

EXPLORING FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY

Dear Friend,

This **EXPLORING** study is more detailed than the **DISCOVERING** study, which is in the single sheet, two-sided format that we give to anyone interested in a basic study for personal edification, one-on-one discipleship and/or leading a small group discussion. This more in-depth study, adapted from the Life Change series (used as licensed by WORDsearch11), is what we recommend for those who are interested in gleaning more from their studies, being better prepared to lead others in their studies, and building their biblical theology as part of their leadership development.

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BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Timeline of Paul's Ministry

(All dates are approximate, based on F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, page 475.)

Public ministry of Jesus	28-30 AD
Conversion of Paul (<u>Acts 9:1-19</u>)	33
Paul visits Jerusalem to see Peter (<u>Galatians 1:18</u>)	35
Paul in Cilicia and Syria (<u>Galatians 1:21</u> ; <u>Acts 9:30</u>)	35-46
Paul visits Jerusalem to clarify the mission to the Gentiles (<u>Galatians 2:1-10</u>)	46
Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus and Galatia (<u>Acts 13-14</u>)	47-48
<i>Letter to the Galatians</i>	48?
Council of Jerusalem (<u>Acts 15</u>)	49
Paul and Silas travel from Antioch to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia (<u>Acts 16-17</u>)	49-50
<i>Letters to the Thessalonians</i>	50
Paul in Corinth (<u>Acts 18:1-18</u>)	50-52
Paul visits Jerusalem	52
Paul in Ephesus (<u>Acts 19</u>)	52-55
<i>Letters to the Corinthians</i>	55-56
Paul travels to Macedonia, Dalmatia, and Achaia (<u>Acts 20</u>)	55-57
<i>Letter to the Romans</i>	early 57
Paul to Jerusalem (<u>Acts 21:1-23:22</u>)	May 57
Paul imprisoned in Caesarea (<u>Acts 23:23-26:32</u>)	57-59
Paul sent to house arrest in Rome (<u>Acts 27:1-28:31</u>)	59-62
<i>Letters to Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon</i>	60?-62
<i>Letters to Timothy and Titus</i>	?
Paul executed in Rome	65?

Saul the Pharisee

Paul was born in the first decade AD in Tarsus, a small but prosperous city on the trade route from Syria to Asia Minor. Tarsus was known for its schools of philosophy and liberal arts, and some scholars believe Paul must have had some contact with these. Like most cities in the Empire, Tarsus probably contained synagogues of Greek-speaking Jews who were often as devout as their Hebrew-speaking brethren.

However, in Phil. 3:5, Paul calls himself "a Hebrew of Hebrews," which probably means that his parents spoke Hebrew and raised him in a strict Jewish home, isolated as much as possible from the pagan city around them. They named their boy "Saul" after Israel's first king, for the family belonged to King Saul's tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5). They must have owned property and had some importance in the community, for Saul was born not only a citizen of Tarsus (Acts 21:39) but also a citizen of Rome (Acts 22:27-28).

Saul was sent to study Jewish law in Jerusalem under the foremost rabbi of his day, the Pharisee Gamaliel (Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:14). The word *Pharisee* comes from a Hebrew word meaning "the separated ones," for the Pharisees felt God had set them apart to live by the Law of Moses. Some Pharisees held that a man was righteous if he had done more good than bad, but Saul evidently followed the stricter group that insisted that every least implication of the law must be kept.

The Pharisees expected a *Messiah* (Hebrew for "Anointed One"; Greek: *Christ*), who would deliver them from foreign oppression and rule with justice. However, Jesus of Nazareth had scandalized many Pharisees by interpreting the Law differently and claiming a special relationship with God. Thus, when some Jews began to proclaim Jesus as Messiah and Lord (a term usually reserved for God), strict Pharisees opposed them furiously.

Saul helped to lead the fight against the proclaimers of Christ in Jerusalem (Acts 7:58-8:3; Galatians 1:13). When some were driven out, Saul obtained permission to pursue them to Damascus. But on the way there, Jesus confronted Saul in a blinding encounter (Acts 9:1-19), revealing to Saul that he was persecuting the very God he professed to worship. Saul's life now turned from Pharisaic observance of God's Law to a devoted obedience to Jesus Christ, the revealed Messiah. He joined the Jews who were urging other Jews to believe in Jesus, and shortly thereafter God called him to proclaim Jesus as Savior to Gentiles (non-Jews) also. Saul took the Greek name Paul when he turned to work among Gentiles.

Paul the missionary

Paul's conversion may have marked his first move outward from cloistered Judaism into pagan culture. He spent ten years in Cilicia and Syria (Galatians 1:21), probably preaching Jesus along with Greek-speaking Jewish Christians. Then Barnabas called Paul from Tarsus to Syrian Antioch, where by this time the church was more Gentile than Jewish.

Eventually, the church in Antioch commissioned Paul and Barnabas to evangelize Cyprus and Galatia. The two men traveled from Syrian Antioch to Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and then back to Syrian Antioch (Acts 13:1-14:28; 2 Tim. 3:11). In Lystra they were nearly murdered by a mob, but they made some converts, among whom were a Jewish woman named Lois, her daughter Eunice, and Eunice's son Timothy.

Timothy

Since children of Jewish mothers are reckoned as Jews, Timothy may have been considered as Jewish. No doubt his Gentile neighbors regarded him so, and his mother raised him to know the Jewish Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15). But Timothy's father was a Greek, and because of him Timothy had never been circumcised (Acts 16:1-3). Thus, despite his mother's lineage and his training in the Scriptures, Timothy was a Gentile in the eyes of Jews. His may have been a hard childhood for a sensitive boy, excluded by Gentiles for his Jewishness and by Jews for his uncircumcision.

But when he, his mother, and his grandmother became Christians, Timothy suddenly belonged to a group of people who didn't care whether or not he was a Jew. He belonged to people who shared together their neighbors' rejection and their Lord's promises. Timothy apparently flourished in his new identity so that even Christians in Iconium, eighteen miles away, "spoke well of him" (Acts 16:2). When Paul returned to the churches he had founded in Galatia two years later, he resolved to take this impressive young disciple with him.

Paul probably met this young man of mixed Jewish-Greek descent on his first missionary journey as recorded in Acts 13:4-14:27. While little is said of his Greek father, Timothy's Jewish mother and grandmother are both stated to be believers. Paul frequently referred to Timothy as his "son" (see Phil. 2:22; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:1), which probably means either that he was won to Christ under the ministry of Paul (but see Acts 16:1) or that he was trained in the ministry under Paul. When the Apostle saw that the young man had great promise for leadership, he had him circumcised and took him along as a younger associate.

Paul also sent Timothy on special assignments to difficult ministries—to Thessalonica (1 Thes. 3:1-10), to Corinth (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Cor. 16:10-11), to Macedonia (Acts 19:22), to Philippi (Phil. 2:19-24), and to Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3). While some have taken Paul's directives to Timothy as evidence that the young man was timid and diffident, it seems unlikely that Paul would have entrusted such difficult

ministries to a man who lacked courage or decisiveness. It seems more likely that Paul's instructions are intended to encourage a young man who was facing intense opposition in Ephesus.

You can learn more about Timothy by reading Second Timothy; Acts 16:1-5; Acts 17:14-15; Acts 18:5; Acts 19:22; Acts 20:4-5; 1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Cor. 16:10-11; 2 Cor. 1:19; Phil. 2:19-24; 1 Thes. 3:2-3, 6; and possibly Hebrews 13:23.

Timothy commissioned

Paul had another young man with him named Titus, a full Greek. Paul had not even considered circumcising Titus, for he felt strongly that the Jewish ritual law was not binding upon Christians (Galatians 2:3-5). But because Timothy was neither Jew nor Gentile, Paul decided that Timothy would be a more effective evangelist as a full Jew (Acts 16:3). Since circumcision was neither good nor bad to Paul (1 Cor. 7:17-20), he chose to do what seemed most expedient for the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:19-23) and circumcised Timothy.

