

# II Timothy

*Know and Proclaim –  
Faithfulness and Perseverance*



**Grace Baptist Church**

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## II Timothy

**Background:** Paul was now near the end of his ministry and life. He was in prison in Rome for the second and final time, after having been freed from his first imprisonment. It is believed that Paul had been rearrested as a part of Nero's persecution of Christians.

Paul writes this letter to Timothy around A.D. 67 to encourage Timothy to persevere in his gospel ministry despite the opposition and suffering that will occur. Paul alludes to the fact that several have abandoned him; some due to other duties, some due to fear of persecution, some in fear of his upcoming execution. Paul anticipates his impending death, so he urges Timothy to stand firm and asks him to come for one final visit. It is not known if Timothy was able to travel to Rome and see him prior to Paul's death.

There is reason to believe that Timothy was in danger of weakening spiritually (II Tim. 1:6-7), and Paul desired that Timothy carry on his work. This final letter of Paul's to Timothy is an exhortation to Timothy to be faithful and persevere.

### II Timothy 1:1-7

**1:1-2:** Paul opens his letter to Timothy in his standard way – identifying himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus. Through this introduction Paul establishes the authority he has to write the contents of this letter to Timothy.

Paul was awaiting certain death, yet he reminds Timothy that the purpose of his apostleship has been to proclaim the gospel, which is the promise of life in Christ Jesus. The promise of life in Christ, the gospel, was the reason for Paul's apostleship – it was the will of God.

Paul expresses his relationship with Timothy by calling him "my beloved (dear) child (son)". The remainder of the greeting is exactly the same as it was in his first letter to Timothy where Paul expresses his genuine desire for God's best in Timothy's life.

**1:3** – Paul opens the letter with thanksgiving to God for his own salvation and ministry. Paul viewed his own faith in Christ as maintaining continuity with the faith of his Jewish forefathers, which provided him with a clear conscience. Paul went on to tell Timothy that he prayed for him without ceasing day and night. Paul, as a prisoner of Rome, was in chains in a jail and had little freedom to much more than pray, which he did day and night.

**1:4** – Paul had a desire to see Timothy again. This desire was enhanced because of Paul’s affection for Timothy and the knowledge that he was about to be put to death by Rome. Paul remembers Timothy’s tears at their last parting, which probably occurred at the time of Paul’s second arrest. Paul longed for Timothy’s companionship, which was a joy to him.

**1:5** – Paul notes Timothy’s genuine (sincere, unhypocritical) faith; a faith that stood out from those that had opposed or deserted Paul. Paul attributes Timothy’s faith to the teaching and influence of his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois. These women were genuine O.T. believers who understood Scripture well enough to prepare themselves and Timothy to accept Christ when they first heard the gospel message from Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary trip.

**1:6** – Because of his genuine faith, Paul urges Timothy to “stir up” (“fan into flame” or “keep at full flame”) his spiritual gift; a God-given ministry of teaching, preaching, and evangelizing. This seems to indicate that Paul was not satisfied with Timothy’s level of faithfulness to his gift at this point-in-time. Paul identified the gift of ministry received by Timothy had come through the laying on of his own hands.

Note: The language used here reflects nothing more than Paul’s general association of Timothy’s ordination, the laying on of hands by Paul and the elders, and Timothy’s personal awareness of his own abilities. The language used cannot and does not support detailed conclusions on (1) how spiritual gifts are bestowed, (2) apostolic succession, and (3) ordination as a means of grace.

**1:7** – Paul reminds Timothy that the gift of ministry that God has given to him was given with power, love, and a sound mind (self-discipline). Paul may have written this exhortation because he heard that Timothy had become intimidated by the opposition to the gospel by Rome and others to the point that he was becoming defensive and ashamed of the gospel.

Paul tells Timothy that God has not given him the “spirit of fear”; which literally means “timidity”, a cowardly, shameful fear caused by a weak, selfish character. This word was used to describe men who ran away during battle. [Note: This is the only time this word is used in the N.T.] This “fear” did not come from God; instead God gives each believer the spirit of power (can-do power, strength, might work), of love (self-sacrifice, charity, benevolence), and of sound mind / self-discipline (disciplined, self-controlled, properly prioritized).

## **II Timothy 1:8-14**

**1:8** - Paul begins an exhortation to Timothy on the basis of God giving each believer the spirit of power, love, and self-discipline. Because of this fact (therefore), Paul encourages Timothy to not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord (to testify about our Lord). Paul did not want Timothy to be ashamed to name the name of Christ because he was afraid of potential persecution. Paul goes on to include himself (he identifies himself as Christ’s prisoner) as one who Timothy should not be ashamed to identify with. It is very possible that Timothy knew if he were linked directly to Christ and Paul he would be putting his freedom and life in danger. Paul exhorts Timothy to join courageously with him in suffering for the gospel...for it is in such circumstances that the power of God is manifested and demonstrated.

**1:9-10** – Paul continues with the theme of the power of God. Paul identifies that it is God who has saved us and called us to a holy life. It must be noted that this calling is not a general invitation to all sinners to believe, but it is a reference to God’s effectual call of the

elect to salvation. This calling results in a holy life through justification, sanctification, and glorification.

This calling to salvation and holiness has nothing to do with a person's merits or works but is purely God's own purpose and grace; salvation is by grace through faith, completely separate and apart from any human work. It was the sacrifice of Christ Jesus that made God's salvation possible; He became the substitute sacrifice for the sins of those who believe. Those who would believe were established before time began; those who would be drawn by God were granted unmerited favor (grace).

