

*2 Timothy: The Good Fight
Finishing Well in Christ*

Lesson 37—2 Timothy 1:1-7

Paul Farewell Address

Most of our study has focused on letters written to churches during Paul's first imprisonment. During his two-year initial incarceration, Paul lived in a house, chained to a guard with free access to visitors. Most scholars, based on early church history and tradition, feel that Paul was released in AD 61–62 and completed a fourth missionary journey. Roman Emperor Nero, wanting an excuse to rebuild Rome according to his vision, set fire to the slums of Rome in April of AD 64. Unfortunately, the fire raged out of control and eventually destroyed most of the city. Nero needed a scapegoat and quickly blamed the inferno on Christians. The persecution of Christians spread throughout the Empire and three years later Paul was rearrested and returned to stand trial for a second time before Caesar Nero.

During his second incarceration Paul was confined to the infamous Mamertine Prison. The prison, still standing today, consists of an upper chamber measuring 30 feet by 22 feet with a ceiling at only six and a half feet and a smaller lower chamber. To access the lower chamber the prisoners were lowered through a manhole-sized opening into a dark dungeon. The prison was intended only to hold inmates until trial or execution. According to church tradition, the apostle Peter was later held in the same prison prior to his crucifixion.

Although his death seemed imminent, it was from this dank dungeon Paul recorded his last words, a farewell address of warning and admonition to his son in the faith Timothy.

While giving Timothy few commendations, Paul gave him several warnings and over twenty-five admonitions, or commands, to insure their ministry continued

after Paul's departure. In one of our earlier studies, Paul charged us, *"And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus"* (Colossians 3:17 NLT). It was because Paul followed his own advice and lived a life "all in" for Christ that he could boast of a clear conscience (1 Timothy 1:5 and 2 Timothy 1:3).

John MacArthur described this letter as a call for all believers to seek strength in the Lord and pursue faithfulness in spiritual service. Abraham Lincoln in his farewell address to the residents of his hometown of Springfield, Illinois on February 11, 1861 captured the same sense of mission and dependence on God when he said, "I now leave . . . with a task before me greater than that which rested upon [General] Washington. Without the assistance of the Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail, trusting in Him."¹

And while Nero lounged in luxury in his palace and Paul languished in prison, Paul's faith never wavered. Paul saw his imprisonment and all aspects of his life and ministry as part of the sovereign will of a loving God. William Barclay notes that today men name their sons Paul and their dogs Nero.²

Paul seemed to realize that life is short while eternity is long and he lived his life in light of eternity. China missionary C.T. Studd wrote a century ago, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for God will last."³ Far too many believers fail to grasp this and coming to the end of life they realize they have, as John Piper puts it, "a saved soul but a lost life." Even when we use our talents wisely, it is easy to get discouraged or distracted in the short term when we invest ourselves in ministry only to face opposition and indifference from nonbelievers. In the course of this epistle, Paul will reveal that he came to the same conclusion as the missionary couple in the following story.

An old missionary couple had been working in Africa for years, and they were returning to New York City to retire. They had no pension; their health was broken; they were defeated, discouraged, and afraid. They discovered they were booked on the same ship as President Teddy Roosevelt, who was returning from one of his big-game hunting expeditions. No one paid much attention to them. As the ship moved across the ocean, the old missionary said to his wife, "Something is wrong. Why should we have given our lives in faithful service for God in Africa all these many years and have no one care a thing about us? Here this man comes back from

¹ <http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/farewell3.htm>

² Barclay, William. *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960. 164. Print. Bible Study.

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Studd

a hunting trip and everybody makes much over him, but nobody gives two hoots about us.”

“Dear, you shouldn’t feel that way,” his wife said.
“I can’t help it; it doesn’t seem right.”

When the ship docked in New York, a band was waiting to greet the president. The mayor and other dignitaries were there. The papers were full of the president’s arrival, but no one noticed this missionary couple. They slipped off the ship and found a cheap flat on the east side, hoping the next day to see what they could do to make a living in the city. That night, the man’s spirit broke. He said to his wife, “I can’t take this; God is not treating us fairly.”

His wife replied, “Why don’t you go into the bedroom and tell that to the Lord?” A short time later he came out from the bedroom, but now his face was completely different. His wife asked, “Dear, what happened?”

“The Lord settled it with me,” he said. “I told him how bitter I was that the president should receive this tremendous homecoming, when no one met us as we returned home. And when I finished, it seemed as though the Lord put his hand on my shoulder and simply said, ‘But you’re not home yet!’”⁴

Prayer

Start by praying over the passage and asking the Holy Spirit to give you fresh insights and wisdom in understanding it. Then read through the entire passage two or three times. The depth of theology is so great that I would strongly advise using the New Living Translation for one of your Scripture readings.

