

The Book of 2 Timothy

Introduction and Date

This letter is some years after Paul wrote 1 Timothy, and the events in the Roman world have changed dramatically. Paul was a prisoner in a Roman dungeon when he wrote this, the last of his epistles, to Timothy (1:8, 16; 4:6-13). The date, as best it can be established, was approximately A.D. 67. Not long afterward, according to tradition, the apostle was beheaded. [Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70.]

Ever since Rome had burned in July of A.D. 64, and the emperor Nero had blamed the Christians, it had become dangerous to be a Christian. It was also dangerous to have contact with leaders of the church such as Paul. Consequently many believers, including some of Paul's coworkers, had chosen to seek a much lower profile and become less aggressive in their ministries. Timothy faced the temptation to do the same.

Rather than theological, the purpose of 2 Timothy was highly personal, to encourage Timothy in his ministry at Ephesus. The primary theme of the letter is the need for faithfulness in the face of hardship.

As Paul's final farewell address (see Acts 20), this book compares with the last words of Moses (Deut. 31:1-8), Joshua (Josh. 23), David (1 Kings 2:1-9), the Lord Jesus (John 13-16), and Peter (2 Peter).

Chapter 1

I. Salutation (1:1-2)

Verse 1—*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God*—in 1 Timothy 1:1, he said his apostleship was *according to the commandment of God*. Of course, the two things are synonymous. God's commandment is according to His will. Timothy knew Paul was an apostle. Possibly Paul includes it here knowing this letter will be read by the believers in Ephesus, as the second half of the book deals with the Ephesian opponents (2:14-3:9; 4:3-4, 14-15), so he added his apostolic authority.

—*according to* [“in harmony with” or “because of”] *the promise of life in Christ Jesus*—was his apostleship “because of” the promise or “in conformity to” the promise? Probably both. The promise of life in Christ, the gospel, was the reason for and the yardstick of Paul's apostleship.

Verse 2—*To Timothy, my beloved son*—Paul was Timothy's spiritual father. In 1 Corinthians 5:17, Paul says, ... *Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord*... Paul mentioned Timothy in all of his inspired epistles except Galatians, Ephesians, and Titus.

—*Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord*—duplicates his greeting in 1 Timothy 1:2.

II. Thanksgiving (1:3-7)

A. Timothy's Heritage (1:3-5)

Verse 3—*I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did*—Paul regarded his own ministry as part of the continuation of God's great ongoing plan of the ages. He was one of the faithful, throughout history, who loyally served God.

—to have a “clear conscience” doesn’t mean Paul never sinned or doesn’t commit acts of sin. Rather, it means the underlying direction and motive of life was to obey and please God, so acts of sin were recognized and confessed (1 John 1:9).

—*as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day*—In prison, Paul had lots of time to pray. It encourages people when we tell them we are praying for them.

Verse 4—*longing* [“strong desire” or “yearning”] *to see you*—

—*even as I recall your tears*—maybe the parting of 1 Timothy 1:3, or perhaps Timothy was with the Ephesian elders who ...*began to weep aloud and embraced Paul...grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more...* (Acts 20:37-38).

—*so that I may be filled with joy*—to be with Timothy again would bring great joy to Paul, in spite of his being imprisoned.

Verse 5—*For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you*—there is no greater inspiration than to feel that someone believes in us, recognizes our faith in Christ.

—*which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois*—It’s hard to overstate the importance and impact of a godly grandmother, who has a sincere faith that she passes down to her children and grandchildren. My own godly grandmother had a tremendous impact in my life right at a time when I felt betrayed and abandoned by others. Be a grandmother who spiritually invests in your adult children and your grandchildren.

—*and your mother Eunice*—Eunice had the benefit of having a godly mother and passed that benefit down to her son.

Application: Acts 16:1 tells us, ...*Lystra, ...a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek*. This is certainly an encouragement to those married to unbelievers. Eunice had a godly impact on her son, in spite of an unbelieving husband.

—*and I am sure that it is in you as well*—Acts 16:2 says that Timothy *was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra*. Our motivation is to please God, not men, but nevertheless, a godly life has influence in the believers around us.

Application: The more personal the letter from Paul, the more often he mentioned personal names. He mentioned 22 people by name in this letter, and nine in Philemon. Names contain personal information, recognition. More impact. A simple example: a young boy named Luke in Emi & Jake’s school had a heart attack. I explained it to my mother in an email. After that, she was praying for Luke, she asked about Luke, I gave her more information about Luke. “Luke” was recognized, and his situation had more impact.

B. God’s Gift to Timothy (1:6-7)

Verse 6—*For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands*—mentioned in 1 Timothy 4:14. The laying on of hands was not the cause of Timothy’s receiving a spiritual gift but was a visible representation and symbol of it. It was *the gift of God*, such as we have the gift of God: our salvation and the Holy Spirit indwelling us and the spiritual gift He’s given each one of us.

Application: Hebrews 2:1 says, “...*we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.*” General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, once sent this message to those under him: “The tendency of fire is to go out; watch the fire on the altar of your heart.” Anyone who has tended a fireplace fire knows that it needs to be stirred up

occasionally. This is your responsibility. No one can do it for you. You need to keep the fire stirred up in your heart.

Verse 7—*For God has not given us a spirit of timidity* [lack of courage or confidence]—implies that Timothy may be prone to disappointment and failure because of those who turned away from the faith or possibly because of Paul’s absence and imprisonment and impending death. All these “worries” are not from God. It’s from looking down instead of up!!

—***but*** [contrast] ***of power***—*my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God* (1 Cor 2:4). In 2 Timothy 3:4, Paul refers to those *holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these.*

—***and love***—*the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith* (1 Tim 1:5).

—***and discipline***—We should be disciplined Christians rather than slaves to our emotions. *Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness* (1 Tim 4:7).

Application: Just a general observation (and I may be stepping on toes here!), but women tend to be led by their emotions (but we don’t have to be). It seems that possibly, with Timothy learning godliness from two women, that Paul is stepping in here as a godly [spiritual] father, telling Timothy to be disciplined, not led by his emotional “timidity.” Emotions are good coming after discipline, but not good if coming before or replacing discipline to godliness.

III. Suffering for the Gospel (1:8-18)

A. Plea to Timothy (1:8)

Verse 8—*Therefore do not be ashamed*—reluctant to do something through fear or embarrassment or humiliation.

—***of the testimony***—public evidence or declaration

—***of our Lord***—Jesus said, “*Whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels*” (Mark 8:38).

—***or of me His prisoner***—Paul was in prison in Rome, but Paul reminded Timothy that he was first the prisoner of the Lord, not the Romans (Eph 3:1; 4:1; Philemon 1, 9).

—***but join with me in suffering for the gospel***—Greek *synkakopatheson* (used only here and in 2:3). It’s one word: “bear evil treatment along with” or “take one’s share of ill-treatment.”

—***according to***—a phrase Paul used this phrase 11 times in Ephesians. Not meaning “out of” but “according to.” How much power does God have? The Creator and Sustainer of the universe (Col 1:16-17). It’s according to that much power.

—***the power of God***—The Spirit of God provides the power to endure the stress that comes from suffering for the gospel, not a removal to some safe place.

Application: From the world’s perspective, the gospel is foolishness (1 Cor 1:23). The people of the world see themselves as “good.” God says they are “sinners” who need a Savior. They want to be god of their own lives, not give control to someone else—namely, the Living God. It’s a self-fulfilling prophecy—they decide what is good, and then declare themselves good!! So, yes, you will suffer to give them a message which is the opposite of what they want to believe about themselves.

B. Paul's Testimony (1:9-12)

Verse 9—*who has saved us* [Paul, Timothy, all believers]—He delivered us from the penalty and power of sin (Eph 2:1-5).

—*and called us* [Paul, Timothy, all believers]—*with a holy calling*—...*those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling* (1 Cor 1:2). God did not call us because we are holy, God called us to make us holy!

—*not according to our works*—...*not of yourselves...not as a result of works, that no one should boast* (Eph 1:9)

—*but* [contrast] *according to* [not “out of”] *His own purpose*—...*created...for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that* [purpose] *we should walk in them* (Eph 2:10).

—*and grace*—*in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith* (Eph 2:7-8).