Those who were drawn to God by the grace were made aware of this calling through the first coming and appearing of Jesus Christ; the Savior of those who would believe. It was through the incarnation, sacrifice, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that God made known the truth regarding immortality and eternal life. It was Christ, the Son of God, who embodied God the Father's saving purpose and plan. It was Christ through which death would be destroyed (rendered inoperative) and life and immortality would be brought into view. This view is now complete in the gospel. It is interesting to note that in the O.T. eternal life was not written about or taught.

**1:11-12** – Paul's excitement regarding the gospel and its power over death and promise of eternal life is evident. In some translations verse 10 ends with the phrase "the glorious gospel", which Paul believes is the most important message ever told. He states that he has been appointed to serve as a preacher (a herald), an apostle, and a teacher of this message. It was the stewardship of the gospel message (Paul's appointment) that brought Paul so much suffering. Paul suffered as a common criminal, being abused and humiliated; he was treated as an outcast of the society of his day. Yet Paul was able to say that he was "not ashamed" of the gospel message.

Paul had no fear of persecution and death for his continued heralding of the gospel message because he was so confident in God who had sealed his future glory and blessing in eternal life. Paul "knew" (the certainty of intimate knowledge) God, the One he believed in. The

Greek verb translated "I have believed" refers to something that began in the past and has continuing results. Paul "knew" God, believed in God, and knew beyond any doubt that God was able to completely vindicate him in the end.

Paul's commitment to God was his life. Paul lived with unwavering confidence and boldness because of the revealed truth about God's power and faithfulness; His love, grace, and mercy. The Greek translated "He is able to keep that what I have committed to Him" can be better translated "He is able to guard what has been entrusted (deposited) to me". There are two interpretations of these phrases: one, it means that God will guard the gospel, which has been entrusted to Paul, or two, it means that God will guard Paul's life which has been entrusted to God. Either way it is this confidence in God that gives boldness to Paul and prevents him from being ashamed. Paul and God had an unbreakable relationship that would be complete and whole one day; the Day when he would stand before Jesus Christ at the Judgment Seat of Christ and be rewarded for his life's ministry.

**1:13-14** – Paul then tells Timothy to follow (hold fast) the pattern of healthy doctrine (sound words) that he heard from Paul. Paul had taught Timothy the truth of the gospel and now Timothy was to hold the truth he had been taught with faith and love in Christ Jesus. A commitment to truth always requires faith (confidence that God's Word is true) and love (kindness and compassion in teaching that truth); these are virtues that ultimately come from being "in" Christ Jesus.

Paul closes his exhortation to Timothy with a challenge to be a steward of the truth that had been entrusted to Paul and now to Timothy. The truth that was entrusted to Timothy was the gospel ("that good thing which was committed to you"). The entrusted truth of the gospel was to be guarded by Timothy with the help of the Holy Spirit; who lives in each believer. Timothy was to teach other believers the truth...and they were to teach others. It was Timothy's responsibility, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to preserve the truth of

the gospel and keep it from being corrupted through the distorted thought of man and the enemy of the gospel, Satan.

## II Timothy 1:15 – 2:7

**1:15** - Paul writes to Timothy about those who have deserted him; all those in Asia, Phygelus, and Hermogenes. Nothing is known of the group referred to as “those in Asia” or of the named individuals. It appears that the named men were leaders within the group who had been close to Paul but deserted him under the pressure of persecution. Their failure was not a defection from the faith but rather a failure to support Paul in his time of need.

Paul identified the group and the men because they were known to Timothy.

**1:16-18** – Paul then contrasts the unfaithfulness of Phygelus and Hermogenes to the faithfulness of Onesiphorus. Onesiphorus had supported Paul while he was in Ephesus and now was supporting him in Rome. Onesiphorus had gone out of his way to help Paul in Rome even though Paul was in prison; he was not ashamed of any stigma that was associated with Paul’s imprisonment. Paul commended Onesiphorus, twice invoking God’s mercy on Onesiphorus and his household.

Again, Paul identified a man that was known to Timothy.

The contrast between the unfaithful and faithful, the weak and the strong, and the unreliable and the trustworthy is very evident. The personal story of Phygelus and Hermogenes portrayed the things that Paul was warning Timothy against – cowardice, shame, self-indulgence, and infidelity. On the other hand, Onesiphorus demonstrated the characteristics Paul was challenging Timothy to demonstrate in his personal life – courage, love, self-discipline, boldness, and faithfulness. The contrast of the negative versus the positive was utilized by Paul to help strengthen Timothy to be counted among those who were willing to stand with Paul.

**2:1** – Paul’s previous writing to Timothy was to remind him of his ordination, Paul’s example, and the example of others. Now Paul directly admonishes Timothy to be strong; to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Paul is calling Timothy to overcome his apparent drift toward weakness and to renew his commitment to his gift, which was his ministry.

**2:2** – Paul knows he is facing death. He now calls upon Timothy to remember what he has heard Paul preach and teach. Paul reminded Timothy that there many witnesses who saw him as Paul taught and preached; this was a gentle reminder to Timothy that he had a reputation to live up to. Timothy was to take the divine revelation he had learned from Paul and teach it to other faithful men; men who had proven spiritual character and giftedness. These men would in turn faithfully teach these truths to another generation. This is required of us today.

