



THRU the **BIBLE**

with *J. Vernon McGee*

2 TIMOTHY

BIBLE COMPANION



EPISTLES

READ THIS FIRST

This Bible Companion is a summary of Dr. J. Vernon McGee's teaching of the book of 2 Timothy heard on THRU the BIBLE. These summarized lessons get to the heart of Bible passages and are intended to stir your own thinking, prayer, and study.



Begin with prayer. Dr. McGee said, "We are living in the day of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the day of grace, when the Spirit of God takes the things of Christ and reveals them to us." Before you start each lesson, ask the Lord to use it to grow you up in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as He is revealed in that section. Dr. McGee said, "This is the secret of life and of Christian living."



As you study, read the Bible passage first. Invite God to open your eyes and deepen your understanding of His Word. That's a request God loves to answer!



If you want to listen to Dr. McGee's complete teaching on any specific passage, go to TTB.org/2Timothy (or any book of the Bible).

The corresponding audio messages are listed at the top of the summaries. You can also use this Bible Companion to follow along and take notes while you listen to Dr. McGee teach a book of the Bible on the radio or online.



After every lesson, several questions are listed for your personal consideration or, if you're reading this as a group, for your discussion. Ask the Spirit to help you take to heart what He wants to show you.

LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU
RICHLY IN ALL WISDOM AND TEACHING....

COLOSSIANS 3:16^A

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LESSON 1

A LETTER FROM PRISON



Begin with prayer



Read **2 Timothy 1**



Listen at [TTB.org/2Timothy](https://www.TTB.org/2Timothy) to **2 Timothy 1:1-6** and **2 Timothy 1:6-18**

A person's last words in this life carry a lot of weight. That's what makes the letter of 2 Timothy so important. This is the apostle Paul's final communication. Because it's his last letter, Paul is very personal, even mentioning 25 people. In essence, he's saying goodbye.

There's a note of sadness in this letter you won't hear in any other of his epistles. Yet, there's also an overtone of triumph: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith," wrote Paul as his own epitaph (2 Timothy 4:7).

In this final book, Paul calls out the coming apostasy as an ominous dark cloud on the horizon. Today apostasy has broken like a storm, like a tornado on the world and in the church.

What do we mean by apostasy? Webster defines apostasy as "total desertion of the principles of faith." So apostasy is not because of ignorance; it's teaching deliberate error, an intentional departure from the faith. An apostate is one who knows the truths of the gospel and the doctrines of the faith, but has denied them and teaches what they want.

What's the ultimate outcome of preaching the gospel? Does everyone get saved? Does it usher in the Millennium? On the contrary, preaching the truth will open the doors for an apostasy that will nearly blot out the true faith from the earth.

Two departures will occur at the end of the age. The first is the departure of the church, called the Rapture, translated from the Greek *harpazo*, meaning "caught up." The Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a shout of command and a blast of a trumpet. We will be caught up (together with those who died in Christ) and meet the Lord in the air, and from that moment onward, we'll be with Him (see 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). When the believers are gone, the old shell of the church, the organization that's left down here, will totally depart from the faith.

The second departure is that rejection of the faith. The Lord Jesus Himself asked this startling question. He said, "... when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). The way the Greek language is constructed, this question demands a negative answer, "No, He won't find the faith on the earth when He returns."

That's not what the social gospel says today. They expect to transform the world by tinkering with the social system. ("If we all just respect each other, then we'll change the world.") But the cold, hard facts of history and the events of the present hour demonstrate how right Paul was. We're now in the middle of an apostasy, perfectly described by Paul.

The visible church has entered the orbit of an awful apostasy. The invisible church—that is, the real body of believers, is not affected. The invisible church today is still here, on its way to the epiphany of glory, moving closer to the Rapture every day. That's a comforting thought!

Because of the threat of apostasy, Paul emphasizes the trustworthiness of the Word of God in this final letter more than in any other epistle. Peter also emphasizes the same message in his final letter, 2 Peter. Second Timothy 2:15 and 4:2 summarize the theme and sound the tone of this second epistle: *Study and do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman that has been tested by trial who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling and skillfully teaching the word of truth. Always be ready to preach the Word, he writes, when the opportunity seems right or not. Correct those who err in doctrine or behavior, warn those who are in sin, encourage those who are growing toward spiritual maturity.*

EVERY WORD FROM GOD,
BREATHED OUT BY HIM
AND RECORDED AS SCRIPTURE,

CAN BE TRUSTED.