—*which was granted us* [Paul, Timothy, all believers] *in Christ Jesus*—...*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus* (Eph 2:10).

—*from all eternity*—*He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world* (Eph 1:4).

Application: Can we even grasp that we were the receivers of God's grace and call before time even began. Whatever difficulties Timothy—or we—have pales in comparison.

Verse 10—*but* [contrast] *now has been revealed*—Before the beginning of time, Christians were granted this unmerited favor (grace), but it was only revealed, made known, through the appearing of Jesus. The thought of God's grace moves from eternity to time. It has the idea that what was given to us (not us, but God's grace to us) was the cause of the incarnation of Jesus.

—*by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus*—Paul moves from God “saving us” to “our Savior Christ Jesus.”

—*who abolished death and*—the product of sin (Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12; 6:23). He could be thinking of the sting of death (1 Cor 15:54-56), it's pain now removed because beyond the grave lies life. Or he could also be thinking of death as a punishment for sin (Rom 5:12), because there is no condemnation for sin for those in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1).

—*and brought life and immortality* [eternal life] *to light through the gospel* —(1 Pet 1:4). Future life was not an image (in the Old Testament) before the gospel. The gospel made it an image. It became a great fundamental doctrine, as truth. Before it was hidden. It was like in an embryo state. But the gospel brought it to light. It's now revealed.

Verse 11—*for which I was appointed*—chosen, delegated, assigned (also stated in 1 Tim 2:7)

—*a preacher*—a proclaimer, a herald of the gospel, an evangelist

—*and an apostle*—sent one, for Paul, he was sent out to the Gentiles

—*and a teacher*—one who gives information or instruction (of our age of grace)

Verse 12—*For this reason I also suffer these things*—There are 2 results of his assignment as proclaimer, apostle, and teacher: (1) suffering here and now and (2) eternal rewards at the bema.

—*but* [contrast] *I am not ashamed*—reluctant to do something through fear or embarrassment or humiliation.

—*for I know whom I have believed*—in whom, a person—Jesus Christ—he put his faith, his trust in the person of Jesus

—*and I am convinced*—to be confident and assured in his mind

—*that He is able to guard*—It could read as here (“He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him,” his destiny, etc.) OR the Greek is more consistent with verse 14. Here Jesus has guarded

the gospel to the Gentiles with which Paul was entrusted. In verse 14, he tells Timothy to guard the standard of sound words that he was entrusted with (heard) from Paul [NET Bible].

—**what I have entrusted** [“deposit”] **to Him**—A downpayment. This word was also used for entrusting your most valued possessions to a faithful friend when you went on a journey, so when you returned, your deposit was unharmed. It was among the highest and most sacred obligations. Think of your child—who would you entrust him/her to if you had to go away for some time.

—**until that day**—when Paul will stand before the bema seat of Christ to give an account for his service (2 Tim 1:18; 1 Cor 3:13; 2 Cor 5:9-10). He is confident God will remember it all.

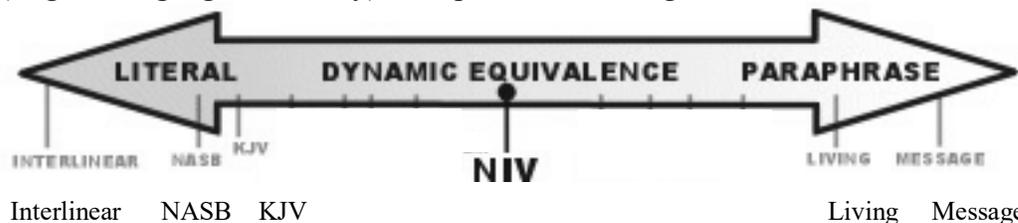
Application: God entrusts His gospel to us. And one day, Jesus will judge us at the bema seat concerning what we did with what He entrusted to us. Did you believe it? Did you obey His Word? Did you share His Word with others? What did you do with what He entrusted to you? Your rewards depend on it. ...*Each man’s work will become evident...the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward* (1 Cor 3:10-15).

C. Paul’s Admonition (1:13-14)

Verse 13—**Retain** [Gk “to hold on to,” “to maintain,” the opposite of “forget”] **the standard** [“example” or “pattern”] **of sound words** [lit. “healthy doctrine” or “to be accurate”]. In 2:15, Paul writes, *handling accurately the word of truth.*

—**which you have heard from me**—When reading any of Paul’s epistles, one has to be impressed with the accuracy of his words. Paul definitely believed *All Scripture is inspired by God* (3:16). The Bible is God’s words, and we need to hold on to it and handle it accurately.

Application: Paraphrases like “The Message” should be considered a commentary, not a word-for-word translation of the original languages of the Bible (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). The NIV ranks midway between a literal/formal equivalent translation and a paraphrase/functional equivalent translation. The NASB ranks as the most word-for-word translation. While a lexicon (original language dictionary) is helpful, the meaning of a word comes from the author’s usage.



—**in the faith** (convinced it is true) **and love** (*agape*) **which are in Christ Jesus**—not just a dry doctrine (as is so often charged against someone who believes in accurate doctrine) but held with faith and love.

Verse 14—**Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us**—God’s Spirit is the enabling power

—**the treasure** [“good deposit”] **which has been entrusted to you**—we are thankful for our salvation and sanctification, it’s a treasure, that has been “deposited” with us, in anticipation for the rest that God has in store for us, *Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him* (1 Cor 2:9).

Application: Paul had a stewardship of the gospel with which he was entrusted [such as “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a

yoke of slavery” (Gal 5:1). He fought for that freedom.]. Now Paul is passing the mantle to Timothy, and it’s a charge to Timothy to “retain the standard of sound words which he heard from” Paul. This assignment was to then to be *entrust[ed] to faithful men* [“humans”] *who will be able to teach others also* (2 Tim 2:2). God has entrusted His message to each generation, who have the responsibility to pass that message down to succeeding generations.

D. Paul Deserted (1:15)

Verse 15—*You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me*—This is the area west of Galatia, in which was the city of Ephesus. [This is not the modern continent of Asia.] That Paul used the word “all” indicates how thoroughly abandoned Paul thought he was. Obviously, he does not mean every single person because Timothy and Onesiphorus (v. 16) did not desert him. Rather, this suggests a general failure to support the apostle in his personal time of need.



—*among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes*—these two are not mentioned anywhere else in the NT. But they were known to Timothy, *you are aware of the fact*.

Application: Notice these men are not described as turning away from the gospel but *turned away from me*, i.e., from Paul personally, during his arrest and imprisonment. Perhaps the Asians feared suffering the same fate as Paul. Because Timothy is *aware of the fact*, Paul does not explain it, so we don’t know the actual events. Paul is victorious in spirit (4:18), yet he was also suffering the natural psychological depression of a person in his situation. Jesus humanly also felt the abandonment of His disciples (John 16:32). But Jesus said to us, *...I will never* [Gk. double negative, “never, ever”] *desert you, nor will I ever forsake you* (Heb 13:5).

E. Paul Befriended (1:16-18)

Verses 16-18—*The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me—the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.* He is mentioned only here and in 4:19.

—Notice that the house of Onesiphorus benefitted spiritually because of his actions.

—Onesiphorus is an exception to all those who turned away from Paul.

—Onesiphorus supported Paul, not only in Ephesus but also in Rome.

—Despite the stigma attached to Paul’s imprisonment, Onesiphorus continued his faithful ministry without hesitation and *eagerly searched for Paul*.

—In the Greek, Paul makes a parallel between Onesiphorus **found** Paul, and Paul prays that Onesiphorus will have **found** the mercy of God on the day of judgment.

—*on that day*—mentioned in verse 12 would be the Bema judgment seat of Christ where believers will stand to give an account for his or her service (2 Tim 1:18; 1 Cor 3:13; 2 Cor 5:9-10).

Twice Paul asks for God’s mercy not only on Onesiphorus but also on his house. I assume, Paul means rewards for Onesiphorus’ faithful service.

—*you know very well* indicates Timothy’s personal knowledge of Onesiphorus’ services in Ephesus.

