of associates and friends in prayer. He prays for Timothy "night and day." In his prison cell he finds joy and gratitude in the sincere faith which a mother and grandmother had helped to instill in Timothy (vv. 3–5).

God has endowed Timothy with a special gift, a commitment. He must keep it burning at white hot heat (v. 6). He has the resources for boldness in his task (v. 7). No shame or hesitation should hamper him, not even Paul's imprisonment and apparent defeat at the hands of his enemies (v. 8). Rather on the basis of Paul's own experience of victory-in-defeat, Timothy likewise can face trouble unafraid (vv. 9–15). The gospel has never disappointed Paul.

Some of the Christians from Asia Minor—two are named—had repudiated Paul. The stress was too much for them. But one man, Onesiphorus from Ephesus, was an exception. He went out of his way in Rome to help Paul (vv. 16–18).

**The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (2 Tim 1). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.**