Scripture Meditation/Memorization

One of the most fundamental and rewarding Christian disciplines that pays back in full spiritual dividends is Bible meditation/memorization. It is an absolutely fundamental in the formation of your spiritual development, spiritual walk and faith growth. In Psalm 1:1-2 (NLT), the Psalmist warrior, King David said,

⁴ http://www.tonycooke.org/stories-and-illustrations/not_home_yet/

*“Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.
But they delight in the law of the Lord,
meditating on it day and night.”*

Memory Verse

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”—2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

Study Format

We have all had weeks in which the time available for preparation of our Bible study evaporates under an unexpected event or a pressing project at work. To enable everyone to complete the study, even when time is at a premium, questions are being divided into two categories: essential and expanded. The Essential Questions are those necessary to understand key points of the passage. The Expanded Questions or growth questions help expand knowledge and gain deeper insight into the Scripture.

If you are concerned about having enough time to complete the whole study, it is suggested that you start by first answering the Essential Questions for each day and answer the Expanded Questions as time permits.

2 Timothy 1:1-2—Greeting and Background

Timothy and his family came from Lystra and he connected with Paul during his stop in that city on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1). Paul’s first visit to Lystra (Acts 14) was not uneventful as we shall see in today’s study. The focus of today’s lesson is on Paul’s young protégé who was selected to carry on the work after Paul’s departure. Timothy, whose name means “honoring God” in Greek, became the bishop of Ephesus. Early church tradition has him dying in AD 97 when the 80-year-old bishop tried to stop a procession in honor of the goddess Diana and was beaten to death by an angry mob of pagans.

Essential Questions:

1. Some think it odd that Paul starts his letter by declaring his apostleship to Timothy—who as Paul’s most intimate associate would have known this better than anyone. John MacArthur says that it, combined with verse 2, strikes a perfect balance between the authority we need to maintain as fathers or

spiritual leaders and an intimate loving relationship with those in our care. What do you think?

2. How does Paul describe his relationship with Timothy in the following verses:

a. 2 Timothy 1:2

b. 1 Timothy 1:2

c. Philippians 2:19-23

3. We are told to count the cost of ministry. Timothy, as a resident of Lystra, was well aware of Paul's treatment by the locals on his first visit to his town, yet still chose to join Paul in his ministry?

a. Briefly read Acts 14:8–20 and describe what happened on Paul's first visit to Lystra.

- b. Acts 16:1–5 describes Paul’s second visit to Lystra about a year later. What do we learn about Timothy from this passage?

Expanded Question:

4. Timothy was integral in Paul’s writings, serving as either a scribe or *amanuensis* (editor). What do you learn from the greetings of these epistles?

- a. 2 Corinthians 1:1

- b. Philippians 1:1

- c. Colossians 1:1

- d. 1 Thessalonians 1:1 and 3:2

- e. 2 Thessalonians 1:1

5. The list of behaviors we are told to put to death in verse 5 closely parallel those listed in Galatians 5:19–20. According to Galatians 5:16–25 how is our behavior an indicator of our spiritual condition?

a. What is this extra blessing?

b. Do you feel that Spurgeon may have been correct in light of James 3:1?

2 Timothy 1:3-7—*Faith and Heritage*

After joining Paul and Silas on the second missionary journey, Timothy accompanied them to Macedonia. Paul and Silas stayed in Berea while Paul went to Athens and later reunited with him in Corinth. Timothy went with Paul to minister in Ephesus for two years but later returned by himself to Corinth after Paul learned of the discord in that church. Timothy arrived in Corinth shortly after they had received and responded negatively to the letter known as 1 Corinthians. It is also believed that Timothy accompanied Paul on his final trip back to Jerusalem prior to Paul’s arrest.

Essential Questions:

1. Paul mentions conscience 23 times in his speeches in Acts and his letters (see 2 Timothy 1:3). He often spoke of having a good, pure, or a clear conscience, which to some would seem remarkable based upon his persecution of believers prior to his conversion. Guilt, the opposite of a clear conscience, can rob us of our health and happiness. If you had a friend wrestling with a guilty conscience what would you share with them based on the following verses? Feel free to add any additional verses that would be helpful as well.

- a. Psalm 32:1-5 (Written by David after confronted by Nathan about Bathsheba).

- b. Hebrews 9:12-15

- c. Ephesians 1:7

- 2. No one is a Christian by proxy or parentage. The faith of the parents alone doesn't bring salvation to their children, but the value of godly examples is immeasurable. What do we learn from the following verses:

- a. 2 Timothy 1:4-6

- b. Proverbs 22:6

- 3. What attitudes and behaviors characteristic of the *old man* are we to put off?

a. 1 Corinthians 16:10

b. 2 Timothy 1:6-7

c. Deuteronomy 31:7–8 (Instruction given by Moses to Joshua as the mantle of leadership was passed to him.)