Application: The Roman Catholic interpretation of verses 16-18 is that Onesiphorus is dead and Paul is making prayers for the dead, in keeping with the Catholic teaching about purgatory,

an idea only found in 2 Maccabees 12:39-45. However, as the Protestants point out, there is no mention or even suggestion that Onesiphorus is dead. Secondly, Protestants do not accept the Apocrypha (inter-testament books) as a part of Scripture, and therefore, purgatory is an unbiblical teaching. Therefore, the Roman Catholic interpretation of this passage is wrong.

Application: Moral behavior cannot be taught merely by character-building courses in the public schools. Christians must see moral commitment as an example in other Christians. Paul had no doubt that his behavior was worth imitating. He presented himself as an example to Timothy. C. K. Chesterton wrote, “Change the way you make decisions. Focus on compounding small choices in the desired direction. The smallest choices make the biggest difference.”

Chapter 2

IV. Suffering and Discipline (2:1-7)

A. Introduction (2:1-2)

Verse 1—*You therefore, my son*—Paul’s spiritual son

—***be strong*** [Gk. continuous action, “able,” same word in verse 2, to become capable] ***in the grace that is in Christ Jesus***. In 2 Corinthians 3:4-6, Paul wrote, ...*such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate* [capable, sufficient for, suitable for] *in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate...*

—In Gk. it is common in prepositional phrases to drop the article, so the fact that there is the article “the” grace is significant. It’s a strong emphasis that it is not just any grace, it is ***the grace that is in Christ Jesus***. This grace is available only to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Application: Every single person who is in Christ Jesus is to be continuously strong, able, capable, sufficient for, suitable for whatever God has in His plan for them. How? By the grace that comes from Christ. We are not adequate in ourselves. Our adequacy is from God. It’s a divine empowerment. *I can do all things by the One who makes me “able”* (Phil 4:13).

Verse 2—*The things which you have heard from me*—what Paul taught

—***in the presence of many witnesses***—Timothy saw others being taught by Paul

—***entrust***—In 4:9, Paul urged Timothy to come visit him in Rome. It is imperative that the message be passed on to others who can teach it, if Timothy were to leave for Rome. The message of Christ (salvation and sanctification) is to be entrusted, that is, to place or provide the truths of Christ to a person. A word that is used to give food to or provide with food. These need to be men and women who can stop the false teaching, who can feed people the truth about Christ.

—***these***—that is, *the things* Paul had taught Timothy in the presence of witnesses—don’t change the message!! The ministry of multiplication. Each generation teaches the next generation.

—***to faithful***—Titus 1:9 described these as those who are *able to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict*.

—***men*** [Gk. *anthropois*, generic, referring to humans, both men and women]

—***who will be able***—same word translated “strong” in verse 1.

—***to teach others also***—to cause others to know or learn

Application: Institutional church organizations use these verses to hand over the reins to those in power in an institutional structure. But the context is that Paul is telling Timothy to entrust the teaching of Paul to other faithful teachers who will be able to teach those very things. It has nothing to do with institutional authorities.

B. The Soldier's Discipline (2:3-4)

Verse 3—*Suffer hardship with me*—Greek *synkakopatheson* (used only here and in 1:8). It's one word: “bear evil treatment along with” or “take one's share of ill-treatment.” For example, if one part of your body suffers, the whole of your body suffers together with that part. This is the main point of the following metaphors. But each metaphor also has its own special distinction.

—*as a good soldier of Christ Jesus*—

Verse 4—*No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life*—A soldier is single-minded, concentrating on his military task, not becoming entangled in day-to-day civilian affairs. This metaphor is a call to perseverance. It does not say to withdraw from everyday life, but to not get “entangled” in those affairs, that is, to become so involved in some activity as to experience severe restrictions as to what one can do as a Christian. Think of a boat propeller entangled in a fishing net so that it cannot propel the boat like it is supposed to do.

—*so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier*—How do you know if and when you are entangled? Are you able to please God, who chose you for salvation and to give Him glory, in the situation? Paul wrote, *We have as our ambition...to be pleasing to Him. Why? For we must all appear before the judgment [bema] seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done...* (2 Cor 5:9-10).

C. The Athlete's Discipline (2:5)

Verse 5—*Also if anyone competes as an athlete*—The issue is not whether one is qualified to compete but, among those competing, who will win the wreath?

—*he does not win the prize*—There are two Greek words for “crown.” One is *diadema*, a royal crown (Rev 12:3; 13:1; 19:12). Here Paul uses the word *stephanos*, a victor's wreath given to the winner in an athletic contest.

—*unless he competes according to the rules*—the one who breaks the rules is disqualified, that is, he is not able to get a victor's wreath. In 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, Paul wrote that Christ is our foundation, but how a person builds on that foundation will be tested, that is, *the quality of each man's work*. If it stands the test, *he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved...* The “rules” or “test” is whatever is *pleasing to Him*. You will not receive a reward for doing what is not pleasing to Christ.

Application: *Why...do you submit yourself to...the teachings of men? ...These are matters which have, too be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence (Col 2:20-23).* There are God's “rules” and there are men's rules. You need to decipher (to succeed in identifying something) which ones you will obey.

D. The Farmer's Discipline (2:6-7)

Verse 6—*The hard-working [diligent] farmer*—a farmer prepares the soil, plants the seeds, waters the seed, harvests the crops. All this takes patience and hard work. Likewise, a believer may not do all these things in one person or at one time. In 1 Corinthians 3:5-6, Paul wrote, *...as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered...* Sometimes you may be the one to plant the seed of the gospel, or sometimes you might be able to help a young Christian to understand the Bible, or sometimes you may be one to refute false teaching. Etc.

—*ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops*—Paul continued in 1 Corinthians 3:8, *...each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.* Christ will not judge you

according to someone else's labor. For example, I've heard believers envy Billy Graham. But God gave you your situation in which to labor for Him. We are not all Billy Grahams.

Application: All three illustrations have in common the point that "success" is achieved through discipline, hard work, and single-mindedness. The diligent soldier gets the approval of his commanding officer, the diligent athlete wins the victory, the diligent farmer gets the first share of the crops. "Success" for the believer is to be pleasing to God and to gain eternal rewards. Jesus said, "*lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (Matt 6:20-21).

Verse 7—Consider [meditate on] *what I say*—that is, think deeply and carefully on the Scripture for some time.

—*for the Lord will give you understanding* [meaning, insight] *in everything*—It's not just knowledge. The metaphors are easy to understand. But Paul connects suffering (v. 3) with discipline and hard work in the metaphors. "Think over the way in which this applies to you." What James wrote, *...if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously..., and it will be given to him* (1:5).

V. Suffering and Glory (2:8-13)

Verse 8—Remember [reflect, to think about again, be mindful of the fact that] *Jesus Christ, —risen from the dead*—emphasizes Christ's deity

—*descendant of David*—emphasizes Christ's humanity

—*according to my gospel*—because it was the gospel of the risen, living Lord that was entrusted to Paul. Paul was able to share the gospel at his trial (4:16-17), and Paul will stand before Caesar (Acts 20:24). So even in prison, Paul was able to testify about Jesus Christ.

Verse 9—*for which I suffer hardship*—the last half of the book of Acts gives details of the many things Paul suffered to bring the gospel to people.

—*even to imprisonment as a criminal*—a word used in Luke 23:32, 33, 39 of the criminals crucified with Jesus. This word is mostly used for those who commit serious crimes, who are severely punished by arrest and torture, which indicates this may be a second imprisonment of Paul's, which was much harsher than the one described in Acts 28.

—*but the word of God is not imprisoned*—Here again we see Paul's play on words: he is imprisoned but God's word is not imprisoned. God's Word will continue to be taught and believed throughout the world. It was a mistake of the Romans to think they could imprison God's Word by imprisoning Paul. God's Word will be spread by Timothy and those he entrusts with it, who will teach others also, through the centuries afterward. As Acts 6:7 says, *The Word of God kept on spreading...* As Luther wrote in "A Mighty Fortress": "The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still; His kingdom is forever."

Verse 10—*For this reason I endure all things*—to go through, bear, withstand (2 Cor 11:23f) —*for the sake of those who are chosen*—lit. the "elect," that is, *according to...the grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity* (1:9). *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world* (Eph 1:4).

—*so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus*—even though elected, people still had to receive Christ, thus obtaining the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. How can they believe unless someone proclaims to them the message of salvation (Rom 10:13-15). Paul gave his life and endured all things to bring this gospel message to them.