**2:3-6** – Paul then challenges Timothy to share in suffering (endure hardship) for the gospel just as he is. The Greek word translated “hardship / suffering” means “to suffer hardship with someone” and is only used in II Timothy. Paul desires that Timothy join him and he uses three common illustrations or analogies to demonstrate his desire of having Timothy join him.

1. A Soldier: Paul uses a military illustration that was very familiar to anyone within the Roman Empire – the soldier. A Roman soldier’s single-minded purpose, rigorous discipline, and unquestioning obedience to his commanding officer provided an excellent illustration of the support Paul was looking to Timothy to demonstrate. Paul wanted Timothy to be soldier of Jesus Christ. Just as a soldier called to duty is severed from the normal affairs of life, so must the soldier of Jesus Christ not allow the things of the world to distract him from obeying Christ. This does not mean that believers are to separate life into “spiritual” and “secular” compartments. All life for the

believer is to be lived spiritually, even the “civilian pursuits” (affairs of this life). Paul is warning Timothy and all believers not to allow anything to distract them from the task(s) God has called them to do.

2. An Athlete: Paul uses an athlete illustration, which was familiar to anyone within the Roman Empire because of the Olympic and Isthmian (Corinthian) games. Paul’s illustration focuses on the athletes who have qualified for the games and are now training and competing to win the victor’s crown in the games. Every athletic event has its boundaries, rules, and judges. All those who fail to discipline themselves to observe the requirements of the boundaries, rules, and judges are disqualified. Paul wanted Timothy to compete by the rules and not be disqualified when he stood before Christ. Paul wanted Timothy to use the gift that God had given him, and use that gift with power, love, and self-discipline – without shame, without fear.
3. A Hardworking Farmer: Paul’s final illustration is that of a farmer; someone who was known to all in the Roman Empire. Paul places an emphasis on “hardworking” to emphasize “labor to the point of exhaustion”; a characteristic well-known about most farmers. A “hardworking” farmer labors with the hope that their physical effort will be rewarded with a good harvest. The diligent farmer gets the first share of the crop he produces. Paul is urging Timothy to be diligent and labor intensively in his ministry.

**2:7** – Paul closes by exhorting Timothy to make an effort to think deeply and meditate on what he has written. The Greek words used here challenge Timothy to meditate and contemplate; to think to gain clear perception and full understanding through careful consideration. Paul knew if Timothy would think and meditate on the words he had written, the Lord would give him understanding of the words that he had written.

## **II Timothy 2:8-13**

**2:8** - Paul had just exhorted Timothy to suffer hardship with someone like a soldier, an athlete, and a hardworking farmer and now he presents Jesus Christ as the One he is to remember. Jesus was the model Timothy was to follow; in commitment to obedience through self-discipline, a striving by the rules to achieve a prize, and by perseverance and diligence.

Paul had encouraged Timothy in the previous verse to meditate and contemplate; to think to gain clear perception and full understanding through careful consideration...and this was to be done remembering Christ. Paul exhorts Timothy to remember Christ; the One who had descended from David and was raised from the dead. This quick reference to Christ was to stimulate thought and contemplation within Timothy. This reference to Jesus, His lineage and resurrection, is central to the good news message proclaimed by Paul.

**2:9-10** – Paul clearly states to Timothy that it is this good news message (the gospel) that has landed him in a Roman jail. Paul contrasts his imprisonment for the sake of the gospel to the unfetter power of the Word of God. Paul, with every move he made, was reminded that he was chained like a criminal in a Roman prison – but God’s Word was not chained.

But....this was a condition of life Paul was willing to endure for the elect; meaning that Paul is enduring persecution precisely because through his ministry of imprisonment God will save some. If the calling of God required Paul to endure imprisonment that is what Paul would do. Paul would (and did) endure everything presented to him for the sake of the chosen ones so they would hear the gospel message of salvation. There is salvation in no one else but Christ Jesus. The gospel must be proclaimed because the elect (the chosen ones) are not saved apart from a personal faith in Christ (Rms. 10:14). The ultimate outcome of salvation is to be with Jesus in eternal glory.

**2:11-13** – Paul introduces a faithful (trustworthy) statement, a statement probably already known to Timothy. This statement may have been a part of a baptismal ceremony or some other type of early church catechism.

**1. *If we died with Him, we will also live with Him.***

- This refers to the believer's spiritual participation in Christ's death and resurrection (Rms. 6:4-8). This truth is vividly portrayed in the ordinance of baptism (Rms. 6:2-23); it shows the contrast between death and life.

**2. *If we endure, we will also reign with Him.***

- This refers to the believer's identification with Christ. Christ endured suffering and ultimate death, but rose again and will one day reign (I Cor. 15:25). The believer will also endure suffering and will one day reign with Christ (Rev. 3:21). This shows the contrast between suffering and glorification.

**3. *If we disown Him, He will also disown us.***

- This refers to apostasy within an individual (Heb. 38-39) and the Lord's rejection of those who professed Christ for a short season but then rejected Him (Matt. 10:33). This refers to a permanent denial of Christ; it is not referring to a temporary failure of belief of a true believer. Those who ultimately deny Christ give evidence that they never truly belonged to Him (I John 2:19).

**4. *If we are faithless, He will remain faithful.***

- This does not refer to apostasy but to the believer that has a temporary lapse in trusting Christ. All believers are human and prone to sin, but God is faithful and will pardon, restore, and help those who are truly His (I John 1:9-10).
- Christ cannot disown Himself; therefore He will not deny even the unprofitable members of His own body. Christ's faithfulness to believers is not contingent on their faithfulness to Him.

