

Notes on 2 Timothy

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Introduction

- 2 Timothy is the last letter we have from the apostle Paul
- In Acts 28, he was sent to Rome to appeal his case before Caesar
- Under Roman law, the accusers had two years to present their case; if they didn't, the defendant would be released
- Acts 28 tells about his two years under house arrest awaiting trial but nothing afterward; during this time he had a powerful ministry in Rome and writing letters, while his team continued to work across the empire
- After being released from Rome (c. AD 62), Paul resumed his travel and ministry for a few more years then was arrested and beheaded in Rome (c. AD 66)

2 Timothy 1:1–2

- Even though this is more personal and less for other people than 1 Timothy, Paul laid out his credentials one more time
- He was not going to let Timothy quit without reminding him of why they were in ministry
 - apostle of Christ Jesus
 - through the will of God

2 Timothy 1:3–5

- Paul could honestly say that he had worshiped the same God his entire life; of course, he had to learn new things (e.g., Jesus is Yehovah and Messiah), but that only deepened his love and worship
- As far as he was concerned, his conscience was always clear before God, even when he was pursuing Christians
- What tears was Paul remembering as he thought of Timothy and longed to see his face once more?
- Paul often longed to see his audience to help them (cf Rom 1:11), but here he was focused on his own joy
- Paul was Timothy's spiritual father, but he wasn't the only one who taught him; as he was about to die, Paul needed Timothy to remember his full spiritual heritage

2 Timothy 1:6–12

- Paul was convinced that Timothy's faith was sincere, but he knew that Timothy was still having trouble in Ephesus
 - At some point, he had let his ministry slide, and he was no longer as strong and effective as he once was
 - This letter is Paul's call for Timothy to get back into the game
- First, he wanted Timothy to "rekindle" his gift
 - If we stop ministry long enough, our gift can "flame out" to the point that we need to repent and start it up again
 - There may be several reasons why we let this happen. For Timothy, it was cowardice.
 - Paul reminded him that cowardice is not from God
- Second, Paul had to remind him not to be ashamed of God's message or messenger but be willing to suffer himself for God's sake
 - because he saved us
 - because he called us into ministry with a holy calling
 - Our calling is based on God's purpose and grace not our works (skills, talents, desires)
 - This grace is eternal but it's been revealed through Jesus, his death and resurrection
- The reason Paul was not ashamed was because he knew in whom he had entrusted his life. His life was no longer his, it was Jesus', so no matter what he suffered, he trusted that Jesus could handle it.

2 Timothy 1:13–14

- The method for rekindling his gift was two-fold:
 - Hold onto what he already learned from Paul as his example
 - Guard closely what he had been entrusted by the Holy Spirit
 - It was not just Paul and elders who had brought him into the ministry but the Holy Spirit himself

2 Timothy 1:15–18

- Sometimes peer pressure is a good thing, and it seems that Paul was not shy to use it to try to prompt Timothy into making the right decision
- Paul exaggerated his abandonment because many had not left him, but (like Jesus on the cross), Paul felt lonely and deserted
- Timothy had a choice to make. Which of these men would he follow after - deserting Paul or helping him? Leaving the ministry or digging in even more? Paul was not his only role model

2 Timothy 2:1–2

- Based on the faith built into him, as attested by “many witnesses”, and the fact that it had been deposited with him, Paul told Timothy that his mission was to entrust that same truth to others
 - They needed to be both faithful and competent because they were expected to do the same thing
 - This is discipleship in its most basic form — one person telling another who tells another

“Every generation has the responsibility to reach their generation for Christ.”

Jack Wyrzten, Co-founder, Word of Life Fellowship

2 Timothy 2:3–7

- Paul used three illustrations to point out some truths that Timothy needed to remember.
 - Soldier — stay focused on the mission
 - Athlete — don’t try to find an easy way out
 - Farmer — don’t lose out on your share of the reward

2 Timothy 2:8–10

- As Paul continued to encourage Timothy to stay in the ministry, he now called Jesus himself as an example
- Jesus suffered, and Paul considered himself to be suffering along with Jesus for the sake of the elect
- **Even when God’s messengers get stuck, his word never does!**

2 Timothy 2:11–13

- This passage is often misunderstood and taught wrongly which is unfortunate because it is one of Paul’s “faithful sayings”
- The first two lines are obvious
 - Those who died with Christ will live with him (salvation)
 - Those who endure will reign with him (sanctification, discipleship, perseverance)
- The third and fourth lines are more difficult, but they are tied together with “deny”
 - Those who will deny/refuse ** who or what ** he will also deny/refuse us