Before Paul left Timothy's home town, he also had the local elders lay hands on the young man to set him apart for his new ministry (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

Travels

Timothy accompanied Paul through Asia to Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 16:6-19:21), surviving riots, prison, and a criminal trial. During six years of traveling, Timothy learned enough to be trusted with a delicate mission to Corinth, where factions and immorality were splitting the church (1 Cor. 4:17).

Paul rejoined Timothy in Macedonia and traveled to Jerusalem, where Paul was arrested. As a Roman citizen, he appealed for a trial before the emperor, probably hoping to have Christianity officially declared a legal religion. At this point, Timothy ceases to appear in the book of Acts; he may have gone on to strengthen the churches Paul's group had founded. When Paul wrote First Timothy, the young man was in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3).

Final days

Paul was probably released from his first imprisonment in Rome in 62 AD but was re-arrested sometime later, perhaps in 65. He wrote Second Timothy during this second imprisonment. Formerly he had been treated as a political prisoner, but now he was treated as a criminal. This time he was not simply restricted to a private house but locked in a dungeon and chained to a wall or a soldier.

Emperor Nero had his reasons for this change. Back in 60-62 AD when Paul was in Rome the first time, the Empire had been running well and Nero had been popular, for he had been leaving affairs of government to some gifted advisors. But between 62 and 65 Nero had replaced his competent servants and had begun to plunder the Empire to pay for his pleasures. The provinces—especially Judah—were groaning under his taxes, the economy was slumping, and Nero was in trouble with the Roman Senate for his murdering, licentious lifestyle. When a fire broke out in Rome in 64, Nero was suspected of arson. He found a scapegoat in an unpopular religious sect; Christians in the city were rounded up and thrown to animals—officially to pay for setting the fire but really to satisfy Nero's blood lust. The Roman people soon grew disgusted at this persecution, but it was unsafe to be a Christian in Rome as long as Nero lived, for he continued to need scapegoats for his crimes.

Thus, when Paul was rearrested, he became another pawn in Nero's game to survive politically. Paul wrote 2 Timothy from his dungeon cell shortly before he was executed.

Date

Paul's first Roman imprisonment is usually dated anywhere from A D. 59 to 64, while the early church without exception declares that Paul was executed by Emperor Nero (who died in June of A D.

3. Look especially for the following terms. Where are they found, and how are they used throughout First Timothy?
 - a. Good
 - b. Faith
 - c. Trustworthy saying
 - d. Teach
 - e. Fight
4. Note here any teachings, commands, warnings, or instructions from First Timothy that you want to think about this week.
5. After gaining some background on First Timothy and after reading this Epistle several times, what questions do you have about its contents? (Does anything puzzle you? Surprise you? Alarm you?) Write your questions here and refer to them as you continue this study.

1 TIMOTHY 1:1-11, SALUTATION AND WARNING

Like each of his thirteen epistles in the New Testament—and in keeping with the custom of the day, which was the opposite of our own—Paul begins First Timothy by writing his name (in Greek, *Paulos*).

1. How does Paul refer to himself in 1:1? Why do you think he does this, if in fact he is writing to a good friend? What does this imply about a larger audience for the letter?

2. How does Paul characterize Christ in 1:1? How does he describe God? How are these descriptions significant?

3. To whom does Paul address this letter in 1:2? How does Paul describe this person? How is this significant?

4. a. What kind of greeting does Paul give the recipient in 1:2? What is significant about each of the items he mentions?

b. How does this greeting compare with those in Paul's other letters?

As you thought about the purpose of First Timothy in the Overview, you may have noted that 1 Tim. 3:15 provides an overview of the entire book: "You will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household." The whole letter is about precisely that: how God's people ought to act in God's Church. Unfortunately, God's people do not always act as they should. That sad fact is trumpeted loud and clear from the very beginning of First Timothy. The church at Ephesus had some major problems, which is why Paul requested that his trusted associate, Timothy, remain at the church to help it straighten out the problems and give them the tools they needed to grow in the faith. Read through 1 Tim. 1:3-11 and note the unique challenges that faced Timothy in the church at Ephesus, as well as the strategies that Paul suggests Timothy use to overcome them.

Stay there in Ephesus (1:3). After Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment, he apparently once more visited the church at Ephesus, where he found conditions that needed extended attention. Timothy was the right man for the job

Certain men (1:3). False prophets and false teachers have always been around to plague God's people. Note just a few other references where they are named: Jeremiah 23:9-40; Ezekiel 13; Matthew 7:15-23; Matthew 24:24; Acts 13:6-12; Acts 20:29-31; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Galatians 2:4; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3.

Myths and endless genealogies (1:4). We don't know exactly what the false teachers in Ephesus were teaching. If they were Jews, they may have devised a complex mythology based on Old Testament genealogies. On the other hand, they may have been forerunners of the groups that became popular in the second century A.D. We call those groups *Gnostics* from the Greek word *gnosis*, "knowledge." Each Gnostic group claimed that one could be saved from futility only by knowing some secret knowledge which that group alone possessed. This secret knowledge they claimed centered around a complex genealogy, beginning with the true "Absolute," who fathered a secondary deity, who fathered a tertiary deity or deities, and so on.

A good conscience and a sincere faith (1:5). Note the reappearance of these paired items in 1:19; 3:9.

The law (1:7-8). This refers to the *Torah*, the first five books of the Bible, written by Moses, also called the Pentateuch.

Those who kill their fathers or mothers (1:9). This phrase includes two words in Greek, *patroloais* and *matroloais*, which are found only here in the New Testament. Literally, the pairing of the words "father" and "mother" with the verb "to strike." Perhaps the sin here is not so much murder as it is the ultimate dishonoring of parents.

5. What was the purpose of Paul's instruction to Timothy to stay in Ephesus? What was the problem according to 1 Tim. 1:3?

6. a. To what were certain men devoted in Ephesus, according to 1 Tim. 1:4?

- b. Why was this a problem? What happens when our devotion is redirected away from Christ?

3. According to 1:4-5, what is one way to determine if a teaching is valid and true? Conversely, what is one way to determine if a teaching is false and harmful?

4. How would you define...
 - a "pure heart"?

 - a "good conscience"?

 - a "sincere faith"?

5. Do you think you possess these things? Explain.

6. How does someone "wander away" from the things mentioned in question 4? Do you know of anyone who has done so? Explain.

7. What did Paul mean by the phrase "meaningless talk"? How can you tell if an idea or teaching is "meaningless"?

8. a. Who is Paul describing in 1:7? What does he tell us about them?

b. What does Romans 1:21-22 and Titus 1:10-11 add to your understanding?

c. Have you ever come in contact with someone who might fit into such a category? If so, describe them. How did you respond to them?

9. Why would someone want to teach something they didn't understand? Why would they "confidently affirm" something they had no real comprehension of? What problem or sin is at the root of such a dilemma?

10. a. How does Paul know that the law is "good" (1:8)?

b. How does one use it "properly"? How can it be used "improperly"?

11. For whom is the law intended, according to 1:9-10? Explain in your own words.

12. If persons such as those listed in 1:9-10 did not exist, would law be necessary? Why, or why not?

13. a. What is "sound doctrine" (1:10), according to Paul?
- b. How can you tell if a doctrine today is sound or not? What "tests" does Paul mention in 1:3-11?
14. What does Paul mean by "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" (1:11)? Does he define it here or elsewhere in First Timothy? See if you can name other places in his writings where he describes this more fully. Then describe this "glorious gospel" in your own words.
15. a. What is your overall impression of 1:3-11? How is it significant that Paul starts out his letter in this way?
- b. Do you think you would have enjoyed being in Timothy's sandals at Ephesus? Why, or why not?
16. List any questions you have about 1 Timothy 1:1-11.
17. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else? How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

1 TIMOTHY 1:12-20, GRACE!

Paul never got over the fact that at one time he had been determined to destroy God's church. Yet to him, the memory was not an occasion to revisit guilt, but one of great thankfulness to the merciful God who transformed him from a persecutor of Christ's body to an Apostle of the church.