—*and with it eternal glory*—this is the ultimate goal of this salvation.

Verses 11-13—It is a trustworthy statement—the following are four couplets: two positive and two negative. Each couplet is a condition that Paul assumed to be real, i.e., *trustworthy*, not hypothetical. Each “if” clause describes an action of a believer (his use of “us” and “we”).

- **For if we died with Him**—either the crucifixion of the sin nature (Rom 6:8; Gal 2:20), OR if we die physically
we will also live with Him—and new life in Christ, OR we shall be raised physically
- **If we endure**—that is, we don’t fall away from the faith. [The idea that all Christians will remain faithful is neither true to revelation nor to reality (Luke 8:13; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 3:12; 2 Tim 4:4).] At the end of his life, Paul wrote, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith* (2 Tim 4:7).
we will also reign with Him—All Christians will be with Christ when He reigns, but the Bible teaches there are degrees of reigning, just as there are differences in rewards (Luke 19:11-27; Rev 2:26-27; 3:21). Paul continued in 2 Timothy 4:8, *In the future there is laid up 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.*
- **If we deny** [abandon] **Him**—This can be seen in various ways. It can be a denying of His name (Rev 3:8) or faith in Him (Rev 2:13). It could be like Peter’s denial (Matt 26:69-75). It can be forsaking the Christian faith and its truths, especially about Jesus (1 John 2:22-23). Some may *profess to know God, but by their deeds deny Him* (Tit 1:16; 1 Tim 5:8).
He also will deny us—the reward and reign that could have been theirs
- **If we are faithless**—In contrast to the *faithful* of v. 2. Those who go back on their commitment to Christ. It’s not our responsibility to keep ourselves saved. It’s God’s. *I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish...No one shall snatch them out of the Father’s hand* (John 10:28-30; Rom 8:37-38). If a person is elect, they will become saved. If they become saved, they were elect. A person cannot become “unelected” or “unsaved.” We can, however, *drift* away from God (Heb 2:1), we can *fall away from the living God* (Heb 3:12).
He remains faithful, for He cannot deny [abandon] *Himself*—God always acts in conformity to His nature, who He is, His character and attributes. Actually, this is the basis of all the couplets. Men/women may fall away from Christ, but Christ always remains faithful because it is His character, and He cannot act contrary to His character (Heb 13:8; James 1:17). This is our hope and security.

IV. Contrasts among Christians (2:14-26)

A. True and False Teachers (2:14-19)

Verse 14—Remind [present imperative: keep on reminding—“reflect, be mindful of the fact that, to cause to think about again”] **them** [others, believers entrusted with the Word of God] **of these things** [taught by Paul (v. 2), the risen Christ and the gospel (v. 8)]

Application: “remember” is used 163 times in the Bible. It would be a very interesting study to examine each of these verses. Here’s a few: (1) God remembers!! (many verses), (2) But we are told that God *will not remember your sins* (Isaiah 43:25; Heb 8:12). Thank you, Jesus!! (3) Jesus was upset with the disciples when He said, *“Do you not yet understand or remember...?”* (Matt 16:9). (4) Interesting: *Remember Lot’s wife* (Luke 17:32). (5) Paul told Timothy, *I constantly remember you in my prayers...* (2 Tim 1:3). (6) *But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Jude 17).

Some ways to remember: (1) review, (2) use memory aids (notation cards, objects), (3) write it down over and over, (4) relate it to what you already know.

—**and solemnly charge** [to express something forcibly and clearly] **them in the presence of God**—see 1 Tim 2:3; 5:4, 21; 6:13; 2 Tim 4:1. We are never apart from the omnipresence of God—**not to wrangle about words**—to argue or quarrel about words. Paul said, *anyone...does not agree with sound words...but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicious, and constant friction...* (1 Tim 6:3-5). We should be constantly evaluating our words and motives, as described in verse 16.

—**which is useless**—useless as far as godliness is concerned

—**and leads to the ruin of the hearers**—doesn't help them to grow or mature as believers

Verse 15—Be diligent—eager and readiness to expend energy and effort

—**(1) to present yourself**—you are always being watched by God for what you do and say, to have godly correct behavior and character

—**approved to God**—*For not he who commends himself is approved but whom the Lord commends* (2 Cor 10:18). What would God say about what you just said, saw, or heard?

—**as a workman**—Gk stresses the labor of the task rather than the skill needed to perform it

—**who does not need to be ashamed**—regretful or sorry because of lost rewards and reigning

—**(2) accurately** [“cutting a straight road,” “imparting it without deviation”, used of a farmer cutting a straight furrow, or a mason cutting a straight stone for a wall]. See Proverbs 3:5.

—**handling the word of truth**—Eph 1:13; Col 1:5; James 1:18—the written Old Testament and what Timothy had heard orally from Paul. Peter wrote, *...our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction* (2 Pet 3:15-16; also Gal 1:6-8). Distorting Scripture has consequences in your sanctification and your eternal future.

Verse 16—But avoid [shun] **worldly** [lit. “profane,” “ungodly”] **and empty** [foolish] **chatter**—

—**(1) for it will lead to further ungodliness**—other ungodly actions, draws you away from God. Sin is like that. For example, it's said that lying is the open door through which a person enters to commit all kinds of other sins.

Verse 17—(2) and their talk will spread [lit. “give their words a feeding place”] **like gangrene**—gangrene is dead body tissue that develops in a part of the body where the blood supply is obstructed by injury, disease, or some other cause, i.e., gangrene feeds off that injury, etc. It eats into the flesh. It has no cure. It spreads and has to be cut off. Profanity, ungodly talk, spreads like that. It appears to be a solitary evil, but more evil will come because of it. Other evil feeds off it. It could be within a person or among other believers—probably both things.

—**Among them are Hymenaeus**—Years before, Paul had said about Hymenaeus, *whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme* (1 Tim. 1:20). But here he is, still teaching error and influencing others. Possibly being *delivered over to Satan* is to be sent out of the protection of being with other believers. Paul did this in Corinth to the man who *has his father's wife*. Paul *deliver[ed] such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus* (1 Cor 5:5). In this instance, the man evidently would die, but his soul was still saved. Hymenaeus was still alive and teaching false things. So we don't know exactly what being delivered to Satan means. There's no suggestion that it means losing one's salvation. In fact, Paul makes the point that the 1 Corinthians man did not lose his salvation. Possibly these men are some of those Paul warned about in Acts 20:28-31. *Be on*

guard...I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among our own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert...

—*and Philetus*—nothing else known about him, probably both men are from Ephesus

Application: It's very naïve to think that listening to profanity or false teaching will not affect you. It does change you. It will start you on a downward spiral away from God, to becoming faithless and denying God (and godliness). You don't want to be sorry or feel regret when you stand before the Bema seat of Christ—to find you have few rewards and rights to reign with Him. It would be like showing up at a marathon, regretting you had exercised more to prepare for that day.

Verse 18—men who have gone astray [“concerning the truth, missed the mark”] **from the truth**—rather than *accurately handling the word of truth* (v. 15).

—*saying that the resurrection has already taken place*—Here Paul tells us the exact false teaching of these men. Possibly it was the gnostic teaching at that time which allegorized or spiritualized the resurrection, saying it was a spiritual one, happening at conversion, not a bodily resurrection. The bodily resurrection, however, is a key teaching of Christianity (Acts 17:32; 1 Thess 4:14-16). Paul wrote that to deny the bodily resurrection is to deny Christ's resurrection, and if Christ is not raised, then the whole gospel message is empty (1 Cor 15:12-17).

—*and they upset the faith of some*—Years earlier, in 1 Timothy 1:19, Paul had mentioned that *some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith*, evidently from the influence of Hymenaeus. Here we see he is still causing *shipwreck* to other believers.

Application: Denying God...becoming faithless...suffering shipwreck in regard to their faith...upsetting the faith—The idea that all Christians will remain faithful is neither true to revelation nor to reality (Luke 8:13; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 3:12; 2 Tim 4:4). This is why you must be alert and not listen to profanity or false teaching. You can become faithless and shipwreck. [Not with respect to your salvation, but your sanctification. Rather than maturing in Christ, you will drift away from Him (Heb 2:1).] Drifting seems almost unawares. A person doesn't become faithless in one big step. It's usually many small steps, of listening to godless things, not even realizing they are moving you away from God. Apostasy from the faith is soon to be followed by indulgence in sin.

