

LifeWay Explore the Bible Series for April 18: Paul gives Timothy his final marching orders 40504

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Paul gives Timothy his final marching orders

2 Timothy 1

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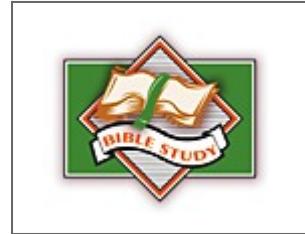
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A more somber tone looms over the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy than in 1 Timothy. Second Timothy has the feel of his last will and testament. He was writing from a severe imprisonment (2 Timothy 1:8; 2:9) which he believed would end in his execution (2 Timothy 4:6). He considered this letter to be his final opportunity to instruct and encourage his young protégé.

We sense his deep love and concern for the young man who would continue Paul's heritage in the ministry. He reminded Timothy to be steadfast in the faith. He urged Timothy to resist the false teachings that still plagued the Ephesian church.

Remember our joint heritage (1:3-5)

Paul opened his final letter to Timothy the same way he began many of his letters—with a word of thanksgiving. He consistently thanked God for Timothy in his prayers. He could remain involved in Timothy's life by interceding for him even though prison bars and oceans separated them.



The apostle affirmed he had served God with a clear conscience. He was not excusing his persecution of Christians. Instead, he was asserting that he was serving God to the best of his knowledge prior to his encountering Jesus on the road to Damascus. His conversion transformed this mistaken understanding. Paul felt he was serving the same God as his Jewish forefathers. His being a Christian was the continuation of what God had started with the chosen people of the Old Testament.

A deeply personal reflection interrupted Paul's prayer. He ached to see Timothy again. He remembered the sadness when they parted but longed for the joy a reunion would bring.

Timothy's genuine faith, as well as that of his mother and grandmother, spawned Paul's gratitude. Apparently Timothy grew up in a home strongly committed to God.

We should never underestimate the influence of a Christian home. We should gratefully remember the blessings and relationships God bestows on us.

Use your gift (1:6-7)

Because of Timothy's genuine faith and his timid nature, Paul reminded him to stir up the gift that resided in him. God's gift certainly surpassed Timothy's natural abilities. God used others through the laying on of hands to bestow the gift to Timothy. That others had recognized God's work in Timothy stimulated the young man to action. God's gift provided Timothy what he needed to accomplish the work to which God had called him and Paul had commissioned him. God could overcome Timothy's timidity with power, love and discipline. God provided the young pastor with strength and love for those he served. All Christians need to use self-control or discipline to accomplish their God-given work.

Demonstrate courage (1:8-12)

Paul urged Timothy not to keel over under opposition and falter in the faith. He challenged his colleague to share with ("join") Paul in his trials and suffering. God would empower Timothy to remain strong as God had bolstered Paul. Paul considered himself to be a prisoner of Christ and not of Caesar. He also encouraged Timothy to remember Jesus' faithfulness before Pilate as a motive to be courageous. To follow Christ is to carry one's cross of suffering and shame.

God called the pair to salvation and to service. They had received their salvation through God's choice and God's grace and through no effort of their own. God's purpose to redeem humanity extended back into eternity, but God's intent had been made visible through Christ becoming human. Christ's work rendered death powerless and displayed for all to see the life and immortality possible through the gospel ("the good news of Christ's revelation of God"). The apostle asserted that God commissioned him to proclaim the gospel boldly and publicly and then instruct others in Christian living.

Paul accepted his suffering because he was convinced God would never let

him down nor desert him. He refused to lose confidence in the gospel. Paul entrusted his proclamation of the gospel to God and knew that God would preserve the message until the day of judgment. As Paul had overcome difficulties, so too should Timothy.

Remain steadfast in your faith (1:13-14)

Paul had drawn a blueprint for Timothy's teaching. He knew that circumstances would force Timothy to expand the message as necessary. Paul reminded Timothy of the Holy Spirit as his strength to guard the gospel. Protecting the truth of the gospel was essential in a setting filled with false teachers.

Paul again cited his own life as an example of guarding the faith. Some of Paul's earlier allies in the faith had rejected and abandoned him. In contrast to those who had deserted him, Onesiphorus ("bearer of profit") stood by him in the imprisonment. He had ministered to Paul and was not deterred by Paul's imprisonment, signified by "my chains." He diligently searched for Paul in Rome until he found him. He was eager to associate with Paul in his suffering and ministry. Paul prayed for God to bestow mercy on him because of this ministry.

Questions for discussion

- ◆ Who will carry on your spiritual legacy?
- ◆ Who has been your mentor?

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