- There is a secondary interpretation of this couplet which takes an opposing view. This secondary interpretation states that the faithless refers to the lack of saving faith within an individual. Once a person rejects Christ, Christ remains faithful to judge those who do not believe by sending them to hell.

**II Timothy 2:14-21**

**2:14** - Paul makes a shift here, from personal exhortations to Timothy to instruction on Timothy's role as overseer of the congregation at Ephesus. In challenging Timothy and the congregation at Ephesus, Paul will use contrasts – Timothy's faithful ministry with the worthless ministry of the false teachers. Timothy was to keep reminding the congregation of the things they already knew; this reminding was to be a regular practice.

Timothy was to remind them that they were solemnly charged in the presence of God to avoid arguing (quarreling) about words – words that led to false beliefs (I Tim. 1:3-4, 6:3-5). This arguing was of no value and actually ruined those who listened. This type of arguing was based on human reasoning – as opposed to the truth of God's established Word – and resulted in the destruction of (over turned / over thrown) of truth; meaning truth was being replaced with a lie.

**2:15** – Timothy was to zealously pursue God's approval ("zealous persistence in accomplishing a goal"). Timothy was to be a laborer who does not need to be ashamed; because he is laboring zealously, giving forth his maximum effort.

Timothy's zealous persistence and maximum effort was to be demonstrated in his imparting of God's Word completely, accurately, and clearly. Timothy was to correctly handle the Word of Truth by "cutting it straight". Precision and accuracy are required in the interpretation and teaching of God's Word because it is God's Word. There is no shame in the correct handling of God's Word – there is ultimate shame and disapproval for those who mishandle God's Word.

**2:16-17a** – Timothy was to avoid godless chatter (“profane empty utterances”), which only advances ungodliness. Participating with those who engage in such profane conversations and speculations will only “give their words a feeding place like gangrene”, which is the death of soft tissue due to obstructed circulation, usually followed by decomposition and putrefaction. The only cure for gangrene is amputation.

**2:17b -18** – Two who were engaged in profane conversation and teaching were Hymenaeus (who Paul had already delivered over to Satan – I Tim. 1:20) and Philteus (a possible replacement of Alexander – I Tim. 1:20). These two men had wandered from the truth (“missed the mark”); they denied the reality of the bodily resurrection of the believer. There was a natural tendency for individuals of that day to be influenced by Greek philosophy which taught that the body is evil and the spirit is good. This led those who accepted Greek philosophy as true to reject the truth of a bodily resurrection but teach that there would be a spiritual resurrection on an individual. The heresy of Hymenaeus and Philteus probably involved the idea that the resurrection is purely a spiritual event which occurred at the time of baptism; that this would be the only resurrection a person would experience and it had already happened.

This teaching caused the destruction of faith among some. Most believe this speaks to those whose faith was not genuine; as genuine faith cannot be overthrown or destroyed.

**2:19** – Paul then draws a conclusion – “Nevertheless”, in spite of the teaching and destructive work of the false teachers, God’s foundation (the elect members of the church) still stands firm. This foundation of God has two inscriptions on it as a “seal”, which indicates the foundations authenticity and integrity. The two inscriptions were:

1. ***The Lord knows those who are His.*** This is a reference to the rebellion of Korah where God differentiated between the true and the false (Num. 16:4-7)
2. ***Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.*** This is an indicative reference to the nation of Israel

just before the judgment of God on Korah, his collaborators, and their families (Num. 16:25-35, note 16:26).

The two inscriptions emphasize respectively God’s sovereign control over the elect members of the church and the individual’s responsibility to turn away from evil. Paul was teaching Timothy that he did not need to fear for the future of the church but he was to make every effort to keep himself from evil – and from the teaching of the false teachers.

**2:20-21** – Paul illustrates his point about the authority and authenticity of the inscriptions on the foundation. He uses a metaphor of a large house and the containers within the house. In a large house there are all sorts of containers. Some are made of gold and silver. Some are made of wood and clay. Some are used for noble and honorable purposes. Some are used for ignoble and repulsive purposes. The reference in the metaphor is to those who are faithful (honor – separated from evil) as compared to those who are not faithful (dishonor – involved with evil).

Paul shifts the metaphor slightly to show how one can be a container for noble and honorable purposes through cleansing. Paul makes two points.

1. Anyone (any container) who wants to be used for the Lord for noble and honorable purposes becomes useful when purged and cleansed from evil. Any container in the house can be “thoroughly cleaned out / completely purged” and used for noble purposes.
2. Anyone (any container) who wants to be used for the Lord for noble and honorable purposes becomes useful when, after cleaning and purging, it is separated from the ignoble and repulsive containers to avoid contamination through contact.

Paul’s point is clear. Timothy was to have nothing to do with the false teachers. Timothy was made holy, set apart, and useful to the Lord. It is important to note that Paul’s point that what is clean and set

apart for use can be easily contaminated and rendered unusable through contact with evil.

## **II Timothy 2:22-23**

**2:22-23** – When Paul wrote to Timothy, he was still a young man. It was possible that Timothy had displayed some of the characteristics and passions of the young when he was with Paul; impatience, intolerance, love of argument, pride, desire for wealth and power, self-exaltation, and quick to judge with bias. These were the youthful lusts that Paul was referring to. While sexual immorality could be added here, it is not the primary meaning of the Greek word used here by Paul.

