

God's Amazing Book

Journey Through the New Testament

STAYING FAITHFUL IN MINISTRY

A Quick Look at the Second Pastoral Letter to Timothy

Consider the following timeline¹:

- 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 began 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 2 Timothy

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 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.



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

[HCSB Study Bible]

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

5. Timothy learned about the Lord from his mother and grandmother.
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?

Portraits of the Minister (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)

Problem-Solving 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)

Priorities 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 prioritize preaching the Word and fulfilling 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?*

Conclusion – Respond to Opportunities²

"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!"

² Warren Wiersbe, *With the Word* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1991), 805.