THRU the BIBLE

The gospel rests on a foundational fact that we are lost sinners without Jesus Christ. We can't be saved by perfect obedience because none of us are perfect. Neither can we be saved by imperfect obedience because God will not accept it.

Therefore, the only solution is the gospel of the grace of God which reaches down and saves us as sinners on the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ. Faith in Christ transforms human life. We live in a showcase today, displaying men and women all over this globe who have been transformed by the gospel of the grace of God.

Instead of presenting the grace of God to sinful man, liberal preaching goes out in three different directions. From some liberal pulpits we hear what is really popular psychology, focusing on "How to Overcome" or "How to Think Creatively" or "How to be Your Best Self." It preaches that we're on the way upward and onward forever. That is popular psychology, and it doesn't get us anywhere.

A second type of liberal preaching involves ethics. It preaches a nice, sweet gospel—a sermonette preached by the preacherette to Christianettes. The message goes something like this: "Good is better than evil because it's *nicer* and gets you into less trouble." The picture of the average liberal church is that of a mild-mannered person standing before a group of mild-mannered people, urging them to be more mild-mannered! Colorless. No wonder the Lord Jesus said to the church of Laodicea: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16). That would make anybody ill.

Then there's a third type of liberal preaching, which is called the social gospel. They preach better race relations, pacifism, social justice, and the Christian social order. It is Christian socialism pure and simple.

In contrast, when the true gospel is preached and men come to Christ, they all become brothers. You can't create better relationships by forcing people together. Only the gospel of the grace of God can make a man into a brother. When that happens, a person's culture or color makes no difference at all.

The solution to man's problems can come only through preaching the *grace* of God. We need to recognize (as Martin Luther put it) that God creates out of nothing. Until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of him. The grace of God through Jesus Christ is the way to transform and save mankind.

THE PROMISE OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS

When Paul addressed his final letter, he told Timothy he was writing “by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.” How do you accept a promise? Only by faith—and that is the only way you can obtain eternal life. God offers it to you as a gift. You accept a gift because you believe the giver. You receive eternal life by believing in the Giver. The Lord Jesus gives you eternal life when you trust Him as Savior because He paid the penalty of your sin. Today He can offer you heaven on the basis of your faith and trust in Him. When you believe Him and come His way, you honor Him. Therefore “the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus” makes it clear that through Christ is the only way you can get eternal life.

TO TIMOTHY, WITH LOVE

Paul greets Timothy as his “beloved son.” It's obvious Paul loved Timothy, and we know Timothy also loved Paul. Paul says, “*I am mindful of your tears. And I wish I could see you.*” But of course, it's likely they didn't see each other again. Paul was arrested, is back in prison, and now faces execution.

Paul rehearses a bit of Timothy's spiritual history. Although Paul came out of Judaism, Timothy was apparently brought up in a Christian home. Both his grandmother and his mother were Christians and likely had a lot to do with this young man turning to Christ. When Paul put his hands on Timothy, when Timothy partnered with Paul, he shared with Timothy the gift of teaching God's Word. Timothy had the gift of teaching already, but Paul “stirred it up.”

Paul was likely concerned about Timothy there in Ephesus, one of the great “sin spots” in the Roman world. Paul had spent three years there himself and knew of the many enticements in the city. In the center of town stood the temple of Diana, the epicenter of first-century pagan worship, a complex so jaw-dropping that it became one of the wonders of the ancient world. Perhaps Paul was concerned Timothy might be intimidated by this overwhelming cult and culture and hold back from teaching the whole counsel of God. He challenges Timothy with the truth that God gives us a spirit of power and of love, of sound judgment and the ability to remain calm and under control.

God doesn't intend defeat to be the norm of Christian living. We can be disciplined Christians rather than slaves to our emotions. Overcoming emotions means not letting your emotions stop you from doing something you should do. When you fear flying, you discipline yourself to fly anyway. Certainly we all still live with our emotions, but they are not the engine, merely the caboose.

Paul affirms to Timothy that life is hard. Some preach that the Christian life ought to be easy, nice and sweet, bright and breezy. Some teach we have an indulgent heavenly Father who will put us on a bed of roses, remove every stone out of our pathway, and not let anything serious happen to us.

But our heavenly Father saved us and called us with a holy calling. This calling leads us to a life of purpose, set apart, not because of any works we've done or rewards we've earned, but because of His own purpose and amazing, undeserved favor which He give us in Christ Jesus.