Paul knew Timothy would pursue something as a young man, so he expressed his desire that Timothy flee the desires of youth and pursue the opposite virtues; righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart. Paul's expression to Timothy was in the form of a command: "Flee what is wrong, pursue what is right". This pursuit of right is to be done with other believers. Connection within a community of faith is essential for personal growth, encouragement, accountability, and perseverance.

Timothy was to pursue the right virtues....and was to refuse to get caught up in foolish and stupid arguments with false teachers, which only results in quarrels (fights / arguments). Timothy was to pursue righteous virtues, which was in stark contrast to the hypocritical virtues of the false teacher.

## **II Timothy 2:24-26**

**2:24** – Paul instructs Timothy that as a servant of God (a preacher and/or teacher of the Gospel) he is not to be divisive or a fighter, but a promoter of unity. He was to be kind, skilled in his teaching, and patient.

**2:25** – Timothy was to be a promoter of unity in humility; meaning he was to be "ready to bear evil treatment without resentment". He was to treat his opponents with gentle instruction. The opponents

referred to here are the false teachers, unbelievers who believe the false teachers and believers who are deceived by false teachers. Timothy's treatment of the opponents was to be characterized by the hope that God will grant them repentance - a change of heart and conduct that leads them to a full knowledge of the truth. All true repentance is produced by God's sovereign grace....and without such grace from God human effort to change is futile.

**2:26** – Paul instructed Timothy to treat the opponents in such a manner as to bring them to their senses to escape the trap of Satan; who has taken them captive to do his will. The false teachers do not understand the truth because of being deceived by Satan. Satan is very clever, is a schemer and a teller of lies....and the opponents within and without the church are being deceived by Satan to do his will.

## **II Timothy 3:1-5**

**3:1** – Paul warns Timothy about the dangers of civilization and society against the church and its believers in the "last days". The Greek phrase – "eschaton hemera" – is translated as "last days" and refers to a period of time which began with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:17) and continues to today. The Greek word translated "perilous times" conveys a clear definition that "savage eras" ("eras" meaning multiple years as one era) will increase in frequency and severity (strength) before the return of Christ. These "savage eras" will be characterized by social degeneration, which we are experiencing today.

**3:2-5** – Paul then provides Timothy with a list of 19 general characteristics of people who will oppose the truth of the Gospel...and who will contribute to a "savage era" (See Romans 1:28-32, Mark 7:21-22). These people will be:

1. Lovers of themselves = self-centered, narcissistic
2. Lovers of money = greedy, covetous
3. Boastful = prideful braggart
4. Proud = arrogant



5. Abusive toward others = (verbally, physically) blasphemy
6. Disobedient to parents = willful disobedience
7. Unthankful = not grateful
8. Unholy = wicked
9. Without love = heartless
10. Unforgiving
11. Slanderous
12. Without self-control
13. Brutal = untamed, not civilized
14. Not lovers of good
15. Treacherous = aggressive disposal toward betrayal
16. Rash = aggressive disposal toward recklessness
17. Conceited = haughty, high-minded, arrogant
18. Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.
19. Having a form (outward appearance) of godliness but will deny its power.

Paul instructs Timothy to be aware of such people and have nothing to do with them. Paul was referring to Timothy's "official" associations with people within the church; as it was Timothy's responsibility to keep the body of Christ (the church) pure. This presents a proper balance to Paul's earlier instruction to Timothy (II Tim 2:24) to be kind to all people, which was an instruction for Timothy to seek the repentance of all people. The people described in II Timothy 3:1-5 are those who have hardened their heart to the gospel and Jesus Christ.

### **II Timothy 3:6-7**

**3:6-7** – Paul now focus' on the men who were false teachers, ones who demonstrated the self-centered characteristics described in verses 2-5, and the ones they entrapped in their false teaching. These false teachers "wormed their way into homes and gained control over the vulnerable and gullible". This had become a challenging problem in the church of Ephesus. The false teachers had come into the church through a group of women who were "heaped with sin and

fed with various lusts". These women did not have a good working knowledge of the truth of God; and they were weighed down with emotional and spiritual guilt. Due to their guilt, these women were susceptible to artificial self-denial and open to a belief that sin (self-will, pleasure) was an acceptable way of life. Their carnality and spiritual immaturity made them easy targets for the false teachers. A characteristic of these women was their pride in their "openness to learn". They embraced whatever teaching that met their purpose and never came to an understanding of God's truth. Their problem was that they could not recognize the truth when they saw it; meaning they could not come to a full knowledge of the truth because of their inability to recognize it when it was presented. This issue addressed by Paul was for an actual situation in Ephesus and dealt with women, but this also applies to men.

### **II Timothy 3:8-9**

**3:8-9:** Paul continues his focus on the men who were false teachers by using Jannes and Jambres as an example. The reference to Jannes and Jambres and their opposition to Moses does not come from the O.T. These names come from early Jewish writings and were names given to Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses in Exodus 7-8. According to Jewish tradition these men pretended to be Jewish proselytes and later instigated the worship of the golden calf. Though these names do not appear in the O.T., they were familiar to Paul, Timothy, and other Jews.

These men, Jannes and Jambres, were recognized as opponents of God and the Jews. Paul uses them as an example to identify and classify the false teachers in Ephesus. The false teachers were men of depraved and corrupt minds, who opposed the truth and were to be rejected in regard to any claim they had of teaching the truth. It appears that these false teachers had significant rhetorical power; some believe they had demonstrated signs and wonders to support their false teaching. Paul instructs Timothy that their teaching is useless because it has been tested and found to be worthless ("disapproved" or "rejected").

