

2 Timothy 1

Good Visual Summary of 2 Timothy from the Bible Project:

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/2-timothy/>

Basic Outline of Chapter 1

- I. Paul greets Timothy (1:1-2).
- II. Paul remembers his heritage and reminds Timothy of his (1:3-6).
- III. Paul exhorts Timothy to suffer for the Gospel with him in keeping with their calling (1:7-12).
- VI. Paul exhorts Timothy to guard the true Gospel he received from Paul (1:13-14).
- VII. Paul calls out deserters and commends Onesiphorus (1:15-18).

Issues for Discussion

1. **Background of 2 Timothy** – Several years have passed since Paul wrote 1 Timothy. It appears Timothy is still ministering in Ephesus. Paul has been imprisoned again in Rome and, this time unlike the last (Philippians 1:23-26) with a grim prospect. He expects to die (2 Timothy 4:6).. Before he does, he wants Timothy to come visit him as soon as possible (2 Timothy 4:9,21). Although church organization and propriety were in view in 1st Timothy, 2nd Timothy has nothing about these things. Instead, faithfulness to the Gospel, steadfastness against false teaching, and perseverance in ministering God’s Word are the focus. The spirit and content of this final letter is similar to Paul’s final words to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-38. He defended what he had done and directed them in what they must do going forward. He did not address specific issues but focused on important principles they must remember. Paul spoke in this same way in 2 Timothy.
2. **“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus...” (1:1)** – In each of Paul’s letters Paul affirmed his apostolic calling and authority, which did not come from men but from God. He was specially commissioned to preach the Gospel, that is, the Good News of Jesus Christ, His death for our sins and His resurrection, which is the meaning of the expression “in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus” (“promise of life” as in John 3:16).
3. **“Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord” (1:2)** – “Grace” means undeserved favor, or to put it another way, God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense. We received forgiveness of sins, the righteousness of God, inclusion into the divine family of God, and the blessings of eternal life, even though we did NOTHING for it. “Mercy” means that we did not get what we deserved, namely, eternal punishment for our sins. “Peace” is the outcome of grace and mercy. We have peace with God, because God is no longer against us on account of our sin and rebellion (Romans 5:1). We have available to us the transcendent peace of God, which will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus against every anxious thought (Philippians 4:7). Lest we forget, all of this grace, mercy and peace comes solely and completely “from God

the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” So all the glory goes to God!

4. **“I thank God... as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers”(1:3)** – Unlike our American convention of saying, “Thank you” to one another, this expression is never used in the New Testament. On the other hand, the expression **“I thank God for you”** is used frequently (Romans 1:8,21; 6:17; 1 Corinthians 1:4,11; 2 Corinthians 4:15; 8:16; 9:11; Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2:13; 3:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:3; Philemon 1:4). When we thank each other, we express our appreciation for each other. There is nothing particularly wrong with this; however, when we thank God for each other, we are acknowledging the source of the good word or deed in the person. We are acknowledging that every good thing comes from God (James 1:17). You may be thinking that I am making much a do about nothing, but am I? What then was Peter’s purpose in giving these instructions:

If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen (1 Peter 4:11).

Was Peter wanting people to talk only with the words of Scripture, that is, Biblical words? Was Peter wanting people only to serve when they received supernatural strength from God? Wasn’t Peter’s meaning that whether we speak or act, all the credit should go to God, as if God were doing it through us? Isn’t this what Paul meant when he wrote, “For to me to live is Christ” (Philippians 1:21) and “I no longer live but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20)? Even when Paul was defending himself against false apostles, he wrote,

But **by the grace of God I am what I am**, and **his grace to me was not without effect**. No, I worked harder than all of them--**yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me** (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Paul gave credit to the grace of God that was working in and through him. This is why I love Dave Ramsey’s reply to anyone asking him how he’s doing. He always says, “Better than I deserve.” That’s what grace means. We are getting much better than what we deserve. All glory goes to God!