Verse 19—Nevertheless—the defection of these two men and their followers must not shake Timothy or the other believers.

—(1) **the firm foundation of God stands**—Jesus is the foundation (1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20). And that is never in danger. It is firm. It doesn't change or move. As this old hymn says:

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"

—**having this seal**—a mark of authentication and ownership, usually used by kings, making an imprint with their signet rings. It would be like our signature at the end of a contract.

—**“The Lord knows those who are His”**—The sovereignty of God. The elect are secure.

—(2) *and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness”*—The believer’s free will responsibility is to turn away from evil, especially the evil of the false teachers. If you are a believer, you are commanded to not do evil. It’s about your sanctification.

Application: Personally remove yourself from evil. As a believer, it should be your desire.

B. Honorable and Dishonorable Vessels (2:20-21)

Verse 20—*Now in a large house*—this would be the *household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth* (1 Tim 3:15). Paul now introduces another metaphor—vessels in the house, some gold (honorable), some earthenware (dishonorable).

Application: You must consider the context of the metaphor. For example, Paul uses this same vessel metaphor in Romans 9, but there it distinguishes believers from unbelievers, as a result of God’s sovereignty. He’s using this metaphor in a completely different way here in 2 Timothy.

Application: Notice—All believers are the household of God. All believers are vessels. No one ceases to be a vessel. Rather, there are different vessels. There are vessels of dishonor, i.e., those who refuse to abstain from wickedness. And there are vessels of honor, defined as those who are sanctified (mature as believers), useful to God, and prepared for every good work. You choose what kind of vessel you want to be (v. 19). God wants you to be an honorable vessel, but it’s up to you.

—*there are not only gold and silver vessels*—even of the better vessels, there are different ones
—*but also vessels of wood and of earthenware*—even of the lesser vessels, there are different ones

—*and some to honor*—for example, on New Year’s Eve, I got out my small crystal goblets for the honorable use of the sparkling grape juice to celebrate a special occasion.

—*and some to dishonor*—probably referring to vessels used for garbage or excrement. Maybe something disposable, like a paper plate or a grocery store plastic bag for garbage.

Verse 21—*Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself*—This is not justification—cleansing from God at salvation but sanctification, confessing our sin rather than holding onto sin (1 John 1:9). There is always the opportunity for the evil to be confessed and cleansing to come, changing the believer from a dishonorable use to a honorable use. The emphasis is on free will.

—*from these things*—the things he mentioned in verses 14-19, ungodliness, from the errors and deeds of the false teachers. Do we even confess and get cleansing from a false teaching or evil we hear? For example, sometimes (not all the time) when I’m getting gas for my car, the person at the next pump blasphemes—and I pray, telling God how sorry I am that that He heard that blasphemy through my ears. I feel dirty just hearing it and pray for cleansing. We live in a dirty world. We need to judge what we need cleansing from. These “little” things affect your character. It depends on how cleansed you want to be. Imagine you have on a snow-white dress and spill a drop of spaghetti sauce on it. Do you say, “Oh, well. It’s just a drop!” Or do you try to remove it and clean the dress?

—*he will be a vessel for honor*—high principles, decency, good character, integrity

—*sanctified*—“set apart,” “holy”

—*useful to the Master*—It’s the Master’s house. The vessels (believers) are His. We should desire to be someone He can use for His glory—honorable, cleansed, sanctified, useful, prepared.

—*prepared for every good work*—how does a believer *prepare* herself? *Long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation* (1 Pet 2:2). *Cleanse yourself by*

confessing your sin (1 John 1:9). Be *sanctified*—...*press on to maturity* (Heb 6:1). What do you desire? Do you desire to be a mature Christian, *useful to the Master*?

Application: Notice that clean and set apart for special use can easily get contaminated and become unusable through contact with the corrupt. For example, Eve was doing great until she started talking to Satan, then considering what he said, then getting close to the forbidden tree. Then finally actually eating from the tree. And she didn't keep it to herself. She was able to persuade Adam to join her in her disobedience—the gangrene (evil) ate them up.

Application: So no matter which vessel you are, you can become the other kind of vessel. A maturing believer can become a dishonorable vessel if they submit to ungodliness (sin or false teaching). Similarly, a dishonorable vessel can cleanse themselves and get right with God and go down the path to maturity and honor. It's a choice a believer always has. Here, Paul is encouraging Timothy to be the workman that handles accurately the Word of God. He doesn't have to let believers who have gone astray influence or discourage him. So be careful being around *earthenware* vessels so they don't pull you down also. If you can influence them to maturity, that's great. But Jude said, *have mercy with fear* (Jude 23). It's like getting close to a fire with the objective of putting it out—however, there is also the danger that you may be burned in the process and not put the fire out at all.

C. The Kind and the Quarrelsome (2:22-26)

How should Timothy cleanse himself (v. 21)? Three things to do:

Verse 22—[1] *Now* [“and”] *flee* [imperative “to cease quickly and continuously”] *from youthful* [“belonging to youth”] *lusts* [“to greatly desire to do or have something”]—this broadens what Paul is saying. It's not only to avoid false teaching, but to run away from the desires young men have, not always immoral things but also foolish things. Timothy was still a relatively young man (compared to the aged Paul). Paul wrote, *Let no one look down on your youthfulness* (1 Tim 4:12).

Application: Young people have certain desires that often disappear as one gets older (or when one gets married and has children). Maybe Timothy was celibate, as Paul seemed to be (1 Cor 7:7-8). Then he would need to purposefully flee from those desires.

—[2] *and pursue* [“keep on—to chase after with intensity of effort”] *righteousness*—Timothy was to run away from youthful lusts and run toward righteousness. Both quickly and with intensity of effort.

—*faith*—making decisions based on the understanding of the truth in the Scriptures

—*love*—described as kindness in verse 24

—*and peace*—also described in verse 24

—*with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart*—this refers to “pursue.” In other words, these instructions are not just for Timothy but are for *Everyone who names the name of the Lord* (v. 19). But not merely Christians, but Christians with a *pure heart*, those pursuing righteousness.

Verse 23—[3] *But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels*—These could be the result of a youthful temperament—to participate in foolish arguments and having difficulty in avoiding arguments. Paul described this in 1 Timothy 1:6-7, *For some men, ...have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though*

they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. Don't get into an argument with this kind of person.

—It seems the next verses have to do with quarreling:

Verse 24—*The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome*—the reason for verse 23 is verse 24. Quarreling is not a characteristic of a bond-servant of the Lord.

—***but be kind to all***—a more gentle demeanor would be more effective, especially for people who are older than Timothy.

—***able to teach*** [“educate”]—if you diligently study to handle accurately the Word of God (v. 15), then you are able to educate a believer who believes something contrary to the Scriptures. You cannot teach what you do not know. But you are able to teach what you do know.

—***patient when wronged***—“bearing evil without resentment” [it's not patient when wrong—note the -ed ending].

Verse 25—*with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition*—Paul described this as *exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one...as a father would his own children* (1 Thess 2:11).

—***if perhaps***—it's never a sure thing that a believer who suffers shipwreck in his faith will turn back to obeying God. As we get closer to the tribulation time, there will be an *apostasy* [falling away] *first* (2 Thess 2:3).

—***God may grant them***—“to allow someone the opportunity to do something”

[1] ***repentance***—to change one's mind—for them, it is to change from *foolish and ignorant speculations* to the truth of the Word of God

[2] ***leading to the knowledge of the truth***—it's amazing how so many people don't even think there is truth or don't have a desire for the truth. They'd rather follow their emotions, their “heart” rather than their mind. Absolute truth means something is true for every person, in every place, for all time.

Verse 26—*and they may come to their senses*—a figure of speech meaning to be reasonable after being foolish

—***and [3] escape from the snare of the devil***—In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul wrote, *...some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons* (see also 1 Tim 3:7).

—***having been held captive by him to do his [the devil's] will***. Paul also wrote, *...stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Eph 6:10-13).

Application: Pray that at the end of your life you can say as Paul said at the end of his life: “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith*” (2 Tim 4:7).

