

GOD'S AMAZING BOOK

THROUGH THE BIBLE, BOOK BY BOOK

led by: Pastor Josh Franklin, Good Hope Baptist Church (www.goodhopechurch.org and www.joshfranklin.org)

STAYING FAITHFUL IN MINISTRY

A Quick Look at the Second Pastoral Letter to Timothy

Consider the following time line¹:

- Timothy ministers with Paul and Silas in Philippi (AD 50).
- Paul flees Berea; Timothy and Silas continue the work (AD 51).
- Timothy rejoins Paul in Athens and brings word of the work to Macedonia (AD 51).
- Timothy returns to Thessalonica to encourage the new believers (AD 51-52).
- Timothy joins Paul in his ministry in Corinth, bringing word of progress in Thessalonica (AD 52).
- Timothy comes to Ephesus to work with Paul during Paul's three-year ministry (AD 54-56).
- Paul sends Timothy with the 1 Corinthians letter to the disordered church in Corinth (AD 56).
- Paul comes to Corinth in person and from there he and Timothy write Romans (AD 57).
- Timothy is with Paul during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (AD 60-62).
- Upon his release from his first imprisonment, Paul goes to Ephesus and appoints Timothy as pastor (AD 62).
- Paul writes 1 Timothy and Titus (AD 62-64).
- Major persecutions of the Christians in Rome begin, following the great fire (AD 64).
- Paul returns to Rome, is arrested, and writes 2 Timothy from the Mamertine Prison (AD 67?).
- Paul's martyrdom in Rome (AD 67?).

Fast Facts on 2Timothy

Written by? Apostle Paul

Written to whom? Timothy
(in Ephesus)

Written when? A.D. 66-67

Written why? To encourage
Timothy, a young church
leader.

FASCINATING FACTS:

1. 2 Timothy was Paul's final epistle and his last written words before his death.
2. 2 Timothy contains one of the two main statements on the inspiration of the Bible in 2 Timothy 3:16.
3. 2 Timothy contains some twenty-five essential directives from Paul to Timothy in 4 chapters.
4. Timothy's father was NOT a Christian.
5. Timothy learned about the Lord from his mother and grandmother.

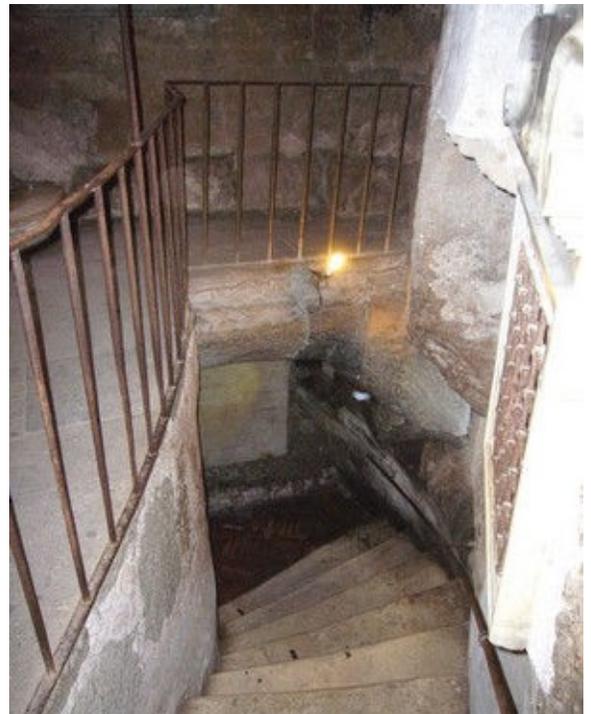


PHOTO: Steps down the Mamertine Prison, where Paul stayed before execution.

[HCSB Study Bible]

¹ HCSB Study Bible (Nashville: Holman Bible publishers, 2010), 2082.

6. If you're not suffering – at least a little – for being a Christian, it may be a sign that you're not living out your faith as boldly as you ought to (3:12).
7. Though his death is not recorded in the pages of Scripture, tradition states that the Apostle Paul was martyred under the cruel hand of the Roman Emperor, Nero - beheaded on the Ostian Way, west of Rome.

This letter can be broken down into four sections:

Perseverance in Ministry (2 Timothy 1:1-18)

The ministry that God has called every Christian to can be tough at times. In this section of his letter, Paul was encouraging Timothy:

- 1) Don't forget your faith (1:1-7)
- 2) Don't be ashamed of your faith (1:8-12)
- 3) Don't let go of your faith (1:13-18)
 - What family member or friend has had the biggest role in your spiritual growth? Why?
 - What are some ways an adult can lead a child to Christ and then nurture his or her faith?

Patterns in Ministry (2 Timothy 2:1-26)

Paul wanted to help Timothy to see how the ministry can be compared to a number of different things. He used many illustrations in this chapter:

- 1) The steward (2:1-2) *What did Paul encourage Timothy to do with what he had been taught?*
- 2) The soldier (2:3-4, 8-13)
- 3) The athlete (2:5) *What must an athlete do to win the race?*
- 4) The farmer (2:6-7) *What should a farmer expect to receive from his hard work?*
- 5) The worker (2:14-18) *What does it mean to be approved by God?*
- 6) The vessel (2:19-22)
- 7) the servant (2:23-26)

Problems in Ministry (2 Timothy 3:1-17)

There are problems in ministry because there are people in ministry. Paul wanted to show Timothy that these problems are real and they need to be faced. Paul could not be there with Timothy all the time, therefore he encouraged Timothy to:

- 1) Turn away from the false (3:1-9) *From what ungodly person or group of people do you need to encourage other believers to disassociate themselves?*
- 2) Follow those who are true (3:10-12)
- 3) Continue in God's Word (3:13-17)

Preach the Word in Ministry (2 Timothy 4:1-22)

Any ministry that does not keep the Word of God at its center will soon die. With his last words for Timothy, Paul reminds him to preach the Word and fulfill his ministry.