He knew very well that his experience was not a solitary one; God lavished divine mercy and grace upon him in order to demonstrate what He longed to do for others. Perhaps one reason Paul wrote of his own experience at the beginning of this letter was to remind Timothy that the same grace and power God used to transform Paul was also available to him. No problem—no matter how difficult or agonizing—is beyond God's reach. Paul was a living example of this truth!

Once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man (1:13). Paul, then called Saul, was a feared enemy of the church before his encounter with God. (See [Acts 7:59-8:3](#); [Acts 9:1-5](#); [Acts 22:2-5](#); [Acts 26:9-11](#); [Galatians 1:13](#).)

Trustworthy saying (1:15). Literally, "faithful the word." The phrase is found only in the pastoral epistles. See [1 Tim. 3:1](#); [2 Tim. 2:11](#); [Titus 3:8](#). It is used to describe statements that ought to be regarded as fully reliable.

The worst (1:15-16). Literally, "first" or "chief." No doubt the Apostle gave himself this title because he was the man at the forefront of efforts to destroy the church—the heart of God's redemptive plan for the world. Paul could think of no sin worse than to attempt to destroy the very thing for which Jesus Christ gave His life.

Unlimited patience (1:16). A divine attitude of moral restraint that holds out under provocation. If anyone had provoked God's wrath, it was Paul; and yet he was shown mercy instead of judgment.

1. a. Note that Paul calls Christ Jesus "our Lord" in [1:12](#). What does he mean by this?

b. What other titles does he use for Christ throughout this book (see [1:1](#); [2:5](#))? What significance does each have?
2. In what way did Christ give Paul "strength" ([1:12](#))? What connection does this have to Paul's being considered "faithful"?
3. Compare [Acts 8:1-3](#); [Acts 9:1-22](#); [Acts 22:3-5](#); [Acts 26:9-11](#) with [1 Tim. 1:13](#). Then match the descriptions in Acts of Paul's former behavior with the three terms mentioned in First Timothy.
 - a. Blasphemer
 - b. Persecutor

c. Violent man

4. a. Why was Paul "shown mercy," according to 1:13?
 - b. What does this reveal about God's character?
 - c. What implications, if any, does it have for evangelism?
5. Paul says three things were "poured out" on him in Christ Jesus (1:14). What are these three things, and what significance does each have?
6. a. What "trustworthy saying" does Paul cite in 1:15? Why does it deserve "full acceptance"?
 - b. Do you have any personal experience with the truth of this saying? Explain.
7. How could Paul say he was the "worst of sinners"? Do you think this was literally true—was his sin really worse than that of others—or could it be the way every deeply convicted sinner feels? Explain.
8. a. For what reason was Paul shown mercy, according to 1:16?
 - b. What does this teach you about God's character?

9. How did Christ display His "unlimited patience" in Paul's life? In what way is 1:16 the Gospel in brief?
10. What does each of the following terms found in 1:17 contribute to your understanding of God?
- a. King
 - b. Eternal
 - c. Immortal
 - d. Invisible
 - e. Only God
11. What does it mean to bestow "honor" and "glory" on God forever and ever? Since He already has these things, how can we bestow them on Him? Do we?

Amen (1:17). The word comes from a Hebrew root meaning "to be firm, steady, trustworthy." It is used in the Old Testament by a congregation or an individual to accept both the validity of an oath and its consequences (see Numbers 5:22; Deut. 27:15-16; Jeremiah 11:5), as well as a response to a benediction. By the time of the New Testament, the word was regularly used at the close of prayers and doxologies to agree with the ideas and sentiments that had just been expressed.

Prophecies once made about you (1:18). These seem to have been prophetic utterances that pointed Timothy's way into the ministry. Paul hoped that by calling them to mind, Timothy would be inspired to successfully fight against the problems that had arisen in Ephesus.

Shipwrecked their faith (1:19). The willful decision to turn away from the truths of the Gospel results in the destruction of "faith." This is a descriptive and colorful term used metaphorically here.

Hymenaeus and Alexander (1:20). These names appear in other New Testament passages (Acts 19:33; 2 Tim. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:14-15), but it is uncertain whether the same men are intended.

Handed over to Satan (1:20). At least two interpretations are possible. The phrase may refer to some illness or physical disability that Satan was allowed to inflict; or it may be used in a semi-technical sense, that these men had been removed from the sphere of the Church and had been thrust outside into the realm of Satan, where they would be open to his attacks (see 1 Cor. 5:5).

Blaspheme (1:20). To speak impiously or irreverently of God or sacred things; to speak evil of; slander.

12. a. How does 1 Tim. 1:18-19 instruct Timothy to "fight the good fight"?
- b. What is this "fight"?

- c. Why does Paul call it a "fight"? Do you often think of this as a "fight" in your own life? Explain.
13. a. A good "conscience" is mentioned in 1:5, 19 and 3:9. What does it mean to have a good and clear conscience?
- b. How does one gain such a conscience?
- c. How does one "reject" a good conscience? What is the result?
14. a. How did Hymenaeus and Alexander "blaspheme" (1:20)?
- b. What was the result?
- c. Do you think such a consequence could occur today? Explain.
15. List any questions you have about 1 Timothy 1:12-20.
16. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else? How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-15, INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING WORSHIP

After briefly alerting Timothy to the nature of the letter he is receiving and reminding him of the history of its author, Paul quickly moves on to offer a number of instructions and advisories about how best to direct the affairs of the Church – BEGINNING WITH PRAYER!

1. 1 Tim. 2:1-2 gives instruction on prayer in at least three categories. Evaluate your own prayer life according to each element:
 - a. Do you have a balance among the different kinds of prayer—*requests* for yourself, *praise* for God, *intercession* for others, and *thanksgiving*? In which of these areas would you like to grow?
 - b. Consider those who benefit from our prayers: "kings and all those in authority." Do you pray for these people? Why, or why not?
 - c. Consider the purpose of praying for authorities: that we may live peaceful, quiet, godly, holy lives. Why would praying for political leaders give us peaceful, quiet lives?
 - d. Why is a peaceful, quiet life desirable for believers?

Wants all men to be saved (2:4). The statement agrees with John 3:16 and 2 Cor. 5:14-15 that Christ died for all. Salvation has been provided for all, but only those who accept it are saved.

Mediator (2:5). The Greek term, *mesites*, means one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or to form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant.

Ransom for all men (2:6). The word "ransom," *antilytron*, occurs only here in the New Testament. It pertains to that which is given in exchange for another as the price of that person's redemption. Christ paid the ransom to free us from the slavery of sin; we are therefore rightfully His possession.

2. a. What does God desire, according to 2:4?
 - b. How can we "plug into" this desire, according to 2:1-2?
3. a. What three parties are mentioned in 2:5?

- b. Why is a "mediator" needed?
-
- 4. a. How did Jesus "give himself" as a ransom (2:6)?
 - b. For whom was He given?
 - c. What difference does this make to us today?
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- 5. What does "testimony" mean in 2:6?
-
- 6. a. What was Paul's special task, according to 2:7?
 - b. In what way was his ministry different from your own? In what way is it similar?
-
- Lift up holy hands*** (2:8). Lifting up hands in prayer is often mentioned in the Old Testament (see 1 Kings 8:22; Psalm 141:2; Psalm 143:6) to indicate earnest desire. The word *holy* here means devout, pious, pleasing to God, set apart for Him.
- 7. a. Why is prayer incompatible with "anger" or "disputing" (2:8)?
 - b. Why do you suppose this command was necessary?
-
- 8. What is the main point of 2:9-10? Is Paul primarily interested in what women wear, or in something else? Explain.

10. List any questions you have about 1 Timothy 2:1-15.

11. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else?
How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-16, OFFICERS IN THE CHURCH

No church can operate for long without a capable leadership team at the helm. Paul therefore set down general guidelines for choosing people capable of doing the job.

No one, of course, is perfect; but Paul laid out some fairly lofty qualifications for those who would desire to become part of the church's leadership team. If character has tended to count for less and less in secular leadership, it continues to count for a great deal in those who would hold office in the church. It is certainly not for everybody—especially the calling to teach. As another author of Scripture reminds us, "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly" ([James 3:1](#)).