It's Jesus who has saved us and called us—not because of who we are or what we have done, but “according to His own purpose and grace.” This salvation we enjoy was hidden in ages past, a mystery in the Old Testament, but is now explained in the New Testament. God had this plan in mind for us since before the world began. When Jesus took on flesh and served His earthly ministry, through His own death, He made death's effects void. He brought life and immortality to us through the gospel.

Death means something altogether different to the child of God. He didn't eliminate physical death, but he made it of no effect. Remember Paul is writing this letter from death row. Physical death was imminent, just days or even hours away. Paul set his hope on God and how Jesus Christ's death assured him he would never suffer spiritual death, which is separation from God. Jesus Christ abolished spiritual death so that no sinner need go to a place where he'll be eternally separated from God.

Although Paul was in prison under a death sentence, he was not ashamed of the gospel. Sometimes Christians are reluctant to witness and we get tongue-tied at times. Paul's confidence came from whom he believed. He clearly knew God would safely keep all that he put in His hands.

Paul said he entrusted himself to God; literally, he deposited his faith in Christ until the day of judgment. Or what Paul said can also mean that “God made a deposit with me.” God's deposit of gifts in Paul's life made him a debtor to the entire world. He owed them the clear testimony of the gospel.

Paul pours confidence into God's "sound words" and urges Timothy to keep them in faith and in love. Every word from God, breathed out by Him and recorded as Scripture, can be trusted. His Spirit living in us enables us to obey the Word and to live the Christian life in His power. Earlier, Paul talked about power, love, and a sound mind, which are all fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, Paul gets personal. He names the names of those who had been with him in Rome but who had "turned away" from the faith. (Apostasy happened in the first century, too.) But not everyone failed him. Paul writes of Onesiphorus, who often refreshed him and wasn't ashamed of his chains. He searched Rome to find Paul, and when he did, he stayed close by to minister to him. Here is a wonderful saint of God. We'll meet more people like that as the letter continues.

NEXT: Four pictures of a faithful believer.

LESSON 1



FOR DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Why does apostasy happen even where the gospel is proclaimed?
2. What do you think Paul's purpose was in telling Timothy about the coming apostasy?
3. What is the difference between the visible church, which will struggle with apostasy, and the invisible church, which will not succumb to such a temptation?

7. Paul's death was imminent when he wrote 2 Timothy. Imagine you could go back and watch him write this letter. What do you think you would have seen?

LESSON 2

FARMER, ATHLETE, SOLDIER, SON



Begin with prayer



Read 2 Timothy 2



Listen at [TTB.org/2Timothy](https://www.TTB.org/2Timothy) to **2 Timothy 2:1-13** and **2 Timothy 2:11-26**

The second chapter of 2 Timothy describes seven pictures of the duty and life of a believer.

A SON

Paul first address Timothy as his son, even though Timothy wasn't physically Paul's son. Timothy was Paul's spiritual son since it was under Paul's ministry that this young man turned to Christ. But it meant more than that.

A child of God is born into God's family by means of his faith in Christ. (See 1 Peter 1:23.) Timothy is in the family of God, and he is a child of God. The same is true for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. To all who believe, Paul says this: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." No one can just grit their teeth and go out and live the Christian life on their own. If you feel that following a few rules or some clever gimmicks will make you a mature Christian, then you have fallen into a subtle trap of legalism. You're trusting in your own strength. The Word of God has no rules to tell the child of God how to live the Christian life. We are saved by grace, and now we are to live by the grace of God and be *strong* in it.

Perhaps you are thinking you could never be strong. Maybe you are disappointed with yourself. If you are, that means you must have believed in yourself. (You shouldn't have.) Instead, walk by the grace of God. Or perhaps you really thought you could do it your way, and now you are discouraged. If you are, that means you don't believe God's Word and way of blessing. Or you may be saying, "I hope I can do better in the future." Then you do expect to get some good out of your old nature. It's not going to work that way! Instead, be strong in the grace of God.

One way you can be strong in God's grace is by passing it along to others. Paul encouraged Timothy to take the lessons he learned from Paul and teach them to others who will in turn teach others, etc. This is the way God moves even today.

A GOOD SOLDIER

The next picture Paul uses to describe how to live a godly life is the Christian as a soldier. The last chapter of Ephesians tells us the believer is fighting a spiritual battle and that he needs to put on the armor of God (see Ephesians 6:12-13).

No soldier in active service gets entangled in the ordinary business affairs of civilian life; he avoids them so he can please the one who enlisted him to serve. Imagine a soldier in wartime telling his sergeant, "Sir, I'm sorry to have to leave, but I have to go to the DMV, and then I have a date with my girlfriend. I just won't be able to be here for the battle tonight." Many Christians are trying to fight like that today.

