

A study of the book of
II TIMOTHY



A Students International Devotional

Written by **Nate Slabach**

Designed by **Andrea Shirley**



All Scripture passages are taken from the NLT unless otherwise noted.

2018 Students International: Use of materials, as written, permitted upon request for non-commercial purposes.

Welcome to **STUDENTS INTERNATIONAL**

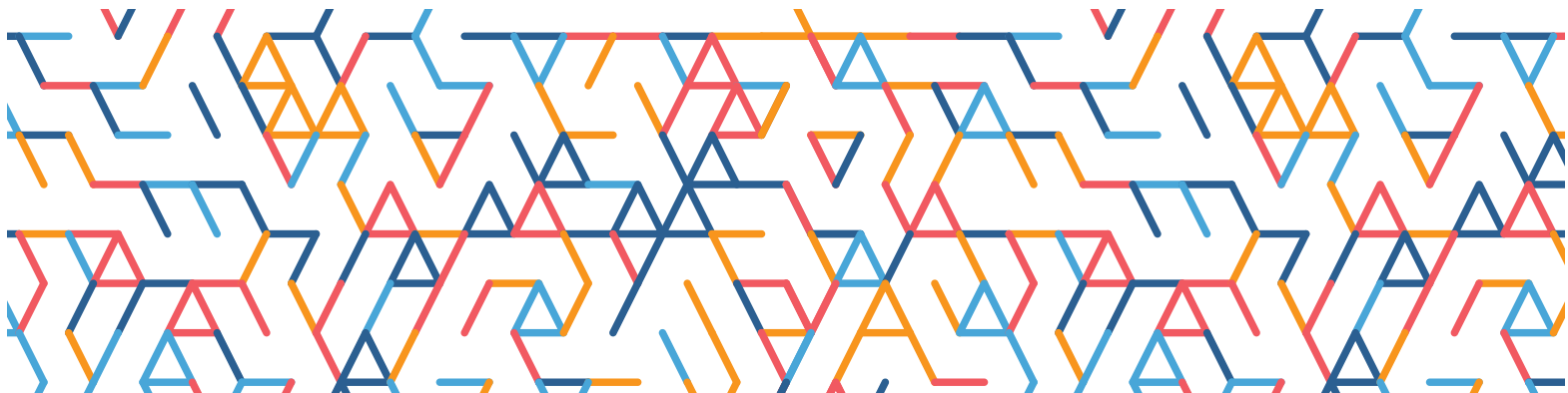
During your outreach you will be studying through the book of II Timothy. Of the 13 New Testament letters written by Paul, II Timothy was the last one. Paul was writing from prison and would soon be martyred. He was beheaded just outside of Rome.

II Timothy is a personal letter to Timothy. Paul first met Timothy in Lystra during his second missionary journey. It is believed that II Timothy was written in AD 67, 17 years later. This letter was written through the inspiration of God and continues to be God's Word for us today.

Each morning as you open the book of II Timothy, do so with great anticipation. God is going to speak to you. And when he does, he will encourage you, give you direction, transform your thoughts, and bring healing to your soul.

I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. May you always be filled with the fruit of salvation – the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ – for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

Philippians 1:9-11



REMEMBER THE CALL

STUDY #1 • II TIMOTHY 1:1

We will begin today's study by reading II Timothy 1:1. But before we do so, let's take a moment to visualize the setting. Paul is sitting in a dimly lit prison cell and is chained to a steel post or a prison guard. He has a piece of writing material made of goat or sheep skin, a small jar of ink, and in his hand a feather pen. He dips the pen into the ink and begins to write.

(v.1) This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I have been sent out to tell others about the life he has promised through faith in Christ Jesus.

Thirty years earlier (37 AD), Paul, then a radical persecutor of the followers of Jesus, was on his way to Damascus with authority to make arrests and bring believers, both men and women, back to Jerusalem as prisoners. As Paul approached Damascus, he had a miraculous, life changing God encounter. A bright light blinded him, and Jesus, with an audible voice, revealed himself to him. A few days later, God sent a courageous believer named Ananias to Paul with a message.

READ ACTS 9:1-15.

God used Ananias to tap Paul on the shoulder and tell him, "I am calling you to ..." In your own words, write out the specific calling God gave to Paul. (v. 15)

As Paul continues to write his letter, he once again refers to his calling. II Timothy 1:11, "And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of this Good News".

Throughout his ministry, Paul wrote letters to a number of New Testament churches. Let's do a bit of research. Did Paul ever mention his calling in the opening statements of any of these pastoral letters?

READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES AND RECORD YOUR DISCOVERIES.

The letter to the church in Rome. (Romans 1:1)

Letters to the churches in Corinth, Ephesus, and Colossae. (I Corinthians 1:1, II Corinthians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, Colossians 1:1)



Paul shared the gospel and saw many come to Christ. He planted churches in foreign countries and testified about Jesus to Roman government leaders. God used him to perform miracles. However, for Paul, living out this calling was not always easy. In II Corinthians 11:24-27, he writes about some of the difficulties and challenges he faced.

“Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have traveled on many

long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.”

In the middle of these difficult circumstances, the certainty of Paul’s calling

and his God-given purpose gave him confidence and kept him on course for thirty years.