Consequently, while their influence in Ephesus was real and serious, in the long run these false teachers would not get very far. Sooner or later it will become clear to all that they are lost fools because their beliefs are false; which is what happened to Jannes and Jambres. Although they were having temporary success, they would ultimately fail. These were words of encouragement to Timothy.

### **II Timothy 3:10-11**

**3:10-11:** Paul opens this new paragraph with a strong, clear contrast through the use of the terms “but you”. Paul was comparing Timothy to the false teachers, which Paul had described in II Tim. 2:14-3:9, noting a contrast. Paul now presents his life and ministry as a contrast to the false teachers to be an encouragement to Timothy.

Paul exhorts Timothy by reminding him of his intimate knowledge of Paul’s life. Timothy intimately knew Paul’s teaching (“content”), way of life, purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance through his shared life experience in Paul’s ministry. He also knew of Paul’s persecutions and sufferings experienced in his ministry. Timothy was a native of Lystra, so Paul’s reference to Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra would have recalled to Timothy vivid memories of Paul’s persecution in those 3 cities.

Paul encourages Timothy by referring to the fact that the Lord had preserved him from death during those persecutions so he could continue his ministry and preaching. God had not kept Paul from experiencing harm during these persecutions because he had been stoned in Lystra; something Timothy may have seen. But the Lord’s repeated deliverance of Paul from persecution should have encouraged Timothy in the face of the persecution that he was facing in Ephesus.

*It must be noted that Paul was not ashamed, nor was he boastful, in using himself as an example for Timothy to follow. He was presenting Timothy with the truth of his life and was presenting himself as an example. Can we do the same – ask people to follow our example?*

### **II Timothy 3:12-13**

**3:12** - Paul informs Timothy that persecution awaits anyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ. Faithful believers who are active witnesses for Christ and the gospel must expect persecution and suffering to come upon them from an unbelieving world that is deeply hostile to Christ and the gospel. Paul had reminded Timothy of his own past experience of persecution and suffering in verse 11 of II Timothy 3.

**3:13** – Paul goes on to tell Timothy that he should expect the persecution, suffering, and false teaching to get worse and intensify as time moves forward. Paul told Timothy that false teaching will increase and become more successful as evil men and imposters (charlatans) advance further. Deceiving imposters and their false teaching will see greater and greater success until Christ returns. The evil men who are the false teachers are deceivers of men; but the greater deception is that they have deceived themselves.

### **II Timothy 3:14-15**

**3:14** – Paul again makes a strong address to Timothy – “But as for you” (‘But you must’ / ‘But continue thou’). Paul exhorts Timothy to continue in the “things he has learned”. Paul and others had taught Timothy from the Word of God, which would have been the O.T. These “learned things” were truths that Timothy had become convinced of. Paul inserts a reminder in his exhortation to Timothy of his godly heritage – the teaching he had received from his mother and grandmother (II Tim. 1:5).

**3:15** – Paul identifies two sources for Timothy’s “learned things”: one, his godly, holy heritage and the teaching he had received as a young child through his growing up years; and two, the Holy Scriptures, which was the O.T. The O.T. scriptures pointed to Christ and revealed the need for faith in God’s promises. For a person seeking truth, God, through the Holy Scriptures will lead a person to the “knowledge of

truth (II Tim. 2:25); salvation is brought by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures. The Scriptures bring salvation only when one places their personal faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul was exhorting Timothy to have complete confidence in both of these sources of his “learned things”. Paul knew that if Timothy stayed true to his roots, his learning, and the truth he was convinced of, it would be enough to prevent any slippage in his commitment to the Christ Jesus, the truth, and the gospel.

### **II Timothy 3:16-17**

**3:16** – Paul had just noted that the Scriptures were able to make one wise to salvation (vs. 15). Now Paul exhorts Timothy regarding the role of God’s Scripture in his life and ministry. Paul begins by telling Timothy that all Scripture is “God-breathed”. The Greek word “theopneustos” does not occur anywhere else in written Scripture or in contemporary Greek literature. The term, thought to have been created by Paul, stresses the divine origin and authority of the Scriptures. The term explains the “inspiration” of the Scriptures – primarily O.T., but applicable to the N.T. Paul was instructing Timothy that God’s words were given to men superintended by the Holy Spirit so their writings were without error.

Paul then asserted the power and usefulness of the Scripture in ministry; it was profitable (useful) in – training and instructing people in God’s truth (doctrine) – in rebuking sin and wrong belief in people – in restoring those who have fallen from their original condition – in positively training a child (and new believer) in godly behavior.

**3:17** – Paul’s conclusion – “in order that” – is that the “man of God” (the technical term in the Greek for the “preacher of the truth, the one who provides spiritual leadership to others”) is “complete, capable, and proficient to meet all demands” through the Scriptures. The truth in the Scriptures is sufficient in all matters in life; specifically regarding truth, salvation, and moral behavior. This was a major challenge that Paul placed on Timothy – but he was confident in

God’s ability to supply all of Timothy’s needs through the Scriptures; as long as Timothy was committed and dependent of the Scriptures to meet his needs.