The soldier's goal is to please who chose him to be a soldier. The believer, too, must establish his priorities to please the Lord. Accept that you're a soldier. Endure hardness. You can't get so entangled in worldliness that you're not able to live the Christian life. As a child of God, we need to recognize that the Christian life is not a playground but a battlefield where battles are being fought and won and lost. A real spiritual battle is going on.

AN ATHLETE

A Christian is also an athlete, contending in the game. You want to win, and you're doing everything you can to be the winner. Like he wrote in Philippians 3:14, Paul pictures himself in a race, saying, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." He wanted to keep his body under control (see 1 Corinthians 9:24-27) and run the

Christian race in such a way that the One who is at the end of the race—the Lord Jesus—would be able to reward him, saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).

He is to play by the rules. There is no shortcut to living the Christian life. Forget the gimmickry today that condenses Christianity into a little course or a few rules. God gave us 66 books, and each one of them is very important. It takes the composite picture to give us the mind and the Word of God. We are to study the whole Bible. An athlete can't cut the corner of a racetrack. Neither can a baseball player run by second base without touching it; he has to touch all the bases to score. A child of God has to do that, too. If you're going to win, you can't take any shortcuts.

A FARMER

The fourth picture describes the believer as a farmer, the one who tills the field and sows the seed of the Word of God. After the farmer has done that, there will be a harvest.

Paul then stops to say, “Remember Jesus Christ.” (The word “that” was added by Bible translators.) Isn't that lovely—remember Jesus Christ! He's the one who preached this gospel, and He's the one who will sit on David's throne. Remember Him if when you stand for the Word of God you suffer some trouble. (Remember Paul was in prison for teaching the Word of God.) Remember that the Word of God is not in prison! Although Paul was in chains, he discovered that the Word of God was still going out in the Roman world. Even with a mad Caesar on the throne, a dictator of dictators, who had imprisoned Paul to silence him, the Word of God was not bound. Thank God, it still is going out to the world in our day.

We die with Christ when we receive Him as our Savior. His death becomes our death. And if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. We are identified with Him and are raised with Him in newness of life. This means this very day He wants to live His life out through us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.” Perhaps not all believers will reign with Him. Perhaps Paul narrows it down to those who have suffered for Him. This would be especially encouraging to Paul's original readers. In that Roman world, more than five million Christians were martyred because they refused to deny Christ. Plenty of “religious rulers” claimed to be godly

but, as Jesus called them, they were hypocrites, pretending to be something they were not. If Christ accepted someone who was not genuine, He actually would be denying Himself, because He is true.

For now, just stick to essentials, Paul wrote. Don't argue about empty words or philosophies or our little differences. Try to stay on the positive side and enjoy each other's fellowship in the gospel.

AN UNASHAMED WORKER

Paul directed Timothy to do his best, to "present yourself approved to God," a worker who has been tested by trial and has no reason to be ashamed. The workman here is evidently a teacher, which means he is to be a diligent student of the Word of God and able to handle it accurately and skillfully teach the Word of truth. To "rightly divide" the Word, the Christian is to be a skilled artisan.

The artisan who handles the Word must understand how the Word of God is one great bundle of truth and how the sections relate to the others. They must respect the structure and teach the whole Scripture, and not just lift out a verse here and there and ignore whole sections. It's easy to teach piecemeal, but the Bible isn't that kind of book; it must be taught in its entirety.

A child of God needs to study the Word of God and be diligent in how you study, so you can teach the truth correctly. Paul tells Timothy to avoid empty chatter that has no value. In their day as well as ours, there were apostates teaching error. In Timothy's day, two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, were among those teaching that the resurrection had already taken place, which meant everyone still living had missed Christ's return.

But no worries, Timothy. God has laid a firm foundation and it stands unshaken despite attacks. The Lord knows those who are His. Isn't that comforting?!

Back in Deuteronomy 6:8-9, God told His people to write His commandments on their house posts and gates. The Israelite used his house as a billboard for the Word of God. That identified him as a worshiper of God.

Now how about the believer today? How does he advertise that he is a child of God? If you call yourself a follower of Jesus Christ, then stand apart from wickedness. That's how people will know you belong to God. You separate from evil and separate to Christ. If you name the name of Christ, you're not living in sin. The Lord knows those who are His because He can discern the

heart, but all the world can look at is the outward life. The world makes sin look attractive by clever advertisements on billboards. How do we as believers compare? Our lives are an attractive billboard for Christ.