Overseer ([3:1](#)). The *King James Version* translates the Greek term, *episkope*, "the office of a bishop." It means "office of overseer" and is used in this sense in [Acts 1:20](#).

Above reproach ([3:2](#)). Literally, "not to be laid hold of," Greek *anepileptos*, used here and in [5:7](#) and [6:14](#). As it stands at the head of a list of qualifications, it serves as a general description of the sort of man who could meet the requirements of the office; it is not a demand of perfection.

Husband of but one wife ([3:2](#)). Either a man who has been married only once, or more likely, a man who is monogamous—only one wife at a time, and completely faithful to her.

Good reputation with outsiders ([3:7](#)). Literally, "a good testimony from those outside." A bad reputation in the community quickly leads to a bad reputation for the Church, which would demean the cause of Christ.

1. Paul used the phrase "trustworthy saying" in [1:15](#); [3:1](#); [4:9](#) (and in [2 Tim. 2:11](#) and [Titus 3:8](#)). What is the point of this phrase? How is it used each time it appears?
2. a. How is personal desire connected with the office of Overseer in [3:1](#)? Why is it important?

b. How could such a desire be easily perverted?
3. In what way is being an Overseer a "noble task"?
4. What did Paul mean when he used the term "above reproach"?
5. In [3:2-7](#), Paul used the following terms to establish qualifications for those who want to become Overseers in the church. How would each qualification help make a better leader?

husband of but one wife

temperate

self-controlled

respectable

hospitable

able to teach

not given to drunkenness

not violent but gentle

not quarrelsome

not a lover of money

manages his own family well

not a recent convert

has a good reputation with outsiders

6. Why would it be important for an Overseer to "see that his children obey him with proper respect"? What connection is there between this and directing the affairs of the Church?

7. What do you think is Paul's logic behind his statement in 3:5?

8. a. What dangers could a young convert be exposed to if he were given a leadership role within the Church?

b. What modern-day applications of this principle (beyond qualifications for being an Overseer) can you think of?

9. Why is it important for an Overseer to have a "good reputation with outsiders"? How would the lack of such a reputation make it easier for someone to "fall into disgrace" and "into the devil's trap"?

Deacons (3:8). Most simply, this Greek word, *diakonos*, means "servant." Acts 6 provides the model for this office.

Much wine (3:8). Similar to the qualification for Overseer in 3:3, but a longer and stronger expression. Leaders in the church should certainly never be prone to even a hint of drunkenness.

10. 1 Tim 3:8-12 lists several qualifications for becoming a Deacon. Discuss each one, comparing them with the qualifications for Overseers.

worthy of respect

sincere

not indulging in much wine

not pursuing dishonest gain

keeps hold of the deep truths of the faith

clear conscience

husband of but one wife

manages his children and household well

11. Paul says that men who are under consideration for becoming Deacons must first be "tested" (3:10). What kind of test do you think he has in mind? What sort of test would be appropriate?

12. 1 Tim. 3:11 lists several qualifications for the wives of deacons. Determine the importance of each.

worthy of respect

not malicious talkers

temperate

trustworthy in everything

13. Why do you think it would be important for both a Deacon and his wife to possess certain qualities, but not others?

14. Paul says that Deacons who serve well "gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith." Why do you suppose this is? Does this apply only to Deacons, or to others as well? Explain.

Mystery of godliness (3:16). The phrase means the "revealed secret of true piety," or the secret that produces real piety in believers. The context reveals that this secret is Jesus Christ.

He appeared in a body (3:16). Some ancient manuscripts read, "God appeared in a body" (see the *King James Version*), but the oldest manuscripts all use the term *hos* ("who" or "he"), not *theos* ("God"). The phrase is a reference to the incarnation of Christ.

15. Paul gives several names to the Church in 1 Tim. 3:15. What does each term add to your understanding of the Body of Christ?

- a. God's household
- b. The church of the living God
- c. The pillar and foundation of the truth

16. Why is "the mystery of godliness" that Paul writes about in 3:16 "great" beyond all question?

17. 1 Tim. 3:16 is apparently an ancient hymn composed about Christ. What does each stanza of the hymn teach you about Christ? See if you can locate other Scripture references that support your assertions.

- a. He appeared in a body

- b. He was vindicated by the Spirit
- c. He was seen by angels
- d. He was preached among the nations
- e. He was believed on in the world
- f. He was taken up in glory

18. List any questions you have about 3:1-16.

19. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else?
How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-16, INSTRUCTIONS TO TIMOTHY

Paul hoped to be with Timothy soon after he wrote this letter, but he knew his plans often changed unexpectedly—whether by his own doing, by circumstances, or by God. So as a precaution Paul penned several instructions to Timothy that would help him get the church at Ephesus on the right track.

Before he got to the specifics, Paul thought it wise to remind Timothy of the glorious Lord they both served. He knew how easy it is to get discouraged when we take our eyes off the of our Source! Yet he also knew how effective we can be when we remind ourselves of the glory of our great God and Savior.

From this point on in his letter, Paul ranges freely from problem to instruction to encouragement and back again. He seldom goes into great lengths in any of his instruction, for no doubt Timothy had already received ample instruction. Nevertheless, because of the difficult ministry in Ephesus, Paul considered it best to sketch for Timothy an outline of what it would take to get Ephesus "up and running" in a way that would honor and glorify God.

In later times (4:1). The expression is not as strong as the phrase used in 2 Tim. 3:1, "in the last days."

Evidently the conditions described here took place during Paul's lifetime.

Forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods (4:3). Such an ascetic emphasis made its way into the Church in the first century and became quite popular in the second century. The error was the equation of holiness with self-denial.

Godless myths and old wives' tales (4:7). Literally, "profane and old-womanish myths." Paul equates these teachings with the fairy tales that elderly women love to tell children; they have no basis in reality.

4. a. Where did Paul get his knowledge of "later times"? How certain is this knowledge?
 - b. What difference does it make? Why is it important that we should know it?
5. How does Paul characterize the false teachers of 4:2? Do they know that what they are teaching is false? Explain.
6. a. What orders did these teachers give their followers (4:3)?
 - b. What was wrong with these orders?

7. What is the main point of 4:4-5?

8. a. How was Timothy to respond to these false teachings (4:6)?

b. What example does this suggest for us?

9. a. What is Timothy to avoid in 4:7? Why? What is he to pursue instead?

b. How could he, and we, do this practically?

10. What comparison does Paul make between "physical training" and "godliness training" in 4:8? How easy is it for you to keep the proper balance? Explain.

Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe (4:10). This is a debated statement, but one that cannot promise universal salvation. Even in this letter Paul maintains that faith is necessary for salvation. The phrase probably means that through Calvary, God is *potentially* the Savior of all men, but *practically* only for those who believe.

Elders laid their hands on you (4:14). Apparently a service where the body of Elders (*presbyterion*) placed their hands on Timothy and prophesied over him. Similar references are found in 1:18 and 2 Tim. 1:6.

Save both yourself and your hearers (4:16). For a soul-winner to save others and lose his own soul is an unmitigated tragedy. For one to save his own soul and have his hearers lost is no less tragic. We must give attention to both.

11. For what did Paul "labor and strive" in 4:10? In what sense did he labor and strive for this—to gain it, or for some other reason?

12. How is God "the Savior of all men"? What is special about "those who believe"? How would you answer those who contend that this verse teaches the universal salvation of all humanity?

13. a. Why might others look down on Timothy (4:12)?
- b. How was he to counteract this tendency?
14. Paul notes five aspects of a believer's conduct that are especially important in setting a good example for others. What does he mean by each, and what is important about each of them?
- a. Speech
- b. Life
- c. Love
- d. Faith
- e. Purity
15. To what was Timothy to devote himself in Paul's absence (4:13-14)? What is so critical about each of these activities?
16. What reason does Paul give in 4:15 for diligence in pursuing the ministry? What did Paul want to see happen? Why was this important?
17. What charge did Paul give Timothy in 4:16? Why?
18. List any questions you have about 1 Timothy 4:1-16.

19. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else?
How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

1 TIMOTHY 5:1-16, RESPECTING ONE ANOTHER AND WIDOWS

Numerous activities occur in any church, regardless of where it is, how large the congregation is, or how old the church is. Such activity inevitably brings up important questions: How should a young pastor treat older members? How should he treat members close to his own age? What should be done about the needs of widows? How do you tell if someone is truly in need of the church's assistance?

While some of these issues may not seem terribly spiritual, all of them (and others like them, just as pressing) must be dealt with in a growing church. Paul knew this, and so he prepared a list of instructions and guidelines for his young associate. Of course, he hoped to be with Timothy in person before too long—but if that trip was delayed, he intended to give the young man the benefit of his long ministry experience. His words no doubt were invaluable to Timothy, as they continue to be for us today.

Dead even while she lives (5:6). Physically alive but spiritually dead. The implication is that such a woman has no claim on the church's support.

Denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (5:8). There is more than one way to deny the faith. A heretic does it by words; the person here does it by his life (see [Titus 1:16](#)). Even unbelievers take care of their own, and they do not have the example of Jesus Christ.

Broken their first pledge (5:12). Literally, disregarded or set aside their solemn promise or oath. Apparently such women had promised to be devoted only to Christ, but abandoned that promise by remarrying.

Turned away to follow Satan (5:15). The phrase does not have to mean formal apostasy from Christianity, but does at least suggest a carnal lifestyle.

1. In [5:1-2](#), Paul instructs how to treat other believers. How do these instructions differ from one another, and why do you think they differ? What is appropriate about each of them?
 - a. Older men
 - b. Younger men
 - c. Older women
 - d. Younger women
2. Paul's instructions about how to handle the needs of widows take up more verses than any other topic in this epistle (fourteen verses, [5:3-16](#)). Why do you suppose this issue was so important to him?
3. Why would Paul say that a widow with children or grandchildren was not "really in need" ([5:3-4](#))? Does our culture live by such reasoning? Explain.

4. a. How can we practically put our "religion into practice" (5:4, 16)? What does God think about this?

b. How is 5:3 the other side of the coin to this instruction?
5. What contrasts are made between 5:5 and 5:6? How are they significant?
6. List the seven qualifications Paul gives for a widow to be put on a church's list of widows (5:9-10). What is important about each one?
7. What reasons does Paul give for not putting younger widows on such a list (5:11-13)?
8. What advice does he give instead (5:14)? Why?
9. What does Paul mean in 5:15 that some had "turned away to follow Satan"?

10. Why should believing women take care of the widows in their families (5:16)?

11. List any questions you have about 1 Timothy 5:1-16.

12. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else?
How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

1 TIMOTHY 5:17-6:2, REGARDING ELDERS, SELF AND SLAVES

Paul continues giving Timothy very practical instructions regarding Elders, how to care for himself, and advice to slaves. How should faithful Elders be rewarded for their service? What do you do about Elders who sin? And what can be done for an upset stomach? How should slaves serve?

Double honor (5:17). Some believe this suggests a "double stipend" or "double salary," but it may also mean double honor in the sense of recognition (rather than a financial honorarium).

Two or three witnesses (5:19). The last part of this verse comes close to a word-for-word quote of Deut. 19:15. See also 2 Cor. 13:1.

The elect angels (5:21). Paul is fond of such terms and uses them to heighten the sense of importance of the declaration he is making. See also 1 Cor. 4:9 and 1 Tim. 3:16.

Use a little wine (5:23). Safe drinking water was not always easily obtainable; Paul's advice also may be medicinal in nature.

1. a. What principle does Paul introduce in 5:17? How does he support this principle in 5:18?

b. Why do you think preaching and teaching are singled out for special attention?
2. What is the proper way to bring an accusation against an Elder, according to 5:19? Why this stipulation?
3. a. Why are Elders who sin supposed to be rebuked *publicly* (5:20)? Why should they be treated differently from others?

b. In what ways does our culture often reverse this directive? Why do you think we do so?
4. What charge is given to Timothy in 5:21? How is this charge made to be solemn? How is Timothy to carry out the charge?

5. a. If godliness is not a means to financial gain, what kind of gain does godliness bring (6:6)? What does this verse mean to you?

b. Is it easy for you to live this out? Explain.

6. In 1 Tim. 6:7, Paul gives a reason for his statement in 6:6. What is this reason? How would remembering his words in verse 7 help to keep us from being robbed of the truth (6:5)?

7. How many people you know are content with the provisions listed in 6:8? Would you be content with these things alone? Explain.

A root of all kinds of evil (6:10). Literally, "a root of all the evils." Note that it is not money itself that is such a root, but the love of money. The verse is often misquoted.

8. What warning does Paul give in 6:9-10? To whom is the warning given? What is often the result of ignoring this warning?

9. Notice the *New International Version* translates 6:10 as "the love of money is a root of *all kinds of* evil," rather than the traditional, "the love of money is *the* root of *all* evil" (emphasis added). What is the main point of such a translation? What do you think the translators were trying to stress, and what were they trying to avoid?

10. According to 6:10, what two things often happen to people who eagerly seek after wealth? Of the two, which do you think is worse? Which do you think people fear most? Explain.

Hope in God (6:17). While wealth is uncertain and may be gone in a moment, God is immutable and immovable and has promised to be with the believer always (see Psalm 52:7; Hebrews 13:5-6).

11. Paul gives two negative commands and five positive commands to the rich in 6:17-18. List and discuss each one.

a. Negative commands

b. Positive commands

12. According to 6:17, why is putting your hope in God the only way to "richly" enjoy life? What does the last part of this verse teach you about God's desire for you?
13. a. What reason does Paul give for his multiple commands in the previous two verses (6:19)? What does this mean?
- b. In your experience, how much of a motivation does this usually produce in our culture? In our churches? Explain.
14. Do we often connect the way we use our money with our status in "the coming age" (6:19)? Explain.
15. What part of Paul's teaching about money in this passage encourages you the most? What part of it surprises you the most? What part threatens you the most? Explain.
16. List any questions you have about 1 Timothy 6:3-10.
17. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else? How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

1 TIMOTHY 6:11-21, FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

Paul had instructed Timothy about the effective workings of the church, drawing on his vast experience with churches around the Roman world. He encouraged his young friend, warned him, gave him specific commands, advised him, and admonished him. Now he ends his letter with a final charge, a last directive to be sure that Timothy follows all the instructions contained in the letter.

The charge is not harsh or demanding or authoritarian, but rather reflects Paul's great affection for Timothy as well as his deep concern for the church at Ephesus. The Apostle wishes he could be with Timothy during the difficult days that he knows lie ahead—but in lieu of that, he will do his best to encourage his friend and equip him to face the challenges courageously that are certainly coming. Timothy will need such encouragement—as we do today.

Man of God (6:11). A common designation for prophets in the Old Testament (see 1 Samuel 9:6; 1 Kings 12:22). While it is unclear whether Paul means to use it as a formal title, it does seem appropriate that he would use it to refer to Timothy, a young man in God's service who represents God and who speaks in His name.

Good confession (6:12). Probably the reference is to Timothy's profession of faith in Christ at a significant time in his life, perhaps his baptism, when many witnesses were present. Compare this to what Paul says about the Lord Jesus' "good confession" in 6:13.

1. Of all the titles Paul could have chosen to refer to his young friend, why do you suppose he picked "man of God"? How would this be a special encouragement to Timothy?
2. What is Timothy commanded to avoid in 6:11?
3. What does Paul say he should pursue instead (6:11)? List and discuss each of the six elements.
4. For the second time Paul tells Timothy to "fight the good fight" of faith (6:11, see also 1:18). Why is it especially appropriate for Paul to use this image to talk with Timothy about the Christian walk?
5. How can Timothy—or any of us—"take hold of eternal life" (6:12)? What exactly is Paul's admonition here?