God has given each of us specific callings as well. A compass keeps a ship headed in the right direction even when the captain is in the middle of a disorienting storm, the winds are strong, the waves are high, and he can’t see land. In the same way, regularly remembering your calling and how God called you helps keep you on track when you are discouraged, exhausted, face relational challenges, and are up against enemy resistance.

REAL LIFE APPLICATION

You have embarked on a cross-cultural ministry adventure. You raised funds. You have participated in pre-field training. You boarded a plane and have now arrived to a foreign country. How did you come to the point of knowing that God was calling you to join a Students International missions outreach? How did God nudge you, speak to you, and stir up interest in you? How did you see God provide the funding you needed for the trip? **Write out the details below.**

Now that you’re here, what do you believe God is specifically calling you to do? What is your purpose?

During your outreach you may face certain challenges and difficulties. You may experience homesickness, struggle with feelings of inadequacy, have awkward moments caused by cultural differences, and feel frustrated with the language barrier. After several days you may begin to feel levels of tiredness, wish you wouldn’t have to take cold showers, and miss air conditioning. These emotions and challenges are to be expected. When this happens, find your II Timothy bible study and flip back to this lesson. Remembering how God called you to join this outreach and your specific purpose will become your compass. It will help you maintain focus as you navigate each day.





KEY INVESTMENTS

STUDY #2 • II TIMOTHY 1: 2-7

READ II TIMOTHY 1:2-7.

As you read today's text you saw that this letter was written to a man named Timothy. Who was Timothy? Let's do some investigating. **Read Acts 16:1-5.**

Where was Timothy's hometown, and how did Paul first meet him?

What do we know about Timothy's family? If his mother was a Jewish believer and it says that his father was a Greek, what might this indicate about his father's faith? Also refer to II Timothy 1:5.

Scholars believe that Timothy might have been in his early twenties. What caused Paul to invite this inexperienced young guy to join him on what may have been a two-year missions trip?

Timothy made a radical decision. He decided to accept Paul's invitation and leave his family and hometown. What does this say about Timothy?

For the next seventeen years, Paul intentionally invested in Timothy.

- Paul by his words and by his example showed Timothy what it meant to be a servant of God, to persevere when things were difficult, to share the gospel, to stand for truth, and to be a courageous leader.
- Paul called Timothy his spiritual son and constantly prayed for him.

- Paul believed in Timothy and trusted him with special assignments. He sent Timothy to deliver his first letter to the church in Corinth (I Cor. 16:10-11) and his letter to the church in Philippi (Philippians 2:19-24). Sometimes he sent Timothy to groups of believers that needed encouragement.
- Paul had Timothy help him write at least six of his letters. (II Corinthians, Philemon, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians) It could be that Timothy did the scribing as Paul told him what to write.

Paul's investment in Timothy had significant impact. Timothy became a strong, selfless, trustworthy leader with a pastor's heart. In Philippians 2:19-23 (NLT) Paul says this about him. *"If the Lord is willing, I hope to send Timothy to you soon for a visit. Then he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting along. I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare. All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. But you know how Timothy has proven himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News."*

NOW LET'S GO BACK AND RE-READ TODAY'S TEXT, II TIMOTHY 1:2-7.



"Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News."



REAL LIFE APPLICATION

Identify a person who has invested in you and positively impacted your life. What was it about him/her that inspired you? What did he/she do that made you feel you were valued? What was it about him/her that caused you to be open to their counsel and input?

BRIEFLY WRITE about a specific example of how that person invested in you.

During your missions outreach, God will open many amazing opportunities for you to invest in others. It may be as you connect with people at your ministry site, as you work alongside a staff member, or as you participate in an activity with other members of your team. Your investment might be through words of affirmation and encouragement, by sharing your personal testimony, by serving with joy and enthusiasm, or by praying with someone. Don't let the opportunities escape you.

READ AND MEDITATE on the following verses.

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. I Peter 4:10

We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News, but our own lives, too. I Thessalonians 2:8

So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone – especially to those in the family of faith. Galatians 6:9-10

Is God inspiring you with specific ideas for how you can invest in others today? List them below. Conclude by asking God to give you the wisdom and power you need to carry out your ideas.

FAN THE FLAME

STUDY #3 • II TIMOTHY 1: 6-18



READ II TIMOTHY 1:6-12.

In study #2, Paul calls Timothy his son, expresses gratefulness for their ministry partnership, and affirms the positive qualities he sees in him. After laying this foundation, Paul now gives Timothy some strong, caring, heart-to-heart encouragement. He says, *"This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you"*.

What is a spiritual gift? A spiritual gift is a skill or ability that God, through the Holy Spirit, gives to each believer. Spiritual gifts equip us to accomplish a given ministry and serve others in the Christian community.

Paul doesn't specifically say what Timothy's spiritual gift was, but he does perhaps give a few clues in verse 8. *"So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for Him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News."* Timothy had the gift of courageously and passionately telling others about Jesus even when it meant giving up comfort. Because of this, he was such a valuable member of Paul's missions team. Now as Paul writes his letter, he indicates that the passionate use of the gift God had given Timothy had diminished. It wasn't the same. Instead of being like a white-hot flame, his passion had died down to being like a glowing coal.