A VESSEL

Paul then describes the believer as a vessel. In every kitchen you have all kinds of containers, some fancy, some everyday. We are to be the kind of container God can use to present any and every kind of gift to his guests for their blessing. We must be clean and ready to use. Don't get yourself involved with childish lusts but run after a mature faith that's characterized by faith, love, and peace. These three virtues sum up the Christian life and we should live them out in our lives. Some people continually want to argue about nonessentials. Christian, you don't have time for that. We are living in a world on fire! Let's get the Word of God to it before it's too late.

A SERVANT

Finally, a believer is like a servant. We are to be gentle to everyone. Wait—aren't we to fight like a soldier? But a servant is not to fight. Is this a contradiction? No, it's a paradox. When you are standing for the truth, you are to be definite and let people know where you stand in the fight. But when you are trying to win a person to Christ, don't argue with him. If he disagrees with you, let him. Just keep on giving him the Word of God. You never know how or when God might draw them and how they will turn their hearts to Him and escape the devil's trap.

NEXT: What will the last days look like?

4. Are there any circumstances in your life right now where you need to follow Paul's words and "remember Jesus Christ"?

5. How would you characterize your diligence in studying the Scriptures?
What can you do to improve in this area?

6. How does the idea of a Christian as a vessel for God's use change the way you think about what God is doing in your life?

7. Paul listed seven pictures of the life of a believer: a son, a soldier, an athlete, a farmer, an unashamed worker, a vessel, and a servant. If he was writing this letter today, what are some other pictures of the Christian life he might have used?

LESSON 3

IN THE LAST DAYS



Begin with prayer



Read 2 Timothy 3



Listen at [TTB.org/2Timothy](https://www.TTB.org/2Timothy) to **2 Timothy 3:1-12** and **2 Timothy 3:8-17**

What will the last days look like? And what should a Christian do?

Paul didn't have much time left, so he spared no words. The last days, which are the days before the rapture of the church, are going to be dangerous. Apostasy will ravage the church like a poison. But the child of God holds the antidote, the Word of God.

Paul tells Timothy what to expect and what is to be the future of the organized church—and it's not that bright. The apostasy that began in the church in Paul's day only continues to grow worse today. These times would be "perilous" for all, especially faithful Christians. That is why 2 Timothy 3 is important and meaningful for us.

False leaders (wolves) will enter the church, not teaching the Word of God, but fleeing the sheep in the congregation (see Acts 20:29-30). Paul describes this coming apostasy in a list of 19 characteristics. It is an ugly brood, but together they give the best scriptural picture of what's happening today. In fact, these attributes have only gotten worse as we draw closer to the Rapture. Do you recognize these in the last days? "And from such people turn away!"

1. **“Lovers of themselves.”** In the last days, congregations will follow teachers “having itching ears.” These teachers want their ears scratched—they want to be complimented. They don’t tell the people that they are sinners and need a Savior; they tell them how wonderful they are. This self-love characterizes our contemporary society.
2. **“Lovers of money”** is related to lovers of self. One follows the other. As Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:10, money itself isn’t bad, but when we love ourselves so much we deny ourselves nothing, then the love of money takes over. Covetousness reveals itself in how we get wealth and how we use it.
3. In the last days, people will be **“boasters.”** Ever notice how you can spot a proud man by the way he walks? Boasters are convinced of their own importance and also—
4. **“Proud”** or arrogant in their attitude.
5. They will be **“blasphemers,”** which is better translated as “railers,” those who poke their noses into somebody else’s business for the purpose of abusing them.
6. The young apostasy will be **“disobedient”** to parent’s discipline. Rebellion sets in at an early age.
7. They will be **“unthankful”** and unappreciative, receiving kindnesses from others without even thinking of thanking them. And they accept *everything* from God without ever returning thanks to Him.
8. They also act out against God in the way they talk and live their lives and are **“unholy”** in their habits.
9. In addition, the last days will be characterized by people as heartless, **“unloving,”** callous, and hateful. These folks are impossible to get along with. They are irreconcilable—they won’t *let* you get along with them. They will be “without natural affection” (KJV), meaning having abnormal relationships. We live in a day that is trying to normalize homosexuality when we know it is not. Romans 1:24 clearly states homosexuality dishonors the body. Humanity sinks to its lowest level when it accepts homosexuality.
10. People will also be **“unforgiving”** and consequently irreconcilable.
11. They will be **“slanderers”** of others’ characters, spreading malicious gossip.
12. They will be **“without self-control,”** especially self-restraint.
13. **“Brutal,”** acting in an uncivilized way.