Chapter 3

VII. Characteristics of the Last Days (3:1-9)

A. Love of Money and Pleasure (3:1-5)

Verse 1—*But*—this is in contrast to the hope of the last verses—that the backslidden may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil.

—***realize this***—Paul had given Timothy some instructions concerning the last days in 1 Timothy 4:1-3. Now he gives some more information, to enable Timothy to combat it intelligently.

Realize is the Greek word for “know,” meaning “to come together,” also translated “to have sexual intercourse with.” So Paul wants Timothy to come together with this information. Not just have information, but to join himself to that information. Become one with it, so when Timothy encounters these issues, he will understand that he’s been warned that these issues will be present because it is the *last days*. So he won’t be surprised or unprepared.

—**that in the last days**—they are *last* because they are the present age, before Jesus comes (Rapture and 2nd Coming). The writer of Hebrews said, *in these last days* [God] *has spoken to us in His Son* (Heb 1:2). The whole period between Christ’s first coming and Christ’s return is the last age before Christ returns and begins the final age of His kingdom on earth. This is the present time for Timothy and for us.

—**difficult times will come** [“now, present”]—that which causes trouble, stress, and hardship, with an implication of violence. The word seems to relate to human experience and not to circumstances. Sometimes it is translated: “people will suffer very much.”

Verses 2-5—Why these particular characteristics? The Greek words here are linked together by the repetition of their sounds. The reason was probably literary, easier to remember. Here is a list of 19 specific characteristics of these *last days*:

- 1) **For men** [generic for humans, i.e., men and women] **will be lovers of self**—narcissistic (“self-lovers”). This parallels the last *rather than lovers of God*. One’s love of God is replaced by a love of oneself.
- 2) **lovers of money**—it’s not having money, it’s loving money—this can apply to anyone, no matter how much money they have or don’t have. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:10, *For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith...* This parallels the second to last *lovers of pleasure*. Money and pleasure are usually together. These four “lovers of” are like brackets around the rest of the list, a list of vices which are the natural fruit of these “lovers of.”
- 3) **boastful**—prideful, bragging about themselves and their money and stuff they have. This is outward behavior of someone who is arrogant.
- 4) **arrogant**—haughty, *God is opposed to the proud* [“arrogant”]... (James 4:6). Prideful feelings, resulting in the behavior of boasting.
- 5) **revilers**—Gk. *blasphemoi*, i.e., blasphemy, insulting, slanderous, mocking God, using His name in profanity. On TV, the “F-word” will be considered profanity and even blocked out, yet blasphemy against God is allowed, even in commercials, even used by children. No one would use “allah’s” name like that. What’s even sadder is to hear Christians use God’s name in casual blasphemy (like OMG, etc.).
- 6) **disobedient to parents**—It’s those who are against obeying parents, against following their rules or standards. In 1 Timothy 5:8, Paul addresses taking care of widows in the family. In 1 Timothy 1:9, Paul mentions *those who kill their fathers and mothers*, even more extreme.
- 7) **ungrateful**—The Greek word begins with “a”, meaning “anti”, against being grateful or thankful. Today, in our culture it has a name—an “entitlement” attitude. It’s a rampant.
- 8) **unholy**—again “a”, meaning “anti” holy, against the character of God and His sinlessness
- 9) **unloving**—callous, again “a”, meaning “anti” loving. Tolerance (to allow something, you disagree with or don’t like, without interference) is promoted in the cultures, but loving is not defined by tolerance. Is it loving to let a child run across the road? Is it loving to let someone drink poison? Is it loving to let someone follow Satan into hell?
- 10) **irreconcilable**—“a”, meaning “against treaty,” i.e., hostility that admits no truce. Perhaps “unforgiving.”
- 11) **malicious gossips**—Gk. *diaboloï*, “devilish” people, who talk evilly about other people, slanderous. Also a title for the “devil.”

- 12) *without self-control*—the ability to control one’s emotions and desires or the expression of them in one’s behavior. The vices mentioned above seem to fall into this category—without self-control.
- 13) *brutal*—uncivilized, vicious, untamed, heartless, callous, monstrous (terrorists)
- 14) *haters of good*—being an enemy to what is good, being against what is good
- 15) *treacherous*—a betrayer. A word used of Judas.
- 16) *reckless*—without thinking or caring about the consequences of an action
- 17) *conceited*—to be extremely arrogant or proud. It’s a figurative extension of a Greek word (not occurring in the NT) that means “to be crazy, to be demented,” an extreme.
- 18) *lovers of pleasure*—play on words. In Greek *phile* [love] *donoi* [pleasure], = *philedonoi* —rather than *lovers of God*— *philo* [love] *theoi* [God], = *philotheoi*
- 19) *holding to a form* [outward appearance or shape] *of godliness, although they have denied its power*—they are religious, perhaps even claiming to be “Christians.” But they are hypocrites. They are deceptive. Wolves in sheep’s clothing (Matt 7:15). White-washed tombs, they may look good outside but inside they are full of dead men’s bones (Matt 23:27).

—*Avoid such men as these*—shun, keep away from, have nothing to do with them

Application: Jesus said, “*You will know them by their fruits*” (Matt 7:16). You are responsible for what teaching/teachers you listen to (or read). If you are going to be influenced spiritually by something or someone, you better be sure they are accurately handling the Word of God. Your sanctification and even eternal rewards depends on it.

B. Depraved Living and Thinking (3:6-9)

Verse 6—*For among them*—“For from these...”—It can be men or women false teachers. Today, there are a number of women, on TV, writing books, etc. to be aware of (Joyce Meier, Beth Moore, Sarah Young...).

—*are those who enter* [“sneak”] *into households*—where they will be most accepted because the woman is usually alone and has no one to discuss what she is listening to. Satan approached Eve when she was alone (and in her “home” environment).

—*and captivate weak women*—those who are vulnerable and gullible, spiritually immature

—*weighed down with sins*—such as the love of money, gossip, ungrateful, prideful

—*led on by various impulses*—controlled by their desires, their immaturity makes them easy targets for the false teachers

Application: Of course, Paul is not talking about women who are maturing and studying the Word of God. They are not vulnerable or gullible. But think of women, maybe home with small children, reading religious books from the shelves of Hobby Lobby, listening to TV or podcasts, letting all kinds of teaching into their home without being able to judge whether something is biblical or not—or even care whether it is biblical or not. Also, I notice if you do try to reason about a particular teacher, they are defensive and emotional about defending what they are listening to. Paul wrote, *we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ... we are to grow up in all aspects into Him* (Eph 4:14-15).

Verse 7—*always learning*—“openness to learn” made them accept whatever fad or new heresy that comes along.

—*and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*—because what they are learning is not the truth.

Verse 8—Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses—The Old Testament does not name these, but Jewish oral or written tradition and early church writers do. They were the magicians who opposed Moses in the plagues (Exodus 7:11; 9:11). Timothy wasn't the first one to combat those attacking God and His Word. It happened to Moses, too.

—**so these men** [Gk. “males”] **also oppose the truth**—the false teachers oppose, show hostility towards, the truth of the Word of God. They don't just ignore it. They hate it. They may use the Bible, taking verses out of context in order to support what they want to say.

—**men of depraved mind**—morally corrupt or wicked in their thinking, affecting them morally. Paul wrote in Romans 1:28, *just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind.*

—**rejected in regard to the faith**—they cannot be trusted to teach the truth

Verse 9—But they will not make further progress—Paul used the verb “progress” first in 2:16, *worldly and empty chatter will make further progress in ungodliness.* Then in 3:13, *evil men and imposters will progress from bad to worse.* Here he adds that their progress has its limits and they will eventually fail (*not make further progress*).

—**for their folly**—their unwillingness to understand. [This Gk. word also describes a state of such extreme anger as to suggest an incapacity to use one's mind—Luke 6:11.]

—**will be obvious to all**—easily known, very evident.

—**just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also**—These magicians copied the plagues Moses did, but eventually, Moses did a plague they could not copy, and their folly became known.

Application: It reminds me of years ago when we were warning people about the false teaching of Rob Bell. We were criticized for being “unloving.” But eventually, his false teaching became *obvious to all*. It's something to pray about—if you know someone who is being misled by false teaching, pray that *their folly* [of the false teachers] *will be obvious to all*.