At this time in history, Christians were hated and persecuted by the Jewish establishment. The gospel challenged their religious structure and control. There were arrests, imprisonments, beatings, and executions. Christians were hated and persecuted in cities and provinces where people worshiped heathen gods. The gospel challenged their idolatry. **Take a moment to read Acts 19:23-34.** And the Roman government had also begun to persecute Christians. Nero was the emperor of Rome. During his rule, a devastating fire swept through the city of Rome. It burned for an entire week. The people accused Nero of starting the fire. They said he had done so because he wanted to rebuild the city to his liking. Nero in turn, blamed the Christians for the fire. Christians were put in prison, burned, and torn apart by animals in the amphitheaters.* These were dangerous times. No wonder Timothy wrestled with feelings of fear and intimidation.

Paul then writes the words we find in II Timothy 1:7, *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."*

In what ways could fear and intimidation cause the flame of Timothy's passionate use of his spiritual gifts to diminish?

Paul says that fear and intimidation don't come from God; don't allow them to dominate. Then he reminds Timothy of three tools that will help him fan the glowing coals and cause them to once again become a white-hot flame.

1. **God's power** – We cry out to God, and he gives us supernatural power. **Read II Thessalonians 1:11 and Colossians 1:11-12.**

2. **Love** – Love for God and love for others pushes us past fear. **Read Ephesians 5:1-2**

3. **Self-discipline** – Fear and intimidation begin in the mind. Refuse to yield to them or allow them to control. **Read II Corinthians 10:3-5 and Romans 12:2**

READ II TIMOTHY 1:9-12 AND 16-18. How did Paul and Onesiphorus model what it means to not allow fear and intimidation to control us, but to passionately use the gifts that God has deposited in us?

REAL LIFE APPLICATION

READ ROMANS 12:6-8. List examples of spiritual gifts found in this passage.

With a spiritual gift may also come a specific passion. God may give someone the gift of mercy and with it a passion for helping orphans, a passion for ministry to those trapped in the sex trade, or a passion to work with the homeless. God may give someone the gift of teaching and with it a passion to teach in front of a church, a passion for teaching children, or a passion for teaching those in a recovery program. **What would you identify as a gift and passion that God has placed in you? How have you been able to use that gift/passion?**

On a scale of 1 – 5, how would you rate your current level of passion for living out the gift God has placed in you?



a glowing coal

a white-hot flame

What would you say are passion killers to which you personally can be susceptible?

Go back and review the three passion renewing tools found in II Timothy 1:7. In what ways can you see these tools being helpful as you fan your gifts and passions into a white-hot flame?

Take a few minutes to have a conversation with God about the gifts he has placed in you and your desire to passionately use them.

For Timothy, passion killers were fear and intimidation. Other examples of passion killers could be distraction, complacency, negativity, misguided priorities, unforgiveness, unresolved conflict, or discouragement.



A SOLDIER, AN ATHLETE, & A FARMER

STUDY #4 • II TIMOTHY 2: 1-7

.....
It's day four, and we're starting II Timothy chapter two. Let's jump into it with great expectation.

READ II TIMOTHY 2:1-7.

As Paul continues to speak words of encouragement to Timothy, he uses three different analogies: a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer. He doesn't describe a soldier and then tell Timothy what can be learned from that illustration. He simply says this. "Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand all these things."

Today we are going to do the same. We will examine certain aspects of the life of a soldier, athlete, and farmer. Then we will ask God, "What do you want me to learn from these examples?" and "How do I practically apply this to my life?"

TAKE A MOMENT to talk to God and ask him to speak to you as we go through this study.

ANALOGY OF A SOLDIER

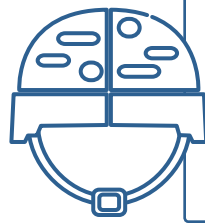
(v. 3-4) Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them.

Joseph Delgado helps lead the sports site in Nicaragua. In the past, he served in the Nicaraguan military. Here are some of his insights.

- In the army your life doesn't belong to you. You belong to the army. You recognize that you are always under the authority of the commander.
- Soldiers are trained to avoid distraction and focus on completing their assigned mission. Distracted soldiers lose the approval of the commanding officer because they fail to fulfill their duties, are not alert and ready to fight, and put their fellow soldiers at risk.
- The qualities of a good soldier are unconditional obedience, respect, discipline, and courage.

REAL LIFE APPLICATION

As Christ followers, what can we learn from the example of a soldier who pleases his commanding officer by not getting distracted from his military duties? In what ways might this apply to your life personally?

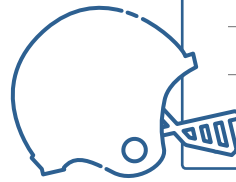


ANALOGY OF AN ATHLETE

(v. 5) *And athletes cannot win the prize unless they follow the rules.*

These are quotes from the Chicago Tribune (May 11, 2015)

- “The NFL slapped New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady with a four-game suspension because he used deflated footballs last season in the AFC title game against Indianapolis.”
- “The NFL came down hard on its biggest star and its championship team, telling Tom Brady and the Patriots that no one is allowed to mess with the rules of the game.”
- “Each player, no matter how accomplished and otherwise respected, has an obligation to comply with the rules and must be held accountable for his actions when those rules are violated and the public’s confidence in the game is called in question.” (Sent to Tom Brady by the NFL)



REAL LIFE APPLICATION

As Christ followers, what can we learn from the example of a talented athlete who is disqualified because he refused to follow the rules of the game? In what ways might this apply your life personally?