14. **“Despisers of good”** means they will be antagonistic toward whatever is good.
15. You don’t dare trust anybody in these days since they are likely to be **“traitors”** and betray you.
16. They will act **“headstrong”** and reckless.
17. They will be **“haughty,”** drunk with their own pride, wrapped in a mist of self-delusion.
18. They will be **“lovers [of their own personal] pleasure...”**
19. **“... Rather than lovers of God.”** Never has there been a time like today when so much money has been spent in order to provide pleasure. Billions of dollars are spent for entertainment (e.g., movies, athletic events, etc.) because people are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. They go through the rituals of religion but lack real life and the power of God in their lives.

The believer in Jesus Christ needs to avoid them. Don’t waste one more day hanging around people (inside and outside the church) who model these 19 characteristics. All across this country are wonderful pastors and churches that faithfully stand on the Word of God. Go stand with them. Don’t waste any more of your life investing it in Christians who never grow up, never mature. Their lives are not changed. If that’s you, get down on your knees and ask God to forgive you and then get up and go follow Him.

Remember Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses? So do these apostates resist the truth. Jannes and Jambres were the magicians Pharaoh called in when Moses started to do miracles and the plagues came upon Egypt (see Exodus 7). Satan has supernatural power and also loves to imitate the things God does. Jannes and Jambres were able to perform miracles by the power of Satan. Moses did them by the power of God. Satan imitates God’s work today (see 1 John 4:1).

“Men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith.” Paul is saying that men on the contemporary scene, like Jannes and Jambres, have corrupt or depraved minds. They’ve discarded the faith—totally rejected it. These guys were twisted in their thinking, defying truth itself. But be sure, what will become of these latest impostors that have invaded the church? Nothing. Everyone will see through them, just as people saw through that Egyptian hoax.

SEE THE BATTLE TO BE FOUGHT.

DEFEND THE WORD OF GOD.

STAND FOR THE GREAT TRUTHS OF THE BIBLE.



THRU the BIBLE

You can dabble in spiritism if you want to, but you are playing with dynamite. In our day, many reject the supernatural altogether, but Satan is alive and on the move. Don't toy around with the evil supernatural.

Paul had faced this opposition firsthand. *You know my life story*, Paul told Timothy. His life was an open book, as every Christian's life ought to be. Paul had suffered a great deal, but the Lord also delivered him. Timothy knew all about what happened to Paul on his journeys. Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, and Lystra were all places in the Galatian country where Paul had gone on his first, second, and third missionary journeys. When Paul was at Lystra, he was stoned and left for dead. Paul said God intervened in his behalf.

All along the way, unscrupulous conmen exploit the faith. They're as deceived as the people they lead astray. As long as they are in the church, things will only get worse.

Such is the picture of the last days before the rapture of the church. Now what can a child of God do in days like these?

The only antidote against a world of apostasy is the Word of God. Understanding and applying Scripture is the only resource and recourse that will combat this evil of false teachers. Paul tells Timothy to continue in the things he has learned. Timothy has had a godly heritage and grew up on the Word of God. Now he needed to grow in his salvation.

Wait—didn't you say he was already saved? Yes, but salvation occurs in three tenses. You *have been saved* from sin. Jesus Christ bore a judgment death for you. When you believe on Him, you pass from death to life. You are no longer condemned. (See Romans 8:1.)

You are *being saved* from sin. He is working out a salvation in you, but it won't be complete in this life. A day is coming when you will be like Christ. (See 1 John 3:2.)

And someday, you will *be saved* from sin.

Paul says Scripture not only tells us how we are saved but also enables us to grow and give us deliverance down here. The constant study of the Word of God is the only help we have, helping us be "wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It makes us wise in knowing how to live down here.

Memorize this verse:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

-2 Timothy 3:16

When Paul says “all Scripture,” he means *all* of it, from Genesis to Revelation. “Inspiration” means “God-breathed.” The writers of Scripture were not just pens the Lord picked up and wrote with. The marvel is that God used these people’s personalities, expressed things in their own thought patterns, yet got through exactly what He wanted to say. Through these writers, God has given us His Word. If He spoke out of heaven today, He wouldn’t add anything to what He has already said.

This Word we have is good for teaching, good for conviction, good for setting things right in your life. That’s how you can test whether the Word of God is moving in your life. If you read this book like any other book, then the Spirit of God is not moving in your life. But if it convicts you, then you know the Holy Spirit is at work within you. God’s Word is good for instruction, helping you think and act in accordance with God’s will. This will help you to grow in maturity.