VIII. Persecution and Steadfastness (3:10-17)

A. All Christians Persecuted (3:10-13)

Verses 10—Now [But] **you** [in Gk. a strong emphasis on *you, however*] **followed**—in contrast to the false teachers, Timothy followed Paul, who lists 9 things in his life of which Timothy knows and the significance of which he understands. “my” placed at the beginning of the list modifies all 9 nouns: *my teaching, my conduct, my purpose, etc.*

—**my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,**

—**persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra**

[Timothy's hometown], **what persecutions I endured**—Acts 13:14, 51; 14:6, 21; 16:1. These were persecutions earlier in Paul's ministry. Why he chose these particular ones is not known.

—**and out of them** [not “from them”] **all the Lord rescued me!**—so Timothy can be encouraged. It's not a promise that God will deliver anyone, but a statement of what God did for Paul.

Verse 12—Indeed, all who desire [determine, long for] **to live godly**—it's not just being a Christian, but it's those believers who are pursuing righteousness, who *call on the Lord from a pure heart* (2:22).

— **in Christ Jesus will be persecuted**—Jesus also said this (Matt 10:22-25; Luke 21:12; John 15:18-21). This is not suffering generally, from the curse. This is specific persecution because a Christian wants to live a godly life. The Koran says Christians are to be killed. This is the danger we are facing as Islam spreads and comes to power over the entire world.

Verse 13—*But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse*—this is the progress of 3:9. *Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness* (2 Cor 11:14-15).
—*deceiving and being deceived*—*Just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind...* (Rom 1:28f). Don't be surprised if false teachers truly believe what they are teaching. They themselves are deceived.

B. The Adequacy of Scripture (3:14-17)

Verse 14—*You, however*—the same as the beginning of verse 10. Timothy is in contrast to the false teachers and the evil people of the world.

—*continue* [a command to remain, to immerse yourself] *in the things you have learned*—The constant study of the Word of God is the only help that any of us has.

—*and become convinced of*—Timothy started learning as a young boy, but as he grew up, he became convinced of the truth of the Scriptures. At some point, every person has to be convinced in their own mind that the Scriptures are true.

—*knowing from whom you have learned them*—For Timothy, this learning began from his godly mother and grandmother, and then included Paul.

Application: One cannot help but base part of the reliability of the gospel message on the character of one's teacher. This is the positive counterpart to the character of the false teachers mentioned above. Your character as a mother or grandmother is part of the message of the gospel. Your children and/or grandchildren see that first before they hear any words. Do they see you studying the Bible and know how important it is to you? Do they see you praying? Do they hear you giving God the glory for what He has done?

Verse 15—*and that from childhood*—it's never too early to learn about God and His Word

—*you have known the sacred writings*—the Old Testament and Paul's letters, probably other New Testament letters that were circulated among the believers.

—*which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation*—it seems Timothy must have been exposed to some of the gospel writings, as this book is written at the end of Paul's life, after he wrote Ephesians, Romans, etc., including his letters to Timothy.

—Notice that salvation comes only from the wisdom of the Bible (Rom 10:13-17).

—*through faith which is in Christ Jesus*—The wisdom gained through understanding the Bible has to be applied by faith. Faith is a decision to trust the evidence. *For by grace you have been saved through faith...* (Eph 2:8-9).

Verse 16—*All Scripture*—All the writings of the first century that survived are in the NT. Peter equated Paul's writing with the *rest of the Scriptures* (2 Pet 3:15-16).

—*is inspired* [Gk. θεο "God" πνευο "breath", i.e., "God-breathed"] *by God*—Peter wrote, *for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God* (2 Pet 1:21). Just as the Holy Spirit superintended over Mary so Jesus was born without her sin, so the Holy Spirit superintended the biblical authors so what they wrote was without error. Jesus said the same thing (Matt 5:18; John 10:35). "Inspiration does not extend beyond the original manuscripts, though the texts we possess today have been transmitted with high accuracy" (Ryrie Study Bible).

Scripture instructs positively in doctrine:

—*and profitable*—useful for spiritual growth

—*for teaching*—a general term for learning

Scripture corrects improper behavior and educates positively in righteous behavior:

—**for reproof**—rebuking and convicting those in sin

—**for correction**—of those teaching error. Someone may believe or teach something in error. That does not make them a false teacher. Priscilla and Aquila, when they heard Apollos, that he was speaking error, *they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately* (Acts 18:24-26). A teacher who is dedicated to the truth of God’s Word will accept correction when they are teaching something in error.

Scripture is necessary for the training of Christians, who seek to live a godly life:

—**for training in righteousness**—Scripture provides not only the content of belief (usually the first part of Paul’s epistles) but also the guidelines for conduct (usually the last part of Paul’s epistles).

Verse 17—*so that* [its purpose] **the man** [humans, both men and women] **of God**—

—**may be adequate**—today “adequate” usually means just “all right.” But the Greek word means “qualified or proficient,” that is, expert, skilled, competent to meet all demands

—**equipped**—to cause to be fully qualified or trained

—**for every good work**—The mastery and use of Scripture is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is to help us and others to live a godly life. James wrote that faith without good works is useless, both to God and to others (James 2:14f). Ephesians 2:10 says *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* Peter wrote, *His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him...* (2 Pet 1:3).

Chapter 4

IX. Preach the Word (4:1-5)

Verse 1—*I* [Paul] **solemnly charge you** [Timothy]—“to be emphatic in stating an opinion or desire, to insist.” It’s also used as a technical term for government officials taking an oath. Here, it’s Paul passing the ministry from himself to Timothy.

—[1] **in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus**—both God the Father and Jesus are watching Timothy and us. We are never out of His presence. There are no secrets from Them. How would you act, what would you say, if you realized someone was listening to and watching you? Well, someone is!!!!

—[2] **who is to judge the living and the dead**—who will judge all people, the *living* (believers at the Bema) and the *dead* (unbelievers at the Great White Throne)

—[3] **and by His appearing and His kingdom**—Jesus could appear at any time, for the second time, as the judge, and to set up His Millennial Kingdom for His faithful. Paul refers to this again in verse 8, *...the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

Application: Remember when they were going to bring President Gerald Ford’s body to be buried at his museum in Grand Rapids. The town was in a flurry of activity. The TV eyes were on our city—clean it up. Get the roads done. We are expecting the appearing of Jesus at any moment. We should live in such a way that all things will be ready whenever He appears.

Verse 2—**preach** [“to announce publicly, out loud,” “to tell”] **the word** [*logos*—John 1:1]—We are not to preach about the Word of God or from the Word of God (that is, lifting a text from it to say what we want to say), but quote the Word of God itself (in its context)!!

—***be ready in season and out of season*** [when the time is suitable or not]—always be prepared and urgent, whether the time is an opportunity to speak the Word or not. This is the first qualifier to telling the Word—be ready!

Application: For example, if you are going to be with unbelievers, be ready with the gospel. If you are going to be with backsliders, be ready to talk about their issue. If someone is suffering, have a verse of comfort. The point is, think about who you are going to be with, and be ready to tell a verse from the Word of God to them. You can talk about the Word, but you should be ready to share the actual Word of God.

—***reprove***—convict those who do listen to the Word

—***rebuke***—those who don't listen to the Word

—***exhort***—encourage

—***with great patience and instruction***—these all need to be done with great patience and great instruction. Patience without instruction is useless. Instruction without patience can be harsh.

Verses 3-4—*For the time will come*—although it is not prophecy, it is a future reality that has now even been realized in Timothy's present time (1 Timothy 1:4 which states myths are currently being taught). The conditions of *the last days* have been happening throughout the church age. It's the reason for Paul's charge to Timothy to proclaim the Word (v. 2).

—***when they*** [this time Paul is describing the audience (those who choose to listen to them) rather than the false teachers] ***will not endure sound*** ["healthy"] ***doctrine***—both the false teachers and the audience must co-operate for the false beliefs to succeed.

—***but wanting to have their ears tickled***—a desire to hear what one wants to hear. The false teaching is on the surface, that is, it satisfies their ears but does not reach into their mind and hearts the way the Word of God does (Heb 4:12).