### **II Timothy 4:1-2**

**4:1** – Paul issues a forceful command to Timothy in light of his salvation, education, and the power of the Scriptures. Paul places this command to Timothy in the context of ultimate reality – reminding him that he is conducting himself in the presence and under the observation of God, even Christ Jesus. It is Christ, not those surrounding Timothy (believers or unbelievers) who will judge him...and that Christ will certainly return. Christ’s kingdom is the ultimate reality with which Timothy should be concerned.

Paul is emphasizing the unique accountability that ministers of the gospel have, but this accountability applies to all believers who have Christ Jesus as Judge. As a believer, our service to Christ is rendered both under His watchful eye and with the knowledge that as Judge He will one day examine our motives and works according to His standard...not ours or other’s standards.

**4:2** – Paul continues his forceful command by issuing 5 imperatives to Timothy: 1) Preach the Word (a reference to 3:16), 2) Be ready in season and out of season (be prepared and alert like a soldier in war – convenient or not), 3) Correct (convince those who are in error), 4) Rebuke (challenge and confront those who are sinning), 5) Encourage (positively teach and communicate the truths of the Word). All 5 of these imperatives are to be executed with great patience and careful instruction.

These challenges apply to the ministers of the gospel as well as to each believer. These 2 verses provide us insight on what Christ Jesus, as Judge, will be examining in our life when we stand before Him.

## **II Timothy 4:3-4**

**4:3-4...** Paul's charge (II Tim. 4:1-2) leads to this exhortation to Timothy that time will come when men will not put up with the preaching of sound doctrine. The term "will not endure" means "not holding up under adversity, will not tolerate"; meaning that people will become intolerant of the confronting truth that comes from the truthful preaching of God's Word.

"Paul's focus in this passage is the people who were professing believers who listened to Timothy's preaching; professing believers who follow their own desires first without regard to others or leadership. They seek to find preachers who teach about God's blessings apart from His forgiveness; and His salvation apart for their repentance. They have an "itch" to be entertained. They desire preaching that produces pleasant feelings that leave them feeling good about themselves. Under these conditions, people will seek to dictate what is preached...and if they don't like what is being preached they will go seek it elsewhere." (John MacArthur).

People who become intolerant of the preaching of sound doctrine will turn toward false ideologies, viewpoints, and philosophies that oppose the gospel and sound doctrine. This points out that for error to flourish it takes two...a false teacher and people who are willing to listen and follow. Ultimately when these two groups work together, the truth is replaced with error.

## **II Timothy 4:5-6**

**4:5...** Paul, once again, uses a strong declaration directed toward Timothy – "But you". Paul exhorts Timothy to be watchful in all things; meaning he was to remain composed and cool-headed during difficult situations and circumstances. Timothy was to be watchful for false teachers and the teaching of false doctrine. Paul exhorts Timothy to be ready to endure hardships; referring to hardship that occurs when one follows Jesus and preaches the gospel and sound

doctrine. Paul then calls Timothy to the work of an evangelist; to proclaim the gospel of Jesus to the lost and unbelieving. In light of II Tim. 4:6, this is a challenge to Timothy to continue the ministry that Paul had started – preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul closes his exhortation with a challenge to Timothy to fulfill his ministry; meaning he was to continue his voluntary service to God as a pastor proclaiming the gospel and teaching sound doctrine.

**4:6...** Paul opens verse 6 with a strong opening phrase – "For I". Paul tells Timothy that he is about to die and his death is imminent. Paul uses the illustration of a "drink offering" to describe the certainty of his upcoming death; he was already being poured out like a drink offering. In the O.T. the drink offering was the final offering that followed the burnt and grain offering. Paul saw his upcoming death as his final offering to God; this was in light of a life that had already been full of sacrifice to God. The time had come. God was calling Paul home. Paul's time for departure (the loosening of the mooring ropes of a ship at dock) had come...his death was at hand.

## **II Timothy 4:7-8**

**4:7...** Paul looks back at his life – a life dedicated to fulfilling the will of God in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. He states that he has fought a good fight, he has finished, and he has kept the faith. The Greek used here means the task was completed but the result continue. There is no pride in these statements. He is simply stating that he has completed the course that God had given to him. Paul saw his life as complete – he had been able to accomplish, through the Lord's power and grace, all that God had called him to do.

**4:8...** As a result of his faithfulness in completing God's will, Paul states that he will stand before the Lord, the righteous judge, at the Judgment Seat of Christ (that day). At that time, Paul was confident that he would receive a crown of righteousness as a reward for his faithfulness. The crown of righteousness is either righteousness itself or it is a reward for righteousness, the Greek phrase can be

interpreted either way. In either case, Christ will give the crown to Paul as a reward for his life of ministry. Paul then states that all believers who have loved the appearing of Christ, ones who have hearts desiring the return of Christ, will also receive a crown of righteousness from Christ.

## **II Timothy 4:9-15**

**4:9-13...** Paul closes by urging Timothy to come to Rome quickly to join him because his days are numbered. The delivery of the letter to Timothy and his trip to Rome would take several months, so any delay on Timothy's part could make his arrival too late.

Paul was alone in prison in Rome, save Luke. Demas, once a faithful worker (Col. 4:14, Philemon 24) had abandoned Paul because he had fallen in love with the world. In contrast, Crescens and Titus had remained faithful to Paul but Paul had sent them on a mission to Galatia and Dalmatia (north of Macedonia) respectively.

Paul asked Timothy to pick up John Mark on his way to Rome. John Mark, a cousin of Barnabas, was deemed by Paul to be unworthy to minister (Acts 15:36-40), but was now considered to be worthy and helpful in Paul's ministry. This is evidence that Barnabas' concern for and discipleship of John Mark – in spite of Paul's opposition – was paying dividends, even to Paul personally.