ANALOGY OF A FARMER

(v. 6) *And hardworking farmers should be the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor.*

- Being a farmer requires hard work. Farmers get up early in the morning and sometimes work late into the evening, especially in the spring when they are planting and in the fall when they are harvesting. They work in the sun, sweat, get dirty, and their hands become calloused.
- Part of the farmer’s hard work involves detailed and strategic planning. As he decides what he will plant, he must take into consideration his ag equipment, the soil conditions, the cost of seed and fertilizer, the current and projected value of the crop, and the potential profit.
- The farmer is willing to take a risk. He is not guaranteed that weather conditions will be favorable or that there will be sufficient rainfall.
- The farmer doesn’t have an immediate return on his investment of time, labor, and money. If he plants corn, he must wait five months before he will have a harvest. However, when harvest time comes, the farmer is filled with satisfaction. His planning, investment, and hard work were so worth it.

REAL LIFE APPLICATION

As Christ followers, what can we learn from the example of a farmer who works hard, and when harvest time comes, is filled with satisfaction? In what ways might this apply to your life personally?



UNASHAMED

STUDY #5 • II TIMOTHY 2: 8-13

READ II TIMOTHY 2:8-13

(v.8) *Always remember that Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David, was raised from the dead. This is the Good News I preach.*

Paul encourages Timothy to never forget that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. What if Jesus would have had a heart for the poor and marginalized, performed amazing miracles, taught captivating sermons, and suffered death on the cross, but wouldn't have been raised from the dead? Would there be Good News? **What makes the resurrection of Jesus essential to the Good News?**

In chapter 1, Paul also talked about the Good News. Read II Timothy 1:9-10. What other incredible aspects of the Good News do we find in these verses?

As Paul writes these words, he is chained in a Roman prison. He wasn't incarcerated because he had committed some horrific crime. He was in a prison cell because he loved people and unashamedly shared the Good News wherever he went. Paul's response to his suffering and hardship could have been anger and frustration. He could have said, "God, I have been faithful to share the Good News, so why are you allowing me to suffer?" Instead, with a smile on his face, he said, *"I am willing to endure anything if it will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen."*

READ ACTS 20:16-24. What inspires you and stirs your heart as you listen to Paul talk at a meeting with the leaders of the church in Ephesus?

READ II TIMOTHY 2:11-13 AND MARK 8:34-35. What are the rewards for those who are willing to die to their own dreams and desires and even embrace hardship for the cause of Christ and for the sake of the Good News?

REAL LIFE APPLICATION



How would you respond to someone who asked you, “What is the Good News?” Write a brief description in your own words. Feel free to also reference I Peter 1:18-25, II Corinthians 5:17-21, Romans 1:15-17.

Write about a time when the opportunity opened for you to share the Good News, and you did it.

What do you find to be the most intimidating or challenging about sharing the Good News? Are there settings in which you have felt resistance or hostility to the Good News – at work, in your neighborhood, at school, at the university?

In what ways does today’s study strengthen your resolve to unashamedly look for opportunities to share the Good News?

Take a few minutes to reflect on the following song.

The Cause of Christ - *Kari Jobe*

The only thing I want in life,
Is to be known for loving Christ.
To build his church to love his bride,
And make his name known far and wide.

For this cause I live, for this cause I’d die.
I surrender all, for the cause of Christ.
All I once held dear, I now leave behind.
For my joy is this, oh the cause of Christ.



ENTRUSTED WITH THE TRUTH

STUDY #6 • II TIMOTHY 2: 14-19, 23-26

READ II TIMOTHY 2:14-19.

Truth is a theme that is woven throughout the four chapters of II Timothy. In the New Living Translation, the word, truth, is used ten different times.

In 1:14, Paul tells Timothy, *“Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.”* Now, in today’s text (2:15), he emphasizes it again, *“Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.”*

When Jesus was on trial before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, shortly before his crucifixion, he said, *“You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”* Pilate then responded with this question, *“What is truth?”* (John 18:37-38)

What is truth? This is a question that is also frequently asked in our modern day, twenty-first century context. **If a neighbor, a fellow student, or a co-worker asked you for a definition of truth, what would be the first thing that comes to your mind?**

Let’s examine the following definitions of truth.

- That which is true or certain concerning any matter or subject, or generally on all subjects; real state of things; fact; verity; reality.* Truth is reality – the way things really are.
- Truth is eternal, constant, and unchangeable. Truth that existed when God created the world is still truth and will always be truth. One day each one of us will be judged by that truth.
- Truth is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God.** It reflects who he is. He is truth. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He doesn’t change like shifting shadows (James 1:17). Jesus embodied truth.

So, what are examples of truth that had been entrusted to Timothy?

- The truth of who Jesus is.
- The truth of the Gospel: man’s sinful condition, God’s love, Christ’s sacrifice, redemption through faith in Jesus, eternal life.
- The definition of sin – what is right and what is wrong.
- The truth of the abundant life we have in Christ Jesus.

Some believe that truth is relative. Each one can decide what truth is for them. Others believe that there are many truths which all lead to God. Some become revisionists, interpreting the truth to make it say what they want it to say. Satan constantly looks for ways to distort the truth. That’s why Paul said to Timothy, *“Guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you!”*

*webster-dictionary.org

**gty.org

Let's go back and read II Timothy 2:16-18. Here we are given an example of a couple of guys who had left the path of truth. What were these guys' names?