—***they will accumulate for themselves***—"to heap up," to significantly increase the number of—the implication is there will be way more false teachers than teachers of the Word of God. There is always someone available who would tell them what they want to hear rather than face them with the truth of God's Word.

—***teachers in accordance to their own desires***—they make themselves the measure of who should teach them and what teaching is acceptable.

—***and will turn away their ears from the truth***—false teaching actually turns them away from truth (of creation, for example). This is the 6th time Paul referred to the truth in this epistle (2:15, 18, 25; 3:7, 8). He also referred to truth five times in 1 Timothy (2:4, 7; 3:15; 4:3; 6:5).

—***and will turn aside to myths***—instead, they believe myths, things that are not even real (like evolution, for example).

Verse 5—*But you*—in contrast to false teachers and those who listen to false teachers

—[1] ***be sober in all things***—clear-minded in everything. Can mean "abstain from wine," but also used in the sense of being serious, self-controlled, sensible, thoughtful, rational.

—[2] ***endure hardship***—specifically suffering for the gospel (1:8).

—[3] ***do the work of an evangelist***—all believers need to be ready to do evangelism if given the opportunity. It doesn't seem here that it was Timothy's spiritual gift, but it was something he was to be prepared to do.

—[4] ***fulfill your ministry***—complete, make to happen, your service to others

Application: Each believer has their own gifts, and areas of service, and life situations. We can apply these same things. Be sensible, serious, willing to endure hardship for standing up for the truth of God's Word, evangelize if you have the opportunity, and make to happen service to others around you. Remember—God is watching and judgment is coming.

JOB OR MINISTRY?¹⁴⁴

A job is one you choose;

A ministry is one Christ chooses for you.

A job depends on your abilities;

A ministry depends on your availability to God.

In a job you expect to receive;

In a ministry you expect to give.

A job done well brings you self-esteem;

A ministry done well brings honor to Jesus Christ.

In a job you give something to get something;

In a ministry you return something that has already been given to you.

A job well done has temporal remuneration;

A ministry well done brings eternal rewards.

X. Paul's Final Testimony (4:6-8)

The Present

Verse 6—*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering*—pouring out a drink before the altar as a sacrifice to God (Exo 29:38-42; Lev 23:13; Num 15:5; 28:7).

—*and the time of my departure* [lit. “unloose,” used as “loosing” a vessel from its moorings] *has come*—Paul believed his current imprisonment would end in death—possibly soon. He sees his death as just a departure from this life into the next life. Tradition says that Paul died as a martyr in Rome at the hands of the Emperor Nero.

The Past

Verse 7—*I have fought the good fight*—not that Paul fought it well but that the fight for the gospel is worth the battle. It is a good fight.

—*I have finished the course*—the Christian race is finished for Paul

—*I have kept the faith*—he was obedient to the gospel message, and he passed it on as he received it

The Future

Verse 8—*in the future*—in heaven

—*there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness*—as previously mentioned, this is not *diadema* (*diadem*) royal crown, but *stephanos*, the laurel wreath given to the winner of a race. It is metaphorical, though, because it is a *crown of righteousness*, which is non-material.

—*which the Lord, the righteous Judge*—at the Bema.

—*will award to me on that day*—the day of judgment, rewards and reigning with Christ

—*and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing*—that would be us.

Application: There's an old illustration. A mother left fresh-baked cookies in the kitchen to cool, with instructions to her young boy, “Don't eat the cookies.” Well, the boy did eat the cookies. Crumbs on his chin. His mother came into the room. He was guilty. The boy loved his mother, but he did not love her appearing!! Will we love Christ's appearing, no matter what we are doing?

XI. Paul's Final Plea (4:9-13)

Verse 9—*Make every effort to come to me soon*—in verse 21, he urged Timothy to come before winter. With the letter getting to Timothy, and Timothy traveling to Rome, it would be several months probably. Perhaps he said before winter because the ship travel would be harder or maybe even non-existent.

Verse 10—*for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica*—Demos is Paul's fellow worker, mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24, together with Luke. But here it is obvious that he is apostate, as Paul says his desertion was because he *loved this present world*. This is a strong word, used by Christ on the cross, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken [deserted] Me?*" (Mark 15:34). Because he is mentioned with Aristarchus in Philemon 24, who is from Thessalonica (Acts 20:4), there is a possibility that he deserted to return home to Thessalonica.

—***Crescens has gone to Galatia***—there is no mention of him deserting Paul, *having loved this present world*.

—***Titus to Dalmatia***—there is no mention of him deserting, *having loved this present world*.

Verse 11—*Only Luke is with me*—Luke is the "beloved physician" (Col 4:14). He traveled extensively with Paul and is the author of the book of Luke and the book of Acts, tracing the history of the life of Jesus and life in the first years of the church age. There is some thought that Luke has remained with Paul as a physician because of his torture in prison. But that is not verified. He could be there as Paul's co-worker and friend.

—***Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service***—Mark and Paul had overcome the differences that caused the separation between Paul and Mark (and Barnabas, a cousin of Mark's) on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-40; Col 4:10).

Verse 12—*But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus*—Perhaps Tychicus delivered this letter to Timothy in Ephesus. Possibly, he was even sent to replace Timothy, at least temporarily, so Timothy could visit Paul (Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21-22; Col 4:7-9).

Verse 13—*When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus*—possibly because winter was coming and the dungeon was cold.

—***and the books, especially the parchments***—Gk. papyrus "scrolls" ("books" had not been invented yet). Papyrus was from the papyrus plant in Egypt, whereas parchments were from calf skins. To the parchments were longer lasting and stronger than the papyrus. We could guess these were part of the OT, but it is just a guess. The wording doesn't tell us what they were.

XII. Human Opposition and Divine Support (4:14-18)

Verses 14-15—*Alexander the coppersmith*—there was an Alexander in Acts 19:33-34 but most likely it is the Alexander of 1 Timothy 1:20, whom Paul *delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme*.

—***did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds***—Paul did not ask for retaliation or personal revenge. He left vengeance up to God (Rom 12:19).

—***Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching***—However, Paul did warn Timothy to be on guard against Alexander because he was not a silent enemy, he vigorously opposed Paul's, and now Timothy's, teaching.

Verse 16—*At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me*—If this was Paul’s second imprisonment, as most commentaries believe, the first defense here would be at the trial of this second imprisonment. No one came forward to support him or to argue his case. —***may it not be counted against them***—as Christ’s words on the cross (Luke 23:34) and as Stephen had also prayed (Acts 7:60).

Verse 17—*But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me*—The secret of Paul’s ministry was not which person was with him or against him. It was his dependence on the strength of God (Phil 4:13).

—***so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished and that all the Gentiles might hear***—That was his assignment from Jesus Himself on the road to Damascus many years ago (Acts 9:15).

—***and I was rescued out of the lion’s mouth***—Some think this was actually the mouth of lions in the Roman coliseum. More likely, he is thinking of the biblical image of Daniel (6:22).

Verse 18—*The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom*—Paul saw his death not as a victory for Rome but a rescue of the Lord. He had complete confidence that God would bring him safely to *His heavenly kingdom*.

—***to Him be the glory forever and ever***—even facing a cruel death, Paul could do nothing but praise God.

—***Amen***—So be it.

XIII. Closing Greetings and Farewell (4:19-22)

Verse 19—*Greet Prisca and Aquila*—the well-known couple who taught Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19).

—***and the household of Onesiphorus***—2 Timothy 1:16

Verse 20—*Erastus remained at Corinth*—an old associate of Timothy’s (Acts 19:22), so his whereabouts would be of interest to Timothy

—***but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus***—near Ephesus. He had accompanied Paul in carrying the offering from the Gentile believers to the poor saints in Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). Thinking that Paul brought him (a Gentile) into the temple (but he hadn’t), it became the unintentional cause of Paul’s being mobbed and arrested (Acts 21:29). It’s interesting that, by this time, evidently the gift of healing was over because Paul could not heal Trophimus, but left him sick.

Verse 21—*Make every effort to come before winter*—Paul mentions again for Timothy to make every effort to come see him before the winter (see 4:9).

—***Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren***—Nothing is known about these people. Probably they are believers living in Rome.

Verse 22—*The Lord be with your* (singular) ***spirit***—referring to Timothy

—***Grace be with you*** (plural)—other believers reading this letter. Paul’s last written words.