Paul indicates that he is sending this letter to Timothy by Tychicus. Little is known about Carpas of Troas. He had Paul's cloak, which was a heavy wool garment that was used in cold weather. The books Paul requested were papyrus scrolls, which could have been the O.T. The parchments Paul requested were vellum sheets made of animal skins. They were very expensive. The parchments could have been copies of letters or blank sheets. The reference to the books and parchments may have also indicated the inclusion of writing materials and official documents. This may have been an indication that Paul was arrested in Troas and had no opportunity to retrieve these possessions before he was sent to prison in Rome.

**4:14-15...** The "Alexander" Paul warned Timothy about may have been the same man he mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20 (cf. Acts 19:33-34), though Alexander was a common name. Or he may have been another Alexander who resided in Rome and had given Paul trouble there. It appears that Alexander was a "coppersmith" that might have been an idol maker, or he was one who opposed Paul's teaching and was spreading false doctrine. In any case, Paul did not want Timothy to retaliate against Alexander ("The Lord will repay him"). The Lord would take care of that ("I will repay"; Deut. 32:35, 41; cf. Ps. 62:12). Timothy was to beware of ("be on guard against") him, either in Ephesus or when Timothy came to visit Paul in Rome.

## **II Timothy 4:16-18**

**4:16...** Customarily under Roman law, accused prisoners underwent a preliminary hearing before their trial. At this hearing, witnesses could speak on behalf of the accused. In Paul's case, at his "first defense," after he had arrived in Rome as a prisoner for the second time, "no one" had come to his defense. ("Defense" in the Greek means "a verbal defense in a court of law", which in English we get the word "apology" and "apologetics.") In the Roman legal system, an accused person received two hearings – the first hearing established the charge, the second hearing determined the accused's guilt or innocence. This was Paul's first hearing and no one came to his defense probably because, when Rome burned in July of A.D. 64, Nero blamed the Christians, and from then on it was dangerous to be a known Christian in Rome. Neither local Christians nor Paul's fellow workers were willing to stand with the apostle ("all deserted me"; cf. Matt. 26:56). Paul hoped the Lord would not hold ("count") their failure to come to his defense in the Roman court "against them" (cf. Ps. 32:2; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60).

**4:17...** "The Lord," however, had not abandoned Paul, but had "strengthened" him. Paul was able to proclaim the gospel before the Roman Tribunal, which furthered his mission to "the Gentiles." He had so far escaped death, though he was ready to die as a martyr.

The "lion's mouth" was a common figure-of-speech to describe mortal death, but it may be a reference to the lions in the Roman Coliseum that were then devouring Christians. It is also possible that "lion's mouth" was a veiled reference to Nero, or probably a more general allusion to Satan's instruments of evil, that have always sought to destroy God's faithful servants (cf. Dan. 6:22; Ps. 22:21; Matt. 6:13; 1 Pet. 5:8).

**4:18...** Paul knew he would die a martyr's death (v. 6-8), but he saw death as God's vehicle to deliver him from an "evil deed" (his execution), and "bring" him "safely" into his Lord's presence ("His heavenly kingdom;" cf. Phil. 1:23). Paul knew the Lord was standing with him and strengthening him (v.17); and he had hope in the Lord's ability to preserve him in any event or circumstance in his life. In light of this, he glorified God with this doxology: "to Him be the glory forever and ever."

The "kingdom" that Paul had in view may be Christ's messianic kingdom, but most interpret this kingdom as heaven, since Paul described it as God's "heavenly kingdom." "Three features of Paul's attitude can provide us help and encouragement for today. First, Paul avoided indulging his disappointments. ... Second, Paul could rejoice in the victory won in the life of Mark. ... Third, Paul found no room for vindictiveness toward those who hurt or opposed him." Thomas Lea

## **II Timothy 4:19-22**

**4:19...** Paul here sent greetings to his old friends "Prisca" (Priscilla) and "Aquila," who were then living in Ephesus (cf. Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19). He also greeted the loyal family of "Onesiphorus," of whom he had written earlier (1:16-17).

**4:20...** "Erastus" and "Trophimus" were old associates of Timothy (Acts 19:22; 20:4; 21:29). Paul now sent news of them. "Erastus" mentioned here may be the city-treasurer of Corinth (Rom. 16:23), but that cannot be verified. "Trophimus" was from Ephesus, who accompanied Paul from Greece to Troas. It is thought that Trophimus

sought healing, but evidently it was not God's will for Trophimus to experience healing through Paul's ministry. (Miletus was a city in Lycia along the coastline, about 30 miles south of Ephesus.)

**4:21...** "Winter" severely restricted travel in some parts of the Roman world. Timothy needed to leave Ephesus soon, so he could reach Rome without undue difficulty; and it may have been that Timothy would be bringing Paul some clothing to wear during the winter while in the Roman jail. Paul relayed the greetings of four other brethren ("Eusebius," "Pudens," "Linus," and "Claudia"), probably local, whom Timothy evidently knew, as well as the greetings of "all" the local Christians.

**4:22...** In conclusion, Paul first wished the Lord's ministry of "grace" on Timothy's "spirit," perhaps to encourage him again to remain faithful. Then he wished God's "grace" for "all" the readers (plural "you" in the Greek text) of this epistle. This was the same closing as he used in I Timothy.

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