5. **“Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy” (1:4)** – In this one line we get a sense of the closeness of Paul and Timothy. Timothy was burdened by Paul’s suffering – after all, Paul was in jail awaiting execution. Timothy’s tearful concern for Paul endeared him to Paul even more. This was the reason why Paul not only longed to see him but urged him to come to him quickly (4:9). Paul had been abandoned by most of his co-workers and only Luke, the doctor and historian, was ministering to him (1:15; 4:9-11). Knowing he was near death (4:8), Paul probably wanted to give Timothy a final in-person, face-to-face charge and encouragement rather than simply instructions through a letter.
6. **“I am reminded of your sincere faith...” (1:5)** – Paul mentioned the influence of faithful ancestors (“ancestors” rather than parents perhaps because his parents were Pharisees in Acts

23:6) in his ministry (1:3) and the faithful influence of Timothy's grandmother (Lois) and mother (Eunice) on Timothy (1:5). What's the big deal? Paul would emphasize the significance of this influence again in 3:14-15, where he wrote,

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because **you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures**, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Why this emphasis on faithful influence and transmission of truth? Paul was face to face with the prospect of his death, and he wanted to ensure that the true Gospel message would not falter or fade away by the failure to communicate it to the next generation. This is why he commanded Timothy in 2:2,

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

This resembles the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 ("Go and make disciples of all nations...") and Acts 1:8 ("And you will be my witnesses..."). It was a reminder to Timothy to faithfully pass along the baton of truth to the next generation. It was a warning against what happened to Israel in the time of the Judges:

After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, **another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel**. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. They forsook the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the Lord's anger because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. (Judges 2:10-13).

We are commanded to "make disciples," to "entrust [biblical truth] to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." Most pointedly, we must pass along the heritage of our faith to our children (cf. Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Ephesians 6:4). This is also why I have been emphasizing in our class the need for us to be training and preparing for future leaders and teachers from our class. This is the kind of discipleship, even ministry of replication that both Jesus and Paul called us to do.

Finally, notice what Paul did not write. Timothy's grandmother was mentioned. His mother was mentioned. But Timothy's dad was noticeably absent. Timothy's "sincere faith" was shaped by his mom and grandma. His faith was authentic even though he may have been a spiritual "momma's boy." Likely, Timothy's dad was not a believer. And Paul stepped into that role, even calling Timothy "my dear son" (1:2).

If you're a mom or a grandma, your influence is absolutely significant, particularly where dads have failed in their responsibility as the primary spiritual and moral guide for their children (Ephesians 6:4). Where they have dropped the ball, you must pick it up. In the time of the Kings of Judah, just about every righteous king had a righteous mom bringing them up, and every

unrighteous king had an unrighteous mom influencing them. Don't underestimate your role in your child's spiritual and moral upbringing.

7. **"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God..." (1:6)** – This is now the fourth time in the course of a handful of verses, where Paul conveyed the idea of remembering: "I constantly **remember** you in my prayers (1:3), **"Recalling** your tears (1:4), "I am **reminded** of your sincere faith" (1:5), and "For this reason I **remind** you to fan into flame the gift of God" (1:6). What we recall to mind is significant and moves and directs both our emotions and our actions. Peter has a similar string of verses that center on remembering: "I will always **remind** you of these things" (2 Peter 1:12), "I think it is right to refresh your **memory**" (1:13), "I will make every effort to see that...you will always be able to **remember** these things" (1:15). We must not minimize the significant place of our minds and our recall in our faithful walk with God. So the LORD warned the people of Israel, as they prepared to enter the Promised Land:

Be careful that you **do not forget** the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day (Deuteronomy 8:11).

The application for us is to remember the true Gospel. It is to remind one another regularly and frequently of our mission, even the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:19-20). It is to remind our children and those we disciple the whole counsel of Scripture (Acts 20:27). It is rehearse, review, and remember the Lord and His Word.