13. a. What does Paul instruct Timothy to do at the beginning of 6:20? How is this a good summary of everything that has been written in this epistle?
- b. In what way is it another aspect of the "fight" that he has mentioned twice already?
14. What negative command does Paul give in 6:20? Where have you seen such a command given before in this letter? Do you believe such commands are necessary for today? Why, or why not?
15. What warning is given in 6:21? How can professing a certain kind of knowledge cause one to wander from the faith?
16. What is the significance of Paul's last sentence, "Grace be with you"? Paul surrounds his letter with grace at the beginning and end. Can you think of any reason Paul might begin his letter with grace *to* Timothy and end it with grace *with* him?
17. List any questions you have about 1 Timothy 6:11-21.
18. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else? How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

When Paul wrote the letter we call 2 Timothy, he was an old man in a Roman prison. This man who had been Christ's greatest missionary for thirty years was now chained to a Roman guard at all times and awaited a death sentence from the emperor.

Timothy may have been in Ephesus, but in whatever city, he was carrying on the ministry Paul had begun but could not continue. Timothy had been working with Paul for over fifteen years, but now the Apostle was departing for good. This charge Timothy received is the last of Paul's writings that remains to us.

Second Timothy is at once two extraordinary things: it is the last preserved words of one of the Church's greatest men; and it is God's Word to us, revealing who He is, who we are in Him, and what He desires from us. For the moment, take it as a letter from a man to his trusted friend. Approach it as you would a letter to yourself, not stopping to wrestle with individual phrases, but looking for the overall message.

First impressions

1. Read 2 Timothy at one sitting. How would you describe the *mood* (tone, emotion) Paul conveys? In other words, what seem to be Paul's attitudes or feelings toward his subject matter and toward Timothy? (Is Paul formal, intimate, angry, joyful...?) If you think his mood changes, note where and how it changes.
2. Repetition is a clue to the ideas that are most important in a book. What words and ideas are repeated in each of the following sets of verses?

1:3-6

1:8, 12; 2:3, 9; 3:11-12

1:8, 12, 16

1:11; 2:2; 3:10, 16; 4:2

Study Skill—Cross-references

Other passages of Scripture can often shed light on the passage you are studying. These other passages are called *cross-references*.

3. What background information do you learn from the following verses concerning...

Timothy (1:5, 3:15)?

how Paul feels about Timothy (1:2; 4:21)?

Paul's circumstances (1:8, 12, 15-18; 4:6-18)?

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-18, UNASHAMED

Since becoming a Christian, Timothy had been devoted to his mentor Paul. Now the mentor is chained in prison, and the young man faces a flock of immature Christians and a barrage of opposition on his own. On his own? Paul couldn't be with Timothy, but he knew what a fearful leader needed to hear.

Read [1:1-14](#) carefully, alert to the emotions Paul conveys. Look for the overall theme or message of the passage.

1. In the left column, list each instruction Paul gives Timothy in [1:1-14](#). Then, in the right column, summarize each resource or reason he gives for obeying the instruction.

instruction	resource/reason
1:6	... For this reason... (1:5-6)
	through... (1:6)
	for... (1:7)
1:8	by... (1:8)
1:8	who... (1:9-10)
1:13	that... (1:14)
1:14	with... (1:14)

Apostle ([1:1](#), [11](#)). Literally, "one who is sent"—a messenger, proxy, ambassador. In Jewish law, this was the *shaliach*, "a person acting with full authority for another" in a business or legal transaction. The early Church recognized certain men who had seen the risen Jesus as Apostles—the leaders with highest authority regarding doctrine and policy. (See [Acts 1:1-8](#); [Acts 6:1-6](#); [Galatians 2:7-10](#).)

2. a. What is "the gift of God, which is in you" ([1:6](#))? See [1:5](#), [7](#).

- b. What does it mean to fan this gift into flame (kindle it afresh; [1:6](#))? See [1:8](#).

3. In 1:9-10, Paul outlines the Gospel he has received from God and entrusted to Timothy. What key points does Paul mention? (Look for at least six.)

4. Why is it crucial that God "saved" and "called" us not because of anything we have done (1:9)? (Optional: See Ephes. 2:7-10; Titus 3:5.)

5. a. How does Paul explain "the promise of life" (1:1) in 1:10?
 - b. This promise was important to Paul as he faced execution in Rome. Why is it important for you to focus on this promise?

Guard what I have entrusted to him (1:12). This phrase is more literally, "guard the deposit of me," and so it could mean either the deposit Paul has entrusted to God or the deposit God has entrusted to Paul.

If interpreted in the second way, the phrase means that God will guard the message He has given Paul, even if Paul falters or if the Church is persecuted. "Deposit" has this meaning—the Gospel entrusted to Paul and Timothy—in 1 Tim. 6:20 and 2 Tim. 1:14.

However, NIV and NASB think Paul would probably not have said "my deposit" in Greek if he had meant "the deposit given to me." Therefore, NIV and NASB interpret Paul to mean "the deposit of my soul (or salvation) that I have given to Him."

6. a. In 1:12-14, Paul tells Timothy God's responsibility and man's. What deposit is God supposed to guard (1:12)?
 - b. What good deposit (NASB: "treasure") is Timothy supposed to guard (1:14)?

7. Paul tells Timothy to guard a treasure/deposit (1:14) and rekindle God's gift (1:6). Do you think you have been entrusted with any deposit? If so, what might it be?

8. a. Why might a modern Christian be tempted to be timid toward testifying about Jesus?
 - b. How might the gift named in 1:7 enable a timid Christian to join in testifying and suffering (1:8)?
9. a. Of all that Paul says in 1:1-14, does anything encourage you to dare to fan the flame of your faith into greater exercise? If so, what encourages you?
 - b. Is there any way you might act on this insight during the coming week? Does this insight prompt you to talk to God about anything? Describe any prayer or action you might pursue.
10. Reread 1:3-14. How would you summarize Paul's message in this passage?
11. List any questions you have about Second Timothy 1:1-18.
12. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else? How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-13, ENDURING

Paul gives Timothy no illusions that his Christian life should be easy or glamorous. Exhortations to "be strong" and "endure" punctuate 2:1-13, and the soldier, athlete, and farmer are suitable images of hard work. Still, Paul doesn't leave Timothy focusing on the work; the attitude, the purpose, and the future reward of devotion are as important as the work itself.

1. Read 2:1-13 several times. As you begin your study, what seems to be Paul's overall point in this passage?

Grace (2:1). God's unmerited favor toward mankind, especially in 1) the gift of His Son to take away our sins and reconcile us to God (Romans 3:23-24; Romans 5:1-21), and 2) the daily provision of the Holy Spirit's power for those who are united "in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1-17). This power enables us to remain in Christ, to do what He desires, and to become the people He desires.

2. Fulfilling the commission Paul describes in 2:2-13 takes supernatural strength—grace from God in Christ Jesus (2:1). How does God's servant appropriate His grace?

3. God's grace makes possible the rest of what Paul urges in 2:1-13. Paraphrase the process he describes in 2:2.

4. a. How did Timothy learn to be a Christian leader?

1:5; 3:14-15

1:2, 13; 2:2; 3:10

- b. In what ways does Timothy's training reflect the process in 2:2?

Endure hardship (2:3). RSV reads, "share in suffering," and NASB says, "suffer hardship." A related Greek verb (*sunkokopatheo*) is translated "suffer" in 1:8 and 2:9.

Endure (2:10, 12). Unlike *sunkokopatheo*, this word *hypomeno* stresses the attitude of patient endurance rather than the suffering being endured. Taken together, the two words express the treatment Christians should expect and the character with which they should respond.

5. How do Paul's exhortation to endure hardship and his three examples (2:3-7) relate to his instruction in 2:2?

Study Skill—Similes and Metaphors

A *simile* is a figure of speech that uses "like" or "as" for comparison; "like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" is a simile. A *metaphor* sheds light on something by referring to it as something else—"All the world's a stage"—in order to imply a comparison between the two (usually dissimilar) things.

Timothy is not a literal soldier or athlete, but the comparisons teach some key truths, if not taken too far. For instance, "a soldier of Christ Jesus" does not fight or kill unbelievers.