The Word of God will *thoroughly* furnish you—it will fit you out for life for every good work. Three easy lessons will not bring you to Christian maturity, but *all* Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and all of it is to be used to meet your spiritual needs.

Timothy had been *taught* the Word of God, and now he is to *declare* the Word of God. Paul has emphasized that in the days of apostasy our resource and our recourse is to the Word of God, and it will adequately meet our needs.

We have seen that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God—it is God-breathed. It says what God wants said, and it has said *everything* He wants to say. For this reason it meets the needs of the human heart.

When it gets into your life it does something that no other book can do because it is the very Word of God.

NEXT: How Paul faced the end.

7. If you could go back in time and ask Paul about why he emphasized the importance of the Word of God so much in his last letter, what do you think he would say?

LESSON 4

LAST WORDS



Begin with prayer



Read 2 Timothy 4



Listen at [TTB.org/2Timothy](https://www.TTB.org/2Timothy) to **2 Timothy 3:16–4:8** and **2 Timothy 4:6-22**

“Come before winter if you can.” It’s with a note of sadness that Paul finishes his letter to Timothy. He knew the time of his departure had come. He had finished his course. He had been on the racetrack of life, and now he was crossing the finish line. He had fought a good fight, and he had kept the faith. A crown of righteousness was ready for him.

But Paul was lonely. He’s in Rome, alone and incarcerated in a horrible Mamertine prison. He’s cold and asks Timothy to bring his cloak. He’s alone and the hours are long. He asks Timothy to bring his books, especially the parchments.

But with the melancholy, we also hear a note of victory as Paul gives his final charge to his son in the faith. As we hear him, listen for what God wants you to hear.

As one who knows that his earthly life is all but over and is living in the reality of the time to come, Paul communicates solemn instructions, like he was already standing before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who will someday judge our works for rewards.

When will this happen? “At His appearing and His kingdom.” The Roman Emperor’s appearance in any place was his *epiphaneia*, his appearing. Obviously when the Emperor was due to visit any place, everything was put in perfect order. The streets were swept and decorated; all work was up-to-date. The town was clean and ready for the *epiphaneia* of the Emperor. So Paul says to Timothy: *“You know what happens when any town is expecting the epiphaneia of the Emperor; you are expecting the epiphaneia of Jesus Christ. Do your work in such a way that all things will be ready whenever He appears.”*

Christ’s appearing and His kingdom aren’t the same thing. His appearing is the epiphany, the rapture of the church. His kingdom refers to the revelation of Christ when He returns to earth to establish His kingdom. Twice He will do some judging. He will judge His own when He takes them out of the world for rewards. And He will judge those who turn to God in the Great Tribulation. All believers will stand before Him for evaluation of our lives at one time or another.

Paul is saying in effect, *“Think ahead, Timothy. You will stand before Jesus Christ to have your life judged. In light of that, this is what you should do today.”* These instructions are just as relevant to us today.

First, be always ready to preach the Word. Preach means to proclaim it, make it a rallying cry for people to respond to it. Preach it when it’s convenient or inconvenient—at any time. If someone wakes you up at two in the morning you ought to be able to give out the Word of God. “In season, out of season” means any time of the day or night, any time of the year, under any and all circumstances. With conviction.

Notice that Paul doesn’t say to preach *about* the Bible. Preach the Word, don’t just talk about it. Nor does Paul say to preach *from* the Word. He does not say to lift a verse from the Bible and then weave a sermon around it. We are not to preach *about* the Word of God or *from* the Word of God, but preach the Word of God itself!

God uses His Word for various purposes in our lives, for whatever is necessary. Timothy was to use the Word of God to “convince” (convict) those in error. He was to use it to “rebuke” those in sin. He was also to use it to encourage (“exhort”) those living in harmony with God’s will. He was to carry on all of these activities—conviction, warning, and appeal—very *patiently* and with careful “teaching.” There are five imperatives in this verse: preach, be ready, reprove, rebuke, and exhort.

All of this is included in preaching the Word of God.

“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” Perhaps we’ve already come to this place. Very few church members will endure sound doctrine. They will only listen to speakers who tell them what they *want* to hear, not what they *need* to hear. Paul pictured people who would be bored by, apathetic to, and annoyed by “sound doctrine.” They’d rather get their ears tickled. They want something novel, something to entertain them. They won’t want to be given the Word of God.

In spite of this, Paul charged Timothy to keep alert (“be watchful”) to false teaching and to be self-controlled in all kinds of situations. Endure hardship willingly, and continue to proclaim the gospel to the lost. This was the ministry God entrusted to him.