“Those who persist in a denial of God by a refusal to suffer for him can expect to enter eternity separated from fellowship with God.” (*New American Commentary*)

- It’s better to understand this in the context of perseverance; if we refuse to persevere in the face of hardship, we are effectively denying him, and at the judgment he will refuse/deny us, i.e., we will have no reward (reigning with him)
- Those who are unfaithful (not to the point of outright refusal/denial), he is still faithful and cannot refuse/deny his own nature (2:19)

2 Timothy 2:14–19

- Timothy was to remind the people of the previous truths and faithful saying and not let them argue over little things
 - It is not useful to those who are arguing
 - It can, in fact, do harm to those who listen to them
- Timothy was to present the message of truth in a straight line; by doing this he would have no need to be ashamed
- Even when we are unfaithful to God and his word, even when some people’s faith is ruined, God still knows who belongs to him
- But we should still stay away from things that should never be connected to Christ

2 Timothy 2:20–21

- Paul used another example — dishes

- Some dishes are expensive and used for very respectable occasions; others are common and used for daily meals
- While a dish cannot decide its use, a believer can; we make ourselves useful or not depending on whether we cleanse ourselves

2 Timothy 2:22–26

- Sins and false teaching are considered youthful desires, including the desire to argue over stupid things
- God’s servant doesn’t need to be involved in those; instead he should instruct people patiently, praying that they would respond to God’s conviction

2 Timothy 3:1–9

- In case Timothy thought that things would eventually get easier, and he could just wait out the persecution and suffering, Paul said that it will actually only get worse.
- Notice that these are things that Paul envisioned would take place in the church, by believers, as they fell further and further from the truth
- We also see an example of why Paul wanted younger women to get married and be busy with their homes and families. They can easily be deceived by false teachers and have their faith ruined.
- The false teachers had disqualified themselves from being teachers or leaders in the faith (1 Cor 9:27)

2 Timothy 3:10–15

- Two commands from Paul for Timothy:
 - “continue following” — these are the things Paul taught him
 - Paul referred to his own endurance in the face of persecution as an example and encouragement for Timothy
 - “remain in the things you learned” — these are the things he learned from others (probably most significantly his mother and grandmother)

2 Timothy 3:16–17

- There isn’t anything in Scripture that isn’t useful for us, even though it’s not all written to us; it’s equally inspired but not equally applicable
 - Teaching - tells us what is right

- Reproof - tells us what is wrong
- Correction - tells us how to get right
- Training - tells us how to stay right

2 Timothy 4:1–2

- Much like in 1 Timothy and Titus, the end of the letter comes with a series of final commands for the men to follow
- Paul is no longer just encouraging Timothy to “hang in there”; now he’s urging him to get back to doing his job, calling on “everything holy”
- Commands:
 - Preach the word
 - Be ready whether it is convenient or not
 - Convict, rebuke, exhort — the same thing that he should have been doing all along

2 Timothy 4:3–4

- Why was it so important that Timothy focused on preaching and teaching?
- Because he still had an audience that might listen. The closer we get to the end times, the less people will listen.
- **Principle: Do all the work you can with the people you have now**

2 Timothy 4:5

- Timothy knew what his job was, and if he did it properly, he would stand out above those who were trying to turn people away
- Not all these instructions should be applied to every believer or every pastor today
 - Don’t take commands for someone else and try to apply them to yourself if they don’t fit

2 Timothy 4:6–8

- This is the final reason why it is imperative that Timothy stay on mission — Paul’s time was over. He finished his ministry, but Timothy’s was not done yet.
- One last encouragement is that God will reward those who remain faithful to him. Paul knew he had, and he wanted the same for Timothy. But it’s up to each of us to want it and work for it.

2 Timothy 4:9–18

- At the time of his greatest need, almost no one was with Paul, and he felt abandoned.
 - Of course, many of these people were still doing their ministry (exactly what he was trying to get Timothy to do). They had not abandoned him, but that didn't change how he felt.
- Paul was confident that no matter what happened to him, the Lord would rescue and deliver him safely into the next life

2 Timothy 4:19–22

- In his final preserved words, Paul celebrated his teammates and their work. His mind was always on the mission at hand, even though his work was finished.