Instead of being diligent to know and guard the truth, they began to have "dialogue" and came up with an idea that they believed to be true but actually was false. What was that false teaching?

Paul compares their false teaching to an aggressive cancer. In what ways was their fake truth like cancer?

"Guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you!"



REAL LIFE APPLICATION

Paul's strong encouragement to guard the precious truth was not only for Timothy. It applies to each of us as well. Today, you are going to be able to practice.

READ AND ANALYZE THE FOLLOWING TEACHING.

God is a God of love and mercy. He would never judge people he created and send them to eternal punishment. At the end, everyone will be saved and will go to heaven. They cite these verses, Colossians 1:19-20, *"For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross."*

How would you respond to this teaching? Use the following scripture references as your truth-guarding tools.

Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23, Matthew 13:24-29, 36-43, 47-50, Matthew 25:31-46, I Corinthians 6:9-11, and II Thessalonians 1:6-10.

As we study about guarding the precious truth, it might raise this question. What should be my response when someone I know gets tricked into believing a teaching that is not true? Do I aggressively confront? Do I avoid talking about it and hope that somehow the person will recognize his error? II Timothy 2:23-26 has some amazing insights into how to handle the situation in a way that honors God.

After reading this passage, write down your thoughts.



READY FOR THE MASTER'S USE

STUDY #7 • II TIMOTHY 2: 19-22

II Timothy 2: 19, *But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and "All who belong to the Lord must turn away from evil."*

People can come up with their version of truth and what they want truth to be, but that will never change God's truth. God's truth is perfect and eternal. Every human who ever lives on this earth will be evaluated and judged by that truth. Paul says that is our foundation. On that we build our very lives.

On that foundation are two engravings. The first engraving: "God knows those who are his." People can fabricate their own version of what is true and believe lies, but they will never deceive God. The ones who walk in truth are his, and those who don't walk in truth aren't his. The second engraving takes us to the topic of today's study, "All who belong to the Lord must turn away from evil."

Many times when Jesus taught his disciples or the multitudes, he used simple, every day illustrations: a farmer planting seeds, a lost coin, a bride waiting for her groom, a man building a tower. As Paul explains the second engraving, he does the same.

(v. 20) In a wealthy home some utensils are made of gold and silver, and some are made of wood and clay. The expensive ones are used for special occasions, and the cheap ones for everyday use.

Let's bring this illustration into our modern day context. Think of a wealthy family that lives in your town. Let's imagine that they invited you to their house for a special seven course dinner. What kind of plates, glasses, serving bowls and utensils would they use for serving the meal?

Somewhere in a cabinet they may have old plastic bowls and empty margarine containers. They might use them to feed the cat or store things like soap or left-over paint, but they would never use them to serve food to guests.

In verse 21, Paul says, *"If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work."*

What does it mean to keep oneself pure and to have a life that is clean? How would you compare this to a life that is contaminated? (Romans 12:1-2, Philippians 1:9-11)

Paul then, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives us a three part strategy for keeping ourselves pure and clean so God can use us. (v. 21)

Part #1 – “Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts.” (1 Cor. 6:18, 1 Tim. 6:9-11, James 1:12-15)

- Lust is a powerful feeling of wanting something – an intense desire. It could be an intense desire for money and material possessions, position and control, recognition, illicit sex. If we allow these desires to control us, they will lead us into sin.
- Run, in this context, means to seek safety by flight.* Run like you would if a gang member was coming after you with a knife. Run with everything that is in you.

In Genesis 39:1-12, we find a powerful example of someone who ran from a situation that stimulated lust. Who was this person? What happened? How did this person respond?

Part #2 – “Pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love and peace.”

- Pursue means to follow in order to overtake or capture.** Like a soccer player who is running to get control of the ball, or a lion who is chasing a deer. Part one of the strategy is to “run from”. Part two is to “run to”.
- Go after God with all your heart. Spend time with Him. Be quick to repent. Take radical steps of obedience. Call out for God’s work of inner transformation.

Part #3 – “Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.”

- God never intended for us to live out the Christian life alone. We need the companionship of others.
- Be intentional about developing strong relationships with others who also want to be pure and live a life that is clean so they are ready for the Master to use. These are relationships of trust: where you can be honest, where you can share on a heart level and you are heard, where you can speak truth to each other, where you commit to hold each other accountable, and where you fight in prayer for each other.

Joseph kept himself pure, and God used him in amazing ways. Because of the false accusations made by Potiphar’s wife, Joseph was thrown into prison. But Joseph had God’s favor, and he was given a position of leadership in the prison. Later, God miraculously moved Joseph out of prison and made him second-in-command over the entire nation of Egypt. God gave Joseph wisdom to lead Egypt through a devastating, seven-year famine. During that time, Joseph brought his extended family to Egypt, and they were saved from starvation - a family whose descendants would later become the nation of Israel.

Take a few moments to reflect. If Joseph would have given in to lustful desires instead of running from them, how might his life story have been different?

REAL LIFE APPLICATION

Using this three-part strategy, what practical advice would you give to a friend who is being tempted with pornography or to engage in pre-marital sex? What practical advice would you give to a friend who is married but feels an attraction to a co-worker?