6. Paul urges Timothy to "endure hardship with us" (2:3), and then uses three similes to motivate his beloved son. What point is Paul making about Timothy's work with each of his three similes? To answer, first describe the characteristics Paul says make a soldier, athlete, and farmer effective. Then explain how those characteristics apply to the Christian servant.

characteristic	application
soldier (2:4)	
athlete (2:5)	
farmer (2:6)	

7. Choose one of Paul's three similes in 2:4-6. How does its lesson apply to you in your service to God?

8. a. Paul's own example should also motivate Timothy. How would you describe Paul's attitude toward circumstances in 2:9-10?
 - b. According to these verses, what convictions enable and motivate Paul to have this attitude?

9. How should Christ's character, actions, and promises encourage Timothy (2:8, 11-13)?
10. a. Where are you in the process Paul describes in 2:2? (For example, are you just learning to understand Paul's Gospel? Are you ready to begin entrusting some of what you know to others? Could you train someone else to teach what you know?)
- b. What might be your next step toward becoming a well-grounded believer, qualified to proclaim the Gospel and train others to do so?
11. In 2:1-13, what motivates you most to endure whatever comes from serving Christ?
12. After studying the passage more closely, what do you now think is Paul's overall message in 2:1-13? (Look at questions 2, 3, 5, and 7, and consider how 2:1-13 relates to 1:1-18.)
13. List any questions you have about anything in Second Timothy 2:1-13.
14. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else? How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

2 TIMOTHY 2:14-26, A WORKMAN APPROVED BY GOD

So far, Paul has exhorted Timothy to guard the truth about Jesus that was entrusted to him (1:14), testify unashamedly to the truth about Jesus (1:8), entrust the truth to others who will pass it on (2:2), and endure suffering as he does all this (2:3). Paul has given reasons for perseverance in the face of fear and shame from hardship and rejection (1:5-2:13). The gift of God has been a theme (1:6-7; 2:1).

Now Paul turns to another problem Timothy must face—falsehood. As always, he focuses on the *character* of his dear son. As you read 2:14-26, consider how much of what Paul says is relevant to Christians who are not Church leaders.

1. What seems to be Paul's overall point in 2:14-26?
2. Give one example of "quarreling about words" (2:14), "godless chatter" (2:16), or "ignorant speculations" (2:23 NASB) from your own experience.
3. According to 2:14, 16, 23, why should Christians avoid ignorant speculations and quarrels about words?

4. How should a Christian respond to foolish arguments?

2:15

2:16, 23

2:21-22

2:24-25

5. a. What does it mean to "correctly handle the word of truth" (2:15)?

b. Name at least one step you could take to become better at handling the word of truth.
6. What attitude does Paul want Timothy to have toward those who oppose him (2:24-26)?

7. a. Why is it often hard to be kind, patient, unresentful, and gentle with quarrelsome people?
- b. How might you cultivate these attitudes toward others?

That the resurrection has already taken place (2:18). Corinth also struggled with teachers who said that Christians experienced only a spiritual, not a physical, resurrection. Like Paul, they taught that a person died to sin, the old self, and the law, and was spiritually resurrected when he accepted Jesus as his Lord (Romans 6:2-11; Romans 7:4, 6). However, unlike Paul, they denied that a person would be resurrected as a whole—body, soul, and spirit—when Christ returns to judge the world. Paul wrote 1 Cor. 15 to refute this teaching. He insisted that the hope of bodily resurrection and eternal life is at the core of the Christian faith (1 Cor. 15:19).

Sealed with this inscription (2:19). "Having this seal" in NASB. Paul may be alluding to the ancient practice of engraving inscriptions on buildings to indicate their purpose. Paul likes to portray the Church as a building (1 Cor. 3:9-17; Ephes. 2:19-22). Or, he may be speaking of the seal on a document that indicates ownership, security, and authenticity.

8. Even though chatter leads to foolish teaching and immorality, what confidence can a Christian leader have (2:19)?
9. a. What is Paul's point in 2:20-22?
- b. What does this point have to do with 2:16-19 and 2:23-26?
10. Paul speaks of fleeing evil desires (verse 22) in the context of avoiding arguments and being prepared to counter false teachers in a godly manner. Can you think of any evil desires that might interfere with a person's effort to act as in 2:24-26?
11. How would you summarize 2:14-26?

12. Is there any area of your life that you would like to concentrate on for growth in light of 2:14-26?
You might review your answers to questions 5 and 7b, or choose some other insight that motivates you. What prayer or action are you motivated to pursue?
13. List any questions you have about Second Timothy 2:14-26.
14. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else?
How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9, GODLESSNESS IN THE LAST DAYS

In chapter 3, Paul advises Timothy on how to act in the "last days" as though Timothy will see them: "Have nothing to do with" the depraved religionists who will be abroad in those days (verse 5). Indeed, the Roman Empire was as full of such people as our world is, for the last days began at Jesus' first coming and will culminate at His return. For nineteen hundred years the Church has found the urgency in Paul's words relevant to current events.

1. Read 3:1-9. What is Paul trying to impress upon Timothy in this passage?

2. What does this warning have to do with chapter 2? (You summarized 2:14-26 on page 47.)

3. The first two vices of verse 2 and the last one of verse 4 all point to the deluders' chief error: wrong love that corrupts potentially good things.
 - a. What should they love (verse 4)?

 - b. What do they love (verses 2, 4)?

 - c. How do people commit this error today?

Study Skill—Lists of Words

It's easy to skim over lists of traits like 3:2-4, getting a general impression of wickedness. We may feel that Paul is describing an especially depraved person, that we already know what such a person is like, and that the description doesn't apply to us. However, we can learn a lot about what we ourselves are like and what God desires us to be if we take time to ponder what these vices really mean. We can look up each word in a dictionary or compare how different Bible versions translate each word, and then write down a definition for each word or write down a word that means the opposite. Then we can ask ourselves whether we ever display such traits.

What we do when we feel convicted of having one of these traits is a deep subject. Prayer and reliance on God's Spirit to transform us internally are our chief tasks (1 John 1:8-10; Ephes. 3:16-19). But rather than choosing to agree with and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:1-12; Ephes. 4:22-24), we tend to struggle with emphasizing how we should "clean up our act."

4. For each of the vices listed in 2 Tim. 3:2-4, write down a word or phrase that describes its opposite, which would be the trait to which Christian would aspire.

boastful (RSV: proud)

proud (RSV: arrogant)

abusive (NASB: revilers)

disobedient to parents

ungrateful

unholy

unloving (RSV: inhuman, without natural affection)

unforgiving (RSV: implacable, NASB: irreconcilable)

slandorous (NASB: malicious gossips)

without self-control (RSV: profligate)

brutal (RSV: fierce)

haters of good things and people

treacherous

rash (RSV: reckless)

conceited

Godliness (verse 5). Meaning a personal attitude toward God that results in the kinds of actions and attitudes that please and glorify Him. A propensity toward obeying God. Devotion in action.

5. What is the power of godliness (verse 5)?

6. What does "having a form of godliness but denying its power" (verse 5) tell you about the kind of religion the depraved ones practice?

7. These people make their livings by exploiting the weaknesses of a certain kind of woman. Verses 6-7 describe such a woman's character. How would you paraphrase that description?

weak-willed

loaded down with sins

swayed by all kinds of evil desires

always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth

Loaded down with sins (verse 6). This may mean that the women are so overwhelmed in their consciences that they clutch at any solution a clever predator promises.

Jannes and Jambres (3:8). According to Jewish commentaries of Paul's day, Jannes and Jambres were two of Pharaoh's magicians who opposed Moses (Exodus 7:11).

8. In what sense do men like those described in 2 Tim. 2:16-18 and 2 Tim. 3:1-9 "oppose the truth" (3:8)?

9. a. Does 3:1-9 offer any warnings you think you should take to heart? If so, what are those warnings?

b. Is there anything you plan to do, or ask God to do, about the warnings you have named?

10. List any questions you have about 2 Timothy 3:1-9.

11. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else? How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17, GODLINESS IN THE LAST DAYS

In the last days between Christ's first and second comings, depraved people are going to be busy. But Timothy and all Christians like him have every resource they need to stand for Christ against wickedness. As you read 3:10-17, look for the guides God has given us so that we can serve Him in difficult times.