"Fan into flame the gift of God" – What was this gift that was given to Timothy by the laying on of Paul's hands. It may have been the same "gift" mentioned by Paul in 1 Timothy 4:14, which came by the laying on of hands by the elders and which Paul told Timothy not to neglect. Rather than a particular manifestation of the Spirit, this gift may have had more to do with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to fulfill a specific calling of God, which was affirmed through ordination by the elders and Paul. The surrounding verses speak of various ministries: preaching, teaching, evangelism, and public ministry. (1 Timothy 4:13; cf. 2 Timothy 4:5). In the Book of Acts, the apostles and church leaders laid hands on people to give the Holy Spirit, (Acts 8:17; 19:6), to ordain the first deacons (Acts 6:6), and to send off the first missionaries (Acts 13). While church leaders used the laying on of hands to ordain for the work of the ministry, the apostles laid hands on people for supernatural empowerment (e.g. miracles like speaking in tongues, healing, etc.). While the work of the ministry was emphasized in 1 Timothy 4:13-14, the empowerment for ministry was emphasized in 2 Timothy 1:7, where Paul writes, **"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."** While Timothy was charged to "fan into flame the gift of God," the Spirit was the One giving him "power, love and self-discipline." This "us working and God working" is captured in Philippians 2:12-13, where Paul writes,

Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, **for it is God who works in you** to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

We are to "work out" what God "works in." Timothy was to "fan into flame" his gift (i.e. divine calling) with the power, love and self-discipline that the Spirit was working in him.

“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid...” (1:7) – Why might Timothy be timid?

Well, Paul was languishing in prison with the sentence of death looming over him. Many Christian leaders had deserted Paul (2 Timothy 1:15) or expressed shame in his imprisonment (1:8). Timothy was constantly battling false teaching in the church. There were wealthy, disorderly women, who were taking advantage of the church resources. There was persecution from the outside and heresy and disorder on the inside. Timothy faced disrespect in view of his relative youthfulness. He likely also struggled with youthful passions, which Paul warned him to flee. Timothy had reason for being timid. But Paul reminded Timothy that God had not given him a Spirit of fear, that is, a Spirit that makes him fearful, worried or overwhelmed. Rather than fear, the Holy Spirit gave them power, love and self-discipline, that is, everything they needed to stand strong in the face of persecution, heresy, corruption and temptation. The Spirit of God would give Timothy COURAGE to minister fearlessly and to suffer for the Gospel shamelessly.

Paul encouraged Timothy to boldly persevere in what He was commissioned to do, knowing that the power of the Holy Spirit was guiding him. So he also wrote a few verses later, “Join with me in suffering for the gospel by the power of God” (1:8). Yes, Paul was in prison, suffering for the Gospel, but this was no cause for shame (1:7,12). Paul was doing exactly what God had planned from the beginning of time, which was realized in the coming of Christ Jesus, who destroyed the stigma of death by adding immortality to life (1:9-10). Paul was convinced that he would not be disappointed by trusting the faithfulness of Christ (1:12), so he would later write,

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing (4:7-8).

Paul was looking forward to his reward for his faithful work (as “a herald, apostle, and teacher” – 1:11) in the Lord’s service. Timothy could look forward to the same reward, along with everyone “who have longed for his appearing.”

8. **“So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me His prisoner... (1:8)** – Suffering for the Gospel is no cause for shame. Paul’s Roman imprisonment and pending execution were no cause for shame. Paul repeated this claim in verse 12, where he wrote, “That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame.” Jesus predicted such things would come for Christians, even teaching, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it” (Mark 8:35). Jesus went on to teach, “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38).

Not shame but rejoicing should characterize suffering for Christ:

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in

heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matthew 5:11-12).

Being ashamed of the Gospel is a misplaced shame. Being ashamed of your view that homosexuality is a sin is misplaced shame. Being ashamed of not using profanity is a misplaced shame. In fact, Peter wrote, “However, if you suffer as a Christian, **do not be ashamed**, but praise God that you bear that name” (1 Peter 4:16). There is no shame in honoring and obeying the Lord. Peter and John rejoiced when they were flogged for preaching Jesus:

They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and released them. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, **rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name** (Acts 5:40-41).

Paul wrote, “For **I am not ashamed of the Gospel** because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16). We must not be ashamed of our witness and obedience to Christ.

Later in 2 Timothy, Paul wrote, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who **does not need to be ashamed** and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2:15). The same language of shamelessness was associated with correctly handling biblical truth.