Using this three-part strategy, what practical advice would you give to someone who has been given the opportunity to significantly increase their income and move up the corporate ladder, has begun to dedicate long hours to their career, and as a result is becoming more and more disconnected from their church community?

*Strong’s Concordance
**merriam-webster.com



BUT YOU, TIMOTHY!

STUDY #8 • II TIMOTHY 3: 1-14

READ II TIMOTHY 3:1-14

As Paul began to write the words we find in chapter 3, he knew that his time on earth would soon be over. He felt a strong urgency to prepare his spiritual son, Timothy, for the reality he would face after he was gone. *“You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times.”*

The last days refers to the time from the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost to the time he returns to establish his eternal kingdom. (Acts 2:16-17) Timothy lived in the last days, and we in 2018 are living in the last days.

Read Matthew 24:36-44. Exactly when will the last days end? What words does Jesus have for us who are living in the last days?

Paul said to Timothy, I just want to make you aware that in the last days there will be difficult times. The difficulties he was referring to weren't natural disasters or economic crisis, but rather having to do with people and the “last days” culture. The last days will be difficult because people will ... and he goes into a detailed description. (v. 2-5)

- Slander others – malicious, false or defamatory statements
- Have no self-control – controlled by desires
- Cruel – brutal, no compassion
- Hate what is good
- Betray their friends – disloyalty
- Reckless – unconcerned about the consequences of actions
- Puffed up with pride – conceited
- Love pleasure (what makes one feel good) more than God
- Act religious but refuse to submit to God's transforming power
- Love themselves - self-centered, self-focused
- Controlled by the love of money - materialistic
- Boastful – speak with pride about themselves
- Proud - arrogant
- Scoff and make fun of God
- Disrespectful and disobedient to parents
- Ungrateful, complaining, never satisfied
- Consider nothing sacred
- Unloving
- Unforgiving – hold anger, bitterness, resentment

(vs. 6-9) In the culture of the last days, people will be open to hear teachers who explain away parts of God's eternal truth. These teachings will be appealing to them because they want God's favor and blessing but are unwilling to repent of their sin and with all their heart pursue Jesus and right living. They follow false teachers and their twisted teachings which allow them to give in to wrong desires without feeling guilty. These teachers are like Jannes and Jambres, the magicians who tried to discredit Moses with their magic when he spoke truth to Pharaoh.

Read Exodus 7:6-23. How did Jannes and Jambres try to discredit Moses?

Read Exodus 8:16-19. How was their deception exposed?

In the first 9 verses of II Timothy 3, Paul was very direct as he spoke about the culture of the last days. He then followed with some great words of encouragement.

“But you, Timothy!” You know the eternal truth that I have taught you. For seventeen years you have learned from my example. You know my life purpose – what motivates and drives me even when I face opposition and persecution. (v. 10)

“But you, Timothy!” You know what it means to trust God and walk by faith. You understand how to be patient and extend grace and forgiveness to others. You know that love for God and love for others is what must be our motivation in life. You have followed me in persevering even when it meant embracing suffering. You know how God was with me and rescued me when I was persecuted in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. (v. 10-12)

“But you, Timothy!” Even when living in the culture of the “last days”, remain faithful to the truth that you have been taught. Be assured that you can trust those who have been your teachers. (v. 14)

REAL LIFE APPLICATION

Take some time to reflect on the current culture of your school, the academic and social culture of your university, the culture of your work place, and the culture of your city, state, and country. Think about popular television shows, movies, news channels, and advertising. Now go back and read Paul’s description of the culture of the last days. Put a check mark beside each point that you would say also describes today’s culture. What thoughts and feelings come to mind as you reflect?

Read back through the “But you, Timothy!” paragraphs at the top of the page. Create a “But you ____!” paragraph using your name and statements that are applicable to you. Then be encouraged as you read your paragraph out loud to yourself.



“...live as people of light!”

Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

For once you were full of darkness, but now have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. (Ephesians 5:8-10)

You are the light of the world – like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:14-16)

THE POWER OF THE WORD

STUDY #9 • II TIMOTHY 3: 15-17



READ II TIMOTHY 3:15-17.

Timothy was privileged to have a mother and grandmother who invested significantly in his spiritual formation. (II Tim. 1:5) From his early childhood years they instilled the truths of the Bible in him. Picture his grandmother, Lois, holding him and telling him about how God created the world and stories of the men and women of faith recorded in the Old Testament. As he grew older, imagine his mother, Eunice, taking him on a nature walk and explaining how Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and how sin brought a separation from God. Visualize them participating in the celebration of the Jewish Passover and the sacrifice of a lamb as an atonement for sin. Then as Timothy became older, his mother, who was Jewish, would probably have enrolled him in classes at the synagogue where he would have studied and memorized the Law of Moses and become familiar with what the prophets had written about the coming Messiah. (Acts 16:1)

(v.15) You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.

On Paul's first missionary journey, he came to Lystra, Timothy's hometown. There, through Paul, God healed a man who was crippled and the door was opened for him to preach the gospel of Jesus. (Acts 14) Timothy heard Paul's teaching and became a believer.

In what ways would Timothy's knowledge of the Scriptures have given him the wisdom to believe Paul's message and put his faith in Jesus, the Messiah?

(v. 16a) All Scripture is inspired by God ...