Expanded Question:

4. Laying on of hands was used to set apart someone for a special mission or purpose. Some would say an unused talent is not an asset but a liability. What do we learn from the following verses?

a. 2 Timothy 1:6

b. Matthew 25:14-30

Lesson 37 Summary/Take Away

If one of your friends at work or a neighbor were to ask you what you did on Tuesday, you would tell them you went to a Bible study. The next question would likely be, "What did you learn?" We often summarize an entire athletic contest or a movie in a few brief sentences and easily convey the essence of the event. Now apply these same skills to give a summary of the passage in a sentence or two. Then, in an additional sentence or two, describe what impact this passage will have on how you live.

Memory Verse

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."—2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

Key Words/Phrases

Write out the definition of these key words. You can use a regular dictionary or go to one of the Greek sources listed in the Tool Box at the end of the study. You may also use a concordance to see where else and how the word is used in the Bible.

Serve with a Pure Conscience (2 Timothy 1:3)

Laying on of Hands (2 Timothy 1:6)

Background Information for 2 Timothy

One commentator entitled 2 Timothy as Paul's famous last words while others have called it his last will and testimony, his swan song, or his marching orders for a young apprentice. Second Timothy is one of three Pastoral Epistles, the others being 1 Timothy and Titus. They are called Pastoral Epistles because they were letters written by Paul to two young pastors. The Pastoral Epistles have been considered to be authentic and part of the canon of Scripture since the second century. However, in the words of John MacArthur, "Many modernist critics delight in attacking the plain statements of Scripture and for no good reason, deny that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles, ignoring the testimony of the letters themselves and that of the early church." The critic's denial is based upon the fact that one third of the words in these epistles, in the original language, are unique and not used elsewhere in Paul's writings. Most evangelicals counter that it is not unreasonable to use different words when addressing a close personal friend as opposed to a serious theological discussion addressed to an entire gathering of often unknown church members.

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, his true son in the faith, believing that death was imminent. The letter though very personal, has few commendations but has 25 imperatives or instructions for Timothy to help better equip him as the mantle of leadership passes to him from Paul.

A brief look at the timeline of the last decade of Paul's life is helpful to understanding these epistles.

AD 58	Paul arrested in Jerusalem
AD 60–61	Paul arrives in Rome
AD 61–63	Paul imprisoned in private home and writes Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.
Early AD 64–67	Paul released from first imprisonment and goes on fourth missionary journey. It was during this time Paul wrote 1 Timothy and Titus while in Macedonia.

Mid-AD 64 Most of Rome burns to the ground. Most blame Nero for the fire citing his desire for “urban renewal.” Nero uses Christians as a scapegoat for fire and widespread persecution breaks out.

AD 67 Paul arrested for a second time.

AD 68 Paul martyred in Rome.

The following chart, adapted from MacArthur’s Study Bible, gives a simple comparison of Paul’s two imprisonments.

First Imprisonment	Second Imprisonment
AD 61–63	AD 67–68
Acts 2–Wrote the Prison Epistles	Wrote 2 Timothy
Lived in rented house chained to guard	Chained in dungeon of Mamertine Prison
Many visited Paul	Virtually alone (only Luke with him)
Many opportunities to witness (even to captors)	Very limited opportunities for ministry
Accused by Jews of heresy and sedition	Persecuted by Rome as a criminal against empire
Suffered as part of local sporadic persecution	Persecution of all Christians by Nero
Optimistic about his release (Philippians 1:24–26)	Anticipated his execution (2 Timothy 4:6)

Tool Box

Step 1: The Bible. Read the passage in a couple of different versions. If you are having trouble understanding a passage, choose a more dynamic version such as *New Living Translation*. To focus in on the exact meaning of a verse, choose a more literal translation such as *New King James Version*, *New American Standard Bible* or *English Standard Version*. *The Amplified Bible* is another excellent version.

Step 2: Study Tools. Use these to help you dig deeper. Background Information: 1) Unger's Bible Dictionary, 2) Bible Dictionaries online at biblestudytools.com and blueletterbible.com. (recommend both David Guzik and Chuck Smith's commentaries/study notes); Word Studies: 1) Zodhiates' *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, 2) Vine's *Complete Expository Dictionary*, and 3) Strong's *Dictionary of Bible Words*.

Step 3: Commentaries. Commentaries should not be used in place of studying God's Word directly, but they can give you additional insights. Some good commentaries include: Warren Wiersbe, J. Vernon McGee, F.F. Bruce, *the Expositors Bible Commentary*, *NIV Application Commentary*, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (edited by Walvoord & Zuck), *the Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, and William Barclay (*great for background and culture, but be careful of his spiritual applications).

Step 4: Online Assistance. Should you have a specific question about the study please e-mail your inquiry to: mannyqwcm@gmail.com