Almost with a big sigh of relief that he had communicated what he needed, Paul now writes his own epitaph. (This is a great passage, 2 Timothy 4:6-8, and would serve you well to memorize.)

“I am now ready to be offered” If you had gone into that execution room in Rome, you would have seen a bloody spectacle. Very candidly, it would have been sickening to see Paul put his head on the chopping block, to watch the burly, brutal Roman soldier lift that tremendous blade above his head, then with one fell swoop sever the head from the body and see the head drop into a basket on one side and the body fall limp and trembling on the other side. But Paul says if that’s all you saw, you really didn’t see very much. That happened to be an altar, and his life was being poured out as a drink offering (see Philippians 2:17). He wanted his life to be poured out, like an offering sacrificed on a brazen altar with fire underneath it. The drink offering would go up in steam. Paul’s life would soon disappear, and all that could be seen was Christ.

Paul’s epitaph is divided into two sections. The first is retrospective; Paul looks back on his earthly life, right before he is executed. In the second part, Paul looks forward to eternal life. The earthly life and the eternal life are separated by what we call death.

Paul sums up his life in three different ways: “I have fought the good fight.” He has been a soldier, a good soldier. A battle has been fought and a victory has been won. At the end of his life he says, *“I have been a soldier of my Savior.”* All believers should see the battle to be fought, defend the Word of God, and stand for the great truths of the Bible.

“I have finished the race.” Life is not only a battle, it’s a race. Paul was a disciplined athlete who was striving to win the prize. During the race Paul was keeping his body under subjection. He was attempting to live the Christian life in such a way that he would not be disapproved. (See 1 Corinthians 9:27 and Hebrews 12:1-2.) Now at the end of his life he could say, *“I have finished my course”*—he had touched all the bases, he had completed all that God had planned for Him.

“I have kept the faith.” Life had been a trust from God, and he had been a good steward. He had kept the faith. He firmly guarded the gospel against error. He never veered from the great truths and doctrines in the Word of God.

Finally, he says, “My departure is at hand.” The Greek word for departure is *analsis*, a nautical term used for a ship tied up at the harbor, ready to put out to sea. *“I’ve been tied down to the harbor,”* Paul said. *“But death for the child of God releases us.”* Life on earth is like being tied down in the harbor; we haven’t been anywhere yet.

Paul says, *“Don’t look at my execution and let blood make you sick. I’m like a ship that has been tied up at the harbor. When death comes, I’m really taking off to go and be with Christ, which will be far better.”*

This brings us to the positive side. Paul looks forward to the future where “there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,” the reward for a righteous life. The Lord, the righteous Judge, will award not only Paul on that great day—but also all those who have loved and longed for and welcomed His appearing. Paul will receive his reward someday, as every child of God’s life will be evaluated and rewarded.

These are all triumphant realities for the future, but finally, Paul faces the reality of his situation.

“Do your best to get here soon.” He’s lonely. *“Demas took off for Thessalonica”*—he couldn’t stand the heat. *“Tychicus went back to Ephesus. Titus went to Dalmatia.”* Perhaps these brothers had legitimate reasons for leaving. Paul probably sent them off to minister on his behalf. “Only Luke is with me.” Dr. Luke stood by Paul to the end.

If you remember, Paul wouldn’t take John Mark with him on his second missionary journey because John Mark had deserted them on the first journey. But Paul had been wrong about Mark, and now he was able to say that Mark was profitable to him in his ministry.

Paul asks for his coat which he had left at Troas. This reveals a little of Paul's suffering. He was cold and needed his coat, something for his body. He also needed something to read, something for his mind. He was thinking of Alexander the coppersmith and committing his misdeeds to the Lord. Paul warns Timothy to be on guard against him. *"Watch out for him."*

Paul said that at his first trial no one stood with him as an advocate—except "the Lord stood with me and strengthened me"—this was something for his spirit. *"The Lord rescued me from the mouth of the lion."*

And now Paul knew he was going to be safely translated to heaven. "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!"


Paul concludes this personal letter by asking Timothy to greet their mutual friends. Love and affection exude with each line. He also relays greetings from those in Rome. He once again asks Timothy to try his best to come visit him by winter.

This concludes the tremendous swan song of the apostle Paul.

A photograph of two men, one Black and one white, smiling and talking to each other outdoors. They are both gesturing with their hands as if in conversation. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a park-like setting.

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A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a smartphone. The phone screen displays a list of booklets from TTB.org. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a wooden table.

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