- Inspired by God: "God-breathed". "The Greek term actually refers to expiration, breath being breathed out as one speaks."*
- *Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God. (II Peter 1:20-21)*

How much of the Bible is inspired by God? In your own words, describe what it means for the Bible to be inspired by God. How does this make the Bible different than other books?

*The Gospel Coalition, *Entrusted with the Gospel*, Wheaton: Crossway, 2010

REAL LIFE APPLICATION

(v. 16) *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.*

Paul reminds Timothy that the Bible is inspired by God and is powerfully useful in our lives in four different ways.

1. *“To teach us what is true.”* God’s Word reveals the truth about God, the truth about man, the truth about the world we live in, and the truth about the world that is to come.*

Read the following scripture passages and give a few examples of the Bible teaching us what is true.

(Psalm 116:5, Jeremiah 32:17-20, Colossians 1:15-17)

2. *“To make us realize what is wrong in our lives.”* God’s Word brings us face-to-face with our sinfulness, our brokenness, and our need for a Savior.

Read the following scripture verses and give a few examples of the Bible making us realize what is wrong in our lives. (Romans 3:10-18, Ephesians 2:1-3)

3. *“It corrects us when we are wrong.”* God’s Word brings us to repentance and forgiveness through Jesus. It begins to transform us - the way we think, our attitudes, and our actions.

Read the following passages and give a few examples of the Bible correcting us when we are wrong. (Ephesians 2:4-10, Colossians 3:1-15, II Peter 1:3-8)

4. *“It teaches us to do what is right.”* God’s Word becomes our guide, helping us make decisions and interact with others in a way that honors God and brings his blessing.

What do the following scripture verses say about the Bible becoming our guide?

(Psalm 119:105, Isaiah 48:17, Joshua 1:8)

II Timothy 3:17 says this about the Bible, “God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.” In what ways has time spent with God and his Word been an important part of being prepared and equipped to serve during this missions outreach?

In what ways has God spoken to you through his Word as you participated in the morning devotional times during your outreach?

Take a few minutes to evaluate your current Bible reading strategy. How is it working? Have you found consistency in daily Bible reading to be a challenge? What have you found to be most helpful in maintaining focus and avoiding distractions during your Bible time? Has it been helpful to have a Bible reading plan? Are there adjustments that you would like to make to your strategy as you go back to your home country?

WITHOUT REGRETS

STUDY #10 • II TIMOTHY 4: 1-8



II Timothy 4:1-5 *I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom. Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.*

For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.

Paul begins chapter 4 with a sense of seriousness and deep emotion, like a father who is giving his last words to a son or daughter. He then concisely summarizes what he wrote in chapters 1-3.

Imagine that you were with Timothy when he received Paul's letter. Timothy immediately opens the letter and you read it together. Now as you come to the words in chapter 4, verses 1-5, which sentence or phrase speaks to you and challenges you the most?

READ II TIMOTHY 4:6-8

Paul paused his writing and stared into space. He knew that his life would soon be over. But looking back over his thirty years as a Christ follower, he had no regrets. He then wrote, "My life has already been poured out as an offering to God". He compared his life to the drink offerings that were poured out as a sacrifice to God in the Jewish temple. Paul didn't give God occasional teaspoons full of the drink offering. Rather he lavishly and without reserve, poured out his life in obedience to Jesus. He didn't do this to somehow make himself right with God or to manipulate God into giving him prosperity. He poured out his life motivated by his love for Jesus.

Read Mark 14:3-9. How might Mary's lavish anointing of Jesus with a jar of expensive perfume be compared to us pouring out our lives in obedience to God?

"I have fought the good fight." I have not deserted my commanding officer but have completed my assignment. *"I have finished the race."* I have completed the runner's goal – to cross the finish line. *"I have remained faithful."* What awaits me now is the prize, the victor's crown that the Lord will award me on the day of his return. I have no regrets!

John graduated from college in 1999 with a teaching degree and began teaching at a local public school. He saw his job not only as a source of income, but also as an opportunity to impact students for the kingdom of God. In 2005, John and other close family members

started a small business. In the following years God grew their business into a company that sold their products to major retailers throughout the country.

In 2012, John and his wife, Nicole, felt a call to cross-cultural missions. As a step of faith and obedience they, along with their three young children, embarked on an eight week internship with an international mission organization during which they continued to pray for direction. While away, John’s company had record sales, confirming God’s amazing faithfulness to them. After completing their eight weeks, they returned to the States. They went back to work in the company, sensing that it was not God’s call at that time to enter into missions full time.

While John and Nicole are currently not on staff with a missions organization, they believe that God is calling them to use their company as a way to further the kingdom of God. John and Nicole generously support missions, both financially and through prayer. They also love organizing and leading short term missions teams. They continue to seek God’s direction for their lives and for how they can strategically support both missions and their local church. Their highest goal is to pour out their lives in service for the work of God’s kingdom. For John and Nicole, their position in life is not what matters, whether on the mission field or at home in the States. Their greatest desire is this, to leverage every resource and every talent they have for the

kingdom of God. One day, as John and Nicole near the end of their lives, they will look back at the life choices they made and will have no regrets.

READ MATTHEW 25:14-30.

Which of the three servants had no regrets after the master returned from his journey? Which one did have regrets? Why?