- *What would the title of your life's story be? What do you want it to be? How can you make it more like what you want it to be, starting this next week?*
- *Paul says we are to be prepared to preach God's Word at all times. When are you most likely to hesitate in sharing the gospel? How could you prepare beforehand to overcome your timidity or fear in such situations?*

Closing – Respond to Opportunities

Paul's plea, "Come before winter" (2 Timothy 4:21), is a reminder to us that opportunities do not wait forever. Once the winter season began, Timothy could not travel easily to Rome and see his beloved friend for the last time. Are there opportunities you are neglecting today that may soon vanish forever? Are there people you should contact and decisions you should make? Today is yours; tomorrow may be too late. Come before winter! [pg. 805, *With the Word*, Warren Wiersbe (Nelson)]

EXTRA:

Robert Mounce has said, “It is in a sense the last will and testament of the greatest missionary-theologian of early Christianity.”

Second Timothy is special because it is the last recorded letter of the Apostle Paul. It was written almost 35 years after his conversion on the Damascus Road. Paul reflects upon the faithfulness of God, and encourages Timothy to stay faithful.

Sunlight gleams off the highly polished blade of the executioner’s sword. His bound victim kneels before him with head bowed. Despite being emaciated and exhausted from mistreatment, the condemned man is still fully alert, completely aware of his imminent death. Yet it is not fear that grips him, but concern; concern for a young man hundreds of miles away. Would his protégé, a young pastor whose task it would be to carry on the leadership of one of the largest churches in the empire, prove steady? Would he resist the cunning false teachers who were even now leading many in his church astray? Would he work diligently to raise up new leaders even when others betray him? Would he continue to proclaim the gospel even under the threat of an executioner’s sword?

These are the questions that motivated Paul to write a “last will and testament” to his faithful protégé. 2 Timothy is Paul’s last known letter and was likely written just a few months before his execution around AD 67 (church tradition indicates that Paul was beheaded between AD 65-67, during the bloody second half of Nero’s reign).

Chase, a middle-aged father of three, rarely gave himself time to reflect on sentimental feelings. Yet how could he resist on this long-dreaded day, as his first-born son, Brian, prepared to leave for college? Three hours separated their suburban home from the large state school where Brian would spend the next four (or more likely six!) years. Chase was proud of his boy, proud that he had been admitted to a top-notch university and even prouder that he had demonstrated diligence at school and at work the past few years to make this accomplishment possible. Yet this pride was bitter-sweet, for Chase knew that Brian’s accomplishment marked a major turning point in their relationship. No longer would Brian be at home, and even more significant, no longer would Brian be a youth depending on his dad’s wisdom and provision. Today, whether he wanted to or not, Chase would release Brian to be the man he was quickly becoming. But was Brian ready? Had he instilled in him the values and priorities that would guide Brian to a God-honoring life? Had he prepared his boy for the distractions and temptations of adult life?²

If you were in Chase’s shoes three years before the day described above, what values and priorities would you make sure to pass on to Brian to help him become a God-honoring man?

In 1992, Barcelona, Spain, hosted the summer Olympics. Millions of people watched the world’s fastest runners compete in distances from one hundred meters to the twenty-six-mile marathon. Derek Redmond of Great Britain, a semi-finalist in the 400-meter race, crouched, ready, in his blocks. In the Olympics four years before, one minute before race time, Derek had made the agonizing decision to disqualify himself due to an Achilles tendon problem. Denied the chance to run, he watched from the sidelines. Now, after four years of relentless, focused training and several surgeries, Derek wanted this race more than ever.

An official raised the starting gun, then squeezed the trigger. The sound cracked through the air, and the runners bolted from their blocks. Arms and legs pumping, each runner sprinted down the track. But one hundred meters into the race, Derek’s hamstring tore. He stumbled and fell. Paramedics rushed onto the track, but he waved them off. He got up, his face twisted in pain and streaked with tears. He hobbled, then fell again. He crawled. Once more he got to his feet, limping, faltering, yet slowly pressing on. With officials and cameramen crowding, Derek turned the last corner.

² material from “2 Timothy” by: Grace Bible Church, College Station, TX

Then, from out of the stands rushed a man wearing a cap. “Just Do It” was lettered across the front. Pushing his way through the throng of officials and onlookers, he came alongside Derek. Without hesitation he put his arm around the young runner. No one pushed him away. This time, Derek did not wave off the help. Instead, he put his arm around the man – his dad. Supported by the bonds of affection, strengthened by a relationship of encouragement and care, the two men crossed the finish line together.

Thousands of years earlier, Paul wrote Timothy, his son in the faith, while sitting in a dark prison cell. Behind them lay years of hard work together, planting churches, teaching, settling disputes, organizing congregations, evangelizing Asia. Paul valued Timothy’s devotion to the gospel, his hard work, dependability, and sincere faith. He empowered Timothy by reminding him of his responsibility to God and the gospel. Timothy must finish his race.³

Do you really have to be so careful about the friends you pick?

Answer: 2 Tim 3:1-5 (NLT)

1 You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times.

2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred.

3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good.

4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God.

5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. **Stay away from people like that!**

³ taken from pg. 274, Holman NT Commentary, Vol. 9