1. Paul makes a series of "but" and "however" statements in 3:9-15. For instance, wicked men will try to cause trouble (3:1-8) *but* God will frustrate their aims (3:9). In 3:10-15 he goes on to contrast Timothy with the wicked men. What does Paul say?

But you (verses 10-11)

But they (verse 13)

But you (verses 14-15)

2. What seems to be Paul's overall aim in 3:10-17?

What kinds of things happened to me in Antioch... (verse 11). Paul refers to what he endured in his early days as a missionary. Timothy probably met Paul when the Apostle first arrived in Lystra (Acts 14:8-23). Some Jews had already run Paul and Barnabas out of Pisidian Antioch and Iconium for preaching about Jesus (Acts 13:13-14:7), but Lystra warmly welcomed the missionaries until Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrived. The Jews persuaded the Lystrians to turn against Paul and Barnabas. Then the crowd stoned the men and dragged Paul's body outside the city, presuming he was dead. But Paul survived, and after spending some time in Derbe he returned to strengthen the disciples in Lystra. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," Paul reminded the Lystrian believers (Acts 14:22). These memories of when Timothy and Paul first met must have been fond and vivid for both men.

3. In 3:10-17, Paul reminds Timothy of two sets of memories from his youth that should sustain him when wicked people plague his ministry. What should Timothy remember?

verses 10-11

verses 14-17

4. a. Why should Paul's words, lifestyle, goals, character, and experiences strengthen Timothy (3:10-11)?

- b. Has anyone served as this kind of example for you? If so, how has that person strengthened your service to God?
 - c. Are you, or could you, model the Christian life for anyone as Paul did for Timothy? If so, for whom and how?
5. a. Second Timothy 3:12 says that a committed Christian can expect persecution. Why is this so? (See 2 Tim. 3:13; John 15:18-25. You might also see James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7.)
- b. Think about why Paul inserted 2 Tim. 3:12 into the middle of contrasting Timothy with the wicked men. What is the connection between these ideas?
6. Paul also wants Timothy to draw strength from what he has "learned and... become convinced of" (3:14). What is the difference between what you have *learned* and what you have *become convinced of*?
7. On what has Timothy based his personal convictions (3:15-17)?

All Scripture (3:16). "Scripture" means God's revelation written down. In Paul's time, Christians unanimously agreed that the Old Testament was Scripture. In addition, collections of Jesus' acts and sayings were regarded as Scripture by various groups of Christians, and one or two of our current Gospels may have been composed. Also, Paul had written many letters recording the revelation he had received from God, and some people—possibly Paul himself—regarded his writings as Scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Thus, the "sacred writings" that Timothy has known from his youth are the Old Testament, but the "Scripture" that is God-breathed includes both the Old and New Testaments.

God-breathed (3:16). "Inspired by God" in NASB, RSV. The Greek word *theopneustos* is composed of *theo*, meaning "God," and *pneustos*, which refers to breathing, blowing, or sending forth one's spirit. In the Bible, the breath, wind, or Spirit of God is closely connected with His creative Word and inspired speaking (Genesis 1:2-3; 1 Kings 19:11-13; Acts 2:1-4). When God breathed His Spirit into men so that they might be His spokesmen (prophets, writers of Scripture), He did not take over their minds or wills, but somehow guided them to speak His truth as they gave Him their attention.

8. a. What does Paul mean by calling Scripture "God-breathed" (verse 16)?
- b. What are some of the implications of this fact for us?
9. a. Paul lists five ways in which "God-breathed" Scripture is useful to us (3:15-16). Explain each in your own words.
- giving "wisdom that leads to salvation" (NASB)
- teaching
- rebuking
- correcting
- training in righteousness
- b. What is the ultimate goal of using Scripture for these purposes (3:17)?
10. Does anything Paul says about himself or Scripture encourage you in your current situation? If so, what encourages you?
11. What implications, if any, does 3:10-17 have for *your* teaching, way of life, purpose, faith, or character?
12. Why does Paul stress the importance of Scripture in the context of warnings about misleading, immoral teachers?

13. List any questions you have about 2 Timothy 3:10-17.

14. What is one thing you learned that you could apply to your own life and share with someone else?
How will you apply it and with whom will you share it?

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-8, PASSING THE MANTLE

When he left the world, Elijah gave his mantle to Elisha to signify that the young man who had served him would now succeed him as Israel's chief prophet (2 Kings 2:7-15). When a tired runner finishes his lap in a relay race, he passes the baton to a fresh runner and then goes to rest. Paul was not passing his Apostolic status to Timothy, but he was passing on his task of guarding and spreading God's truth. As you read 4:1-8, sense Paul's emotion in his final charge to Timothy.

1. How does 4:1-8 relate to what Paul wrote in chapters 1-3?
2. What does Paul urge in 4:2, 5? (List as many of his exhortations as you can.)
3. In 4:1, Paul gives an incentive for these exhortations. How is this verse an incentive?

Preach (4:2). Declare as an ambassador would—sensitively, diplomatically, yet also firmly and authoritatively.

Correct (4:2). This word has the sense of motivating the listener to confession or conviction of sin.

Rebuke (4:2). A pronouncement of reproof or blame that requires humility and forgiveness, not condemnation (Mark 10:13, 48; Luke 17:3).

Encourage (4:2). "Exhort" in NASB, RSV, KJV. To remind a person of previously taught knowledge in order to influence him to act upon it. Encouragement/exhortation addresses the intellect, will, and emotions. Its methods range from a gentle "you can do it" to an urgent "get moving!" The Greek verb *parakaleo* is related to the noun *parakletos*, the title given to the Holy Spirit in John 14:16.

Parakaleo is literally "to be called alongside" to help someone.

4. Why must Timothy preach patiently and sometimes reprovably (4:2-4)?
5. What strikes you as especially significant in Paul's instructions of 4:2-4?

Poured out like a drink offering (4:6). Along with the burnt offering of animal and grain, wine was poured around the base of the altar (Numbers 15:1-12; Numbers 28:7, 24).

6. Paul compares his Christian life to a fight and a race. What similarities do you see among these?

2 TIMOTHY 4:9-22, PERSONAL REMARKS

In Paul's final words we get an intimate glimpse of the man's character, needs, and humanity. A warmly personal letter closes in that spirit, full of references to real people Paul and Timothy knew.

1. a. What do you learn about Paul's needs from 1:16-18 and 4:9-13, 16?

 - b. Do you have similar needs? Does someone you know have these needs? If so, how might you help see that they are met?
-
2. What attitudes toward people and circumstances does Paul show in 4:16-18?

Review

3. Reread all of 2 Timothy. It should be familiar to you by now, so you should be able to read rapidly, looking for threads that tie the book together. Pray for a fresh perspective on what God is saying.

Study Skill—Returning to the Purpose

Many teachers of Bible study stress the importance of returning to the author's purpose after studying a book. J. I. Packer calls this the "spiral" approach to Bible study. Our view of the purpose often changes after a closer look. Even if our purpose for studying 2 Timothy is not the same as Paul's intent, his intent should affect how we interpret and apply what he says.

4. In question 4 on page 39, you said tentatively what you thought Paul's aims for this letter were. After closer study, how would you now summarize his main aims?

5. What are the most important lessons you learned from 2 Timothy about.

God's character

the Christian life

the character of a Christian leader

the responsibilities of a Christian leader

obstacles to healthy church growth

reasons for godly leadership

other

6. Review the questions you listed at the ends of each lesson. Do any remain unanswered? If so, where and how will you look for answers?

7. Have you noticed any areas (thoughts, attitudes, opinions, behavior) in which you have changed as a result of studying 2 Timothy? If so, how have you changed?

8. Look back over the entire study at questions in which you expressed a desire to make some specific application. Are you satisfied with your follow-through? Pray about any of those areas that you think you should continue to pursue specifically. (Now that you have completed this study, perhaps something new has come to mind upon which you would like to concentrate. If so, bring that to God in prayer as well.) Write any notes here.