REAL LIFE APPLICATION

All of us, without exception, will come to the end of our life, just like Paul did. At that point none of us will want to look back and have regrets. Days, months, and years that have been lived will be gone. We can’t go back and change decisions we have made or how we chose to spend our time, use our abilities, invest our resources, or dedicate our lives. The time to live passionately for Jesus and to wisely invest what God has given us is now.

Take a few minutes to sit with God and ask him to help you objectively assess your life – your priorities, your passion and love for Jesus, your obedience to what he is currently calling you to do, your use of the abilities and resources he has given you. What is he speaking to you?

In Nicaraguan culture, life is divided into three ages. The first age is year 1-30, the second age is year 31-60, and the third age is 61 to 90. The third age is the term most used and refers to retirement.

- If you are in the first age, what are your life goals? What do you need to do to avoid wasting your life and to finish well? Write down two specific steps of action that you want to implement as soon as you return to your home country.
- If you are in the second age, step back from the busyness of life and look ahead to the finish line. This is the time to evaluate and recalibrate as needed to be on track for finishing well.
- If you are in the third age, what things do you still dream of achieving for the Kingdom of God during the years that remain? Ask God to inspire you with a plan for fulfilling those dreams.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.

(Hebrews 12:1-2a)



PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

STUDY #11 • II TIMOTHY 4: 9-22

READ II TIMOTHY 4:9-22.

Paul could be called one of the heroes of faith along with those whose stories are recorded in Hebrews 11. From the day Jesus revealed himself to Paul on the road to Damascus until the day he was martyred, he lived a life of faith and radical obedience to God. He took the Good News to foreign territories and cultures. He planted churches and raised up leaders. He didn't give up when those who opposed the gospel beat him with rods, stoned him, or threw him into prison. We would all see Paul as someone whose example deeply inspires us.

Now as we read today's text, we see a more human side of Paul. (v. 9) *"Timothy, please come as soon as you can."* Demas, a friend and co-worker, had lost his passion for Jesus and had deserted Paul. Two other trusted co-workers, Crescens and Titus had also left because of responsibilities in Galatia and Dalmatia. In addition to this, Paul had needed to send Tychicus to touch base with the church in the city of Ephesus. Only Luke, a faithful friend who had joined Paul on his first missionary journey, was still with him.

Put yourself in Paul's shoes. What emotions must Paul have been feeling as he wrote the words in verses 9-12?

(v. 11b, 13) *"Bring Mark with you when you come, for he will be helpful to me in my ministry." "When you come, be sure to bring the coat I left with Carpus at Troas. Also bring my books, and especially my papers."*

In a time when Paul was feeling lonely and abandoned, what were practical ways that Timothy could support and be an encouragement to him?

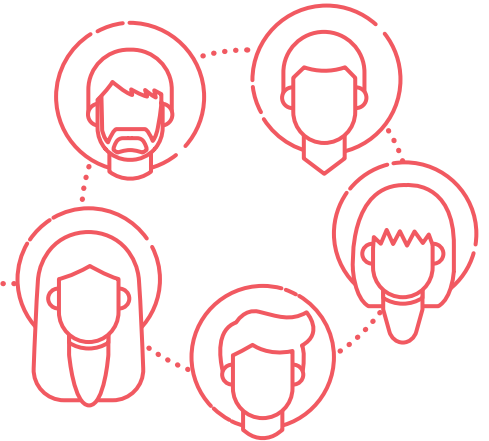
READ V. 14-18. ALSO READ I TIMOTHY 1:18-20.

When was another time that Paul was abandoned and felt alone? What was it that brought him encouragement?

READ V. 19-22. Then read Acts 18:1-3, 18, 24-26 to learn more about Aquila and Priscilla. Read Acts 19:21-22 to learn more about Erastus. Read Acts 20:1-5 to learn more about Trophimus. And read II Timothy 1:16-18 to learn more about Onesiphorus.

How important were co-workers and ministry partners in Paul's life and ministry?

Paul couldn't fulfill the mission and vision God had given him without a team of co-workers and ministry partners. He needed their friendship, their companionship, their encouragement, their God-given abilities and spiritual gifts, and their support. Together they prayed and sought God's direction. Together they dreamed and developed ministry strategies. Together they loved people and shared the Good News. Together they stayed strong when experiencing ministry challenges. And together they will be rewarded by Jesus on the day of his return.



REAL LIFE APPLICATION

Take a few minutes to reflect on your Students International missions outreach experience.

What are things that you admire about your site leader/leaders? In what ways do they inspire you?

How would you explain the vision and ministry strategy of your ministry site and the kingdom impact that it is having in the community?

In what ways did you have the opportunity to be an encouragement, assist with activities, and be a partner in ministry at the site?

In what ways can one encourage a site leader and continue to be a ministry partner after returning to his/her home country? Add your own creative ideas to the list.

- Pray for the site leader and ministry site.
- Stay in contact through Facebook.
- Affirm the positive you see in the site leader.
- Send an e-mail with a few words of encouragement.
- Empower the site leader by donating supplies that they need for the site.
- Sign up to become one of the site leader's monthly supporters.
- Occasionally send the site leader a small care package. Mail the package to a team that will be going to the country for an outreach.

- Come back to serve at the ministry site on another outreach.

- ---

- ---

- ---

Which of these ministry partner ideas excite and energize you?

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

– Helen Keller