So in principle, there is no shame when you are doing anything aligned with the Person and will of God.

9. **“He has saved us and called us to a holy life –not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace” (1:9)** – Salvation is not by OUR WORK or our OUR WILL but by HIS WILL and HIS WORK (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). Here is the bedrock that undergirds Paul’s exhortation to speak and suffer and serve fearlessly. It is God! He is the One who planned it. He is the One who prepared it. He is the One who sustains it. He is the One who empowers it. He is the One who will accomplish it. The following verse will powerfully reinforce this point.
10. **“This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time” (1:10)** – The grace that saves us was not an afterthought in view of man’s rebellion and sin. Even before God created Adam and Eve, the plan of salvation was in His mind, and to whom He would extend His grace was already determined. Knowing man’s depravity, God chose from the beginning to supernaturally snatch some of us, who believe in Him, from the fire of mankind’s self-inflicted damnation. This was His plan for His highest glory (Romans 9:22-23). Our salvation is NOT God’s chief purpose, rather it is HIS GLORY. In other words, from the beginning of time, God had ordained to save Timothy and empower Him for the ministry in order to bring glory to His Name through Timothy. Timothy was saved by grace through faith in order to the good work, which God had prepared for him to do from the beginning of time. This is true for every believer, as we learn from Ephesians 2:8-10.

Consequently, if we are aligned with God’s working purpose, *our* chief purpose must NOT be our

glory but HIS GLORY, NOT the enjoyment of His benefits but the enjoyment of HIM above all and forever. Nearness to God is our good! (Psalm 73:28):

Whom have I in heaven *but You*?
And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever (Psalm 73:25-26).

11. **“Because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day” (1:12)** – Knowledge > Trust > Conviction! Notice that Paul’s confidence was not in his faith but Christ’s faithfulness. So Paul wrote in Philippians 1:6 “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” We find a similar kind of conviction in Abraham (Romans 4:20-21).
12. **“What you heard from me keep as the pattern of sound teaching...” (1:13)** – Both in 1 Timothy and now here in 2 Timothy, Paul was concerned about the faithful transmission of truth (cf. 1 Timothy 1:18-19; 2:4; 3:9,16; 4:6,11,13,16; 5:7; 6:2-3, 20; 2 Timothy 1:5,13-14; 2:2,14-15; 3:14-17; 4:2,5,17). Paul modeled sound teaching to Timothy. So Paul says of himself with respect to his ministry to the Ephesians:

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus” (Acts 20:21).

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24).

Paul was concerned for Timothy to make sure that sound doctrine was taught and also passed on. This is why he commanded to “guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us” (2 Timothy 1:14). False teachers were a continual danger to the church in Ephesus. This is why Paul warned the Ephesian elders in person several years before at his last face-to-face meeting with them:

I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears (Acts 20:29-31).

This is also why Paul counseled Timothy to deliberately pass on the sound doctrine to others (i.e. those reliable and qualified), who would in turn pass it on to others, and so on:

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

Along with conversion, the Great Commission held that Christians are to make disciples who would be taught to OBEY everything Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:19-20).

13. **“everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me...May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus...” (2 Timothy 1:15-28)** – Paul contrasted the desertion of Phygelus, Hermogenes and the rest of the Asiatic brothers and sisters (including Demas, Crescens and Titus in 2 Timothy 4:9; 2 Timothy 4:10 “no one came to my support”) with the faithful devotion of Onesiphorus, who refreshed Paul’s spirit, who was not ashamed of Paul’s chains, who sought and found Paul in Rome, and who provided much help in Ephesus.

Who are the reliable people in your life and the unreliable ones? Paul was abandoned by his close associates when his situation grew dire and too burdensome for them. On the other hand, Onesiphorus took time, energy and money to minister to Paul.

Reliable (LOYAL to one another and to the ministry) and qualified (FAITHFUL to the true Gospel and to fulfill one’s calling and gifting) people are the need of the church today. This is what I daily pray for all of us in our Growing Together Sunday School class in keeping with our mission to help each other become all the God has created, called and gifted us to be.