

Episode: Paul's Letters Series No. 17

Narrator: Timothy

Primary Scriptures: 2 Timothy 1-4

Story Summary: Paul's second letter to Timothy

Location: Roman Empire; Asia; Ephesus

Time: AD 30 Jesus crucified and resurrected; Pentecost; Holy Spirit arrives
AD 48 Paul's "famine visit" to Jerusalem; First Missionary Journey starts
AD 50 Council at Jerusalem; Start of Second Missionary Journey.
AD 53 Start of Third Missionary Journey
AD 67 Paul writes *Second Timothy*

Suggested Memory Scriptures: 2 Timothy 1:7, 9, 12; 2:15, 23-24; 3:1-4, 7, 16-17

Paul probably wrote the letter known as *Second Timothy* while imprisoned in Rome the second time. Paul thinks his life is near an end, although he believes Timothy has time to travel from Ephesus to Rome to be with him. In this letter he instructs Timothy to refute false teachers and to be faithful to God.

Throughout the letter Paul pleads for Timothy to remain faithful to him and to God. Paul opens the letter calling Timothy his "dear son" and reminds him of their early acquaintance on the Second Missionary Journey. In the first and fourth chapters, Paul gives names of people who have deserted him and those who have remained faithful to him. He even says that "everyone" in the province of Asia has deserted him.

Paul uses his life as an example that being an evangelist is not easy, but is full of hard work, self-discipline, and danger. With that caveat, Paul encourages Timothy that the price is worth prize. Not only will Timothy and Paul be rewarded, but others will receive eternal salvation because of their efforts.

Paul encourages Timothy to behave in such a way that he will be like an approved worker who correctly handles the words of truth. Then he will be able to refute false teachers who preach such falsehoods as: the resurrection has already come; it is unimportant how you behave; and false information that results in foolish arguments.

Timothy is warned to watch out for certain characteristics that mark false teachers and their followers. Paul's words in the beginning of Chapter 3 and continuing into Chapter 4 could lead modern readers to conclude they are living in the last days, just as Timothy probably thought he was. Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 are vital for modern Christians to remember. *All Scripture is God-breathed, not just some of it.*

2 Timothy 4:3 is one of the great warnings of the Bible. It shows the importance of sound teaching and sound listening. It is always tempting to find teachers who teach what we want to hear. Instead, Paul instructs us to find teachers who teach the truth.

Discussion Questions:

1. *2 Timothy* is probably the last writing of Paul that we have. How would you expect the last letters of someone to sound compared to ones written earlier in life?
2. According to 2 Timothy 1:7, what are some gifts the Spirit of God gives us? How are those attributes exhibited in your life?
3. How would you put 2 Timothy 1:9 into your own words? Does that change the way you feel about it?
4. Do you think 2 Timothy 3:1-5 also depicts the modern world? How can you keep from falling into the traps it describes? Which ones of those behaviors are you most tempted to follow?
5. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What does it mean that all scripture is God-breathed? Why is it important to know all parts of the Bible well?
6. Is 2 Timothy 4:2 applicable to all Christians or just to preachers?

Application Questions:

1. Write a letter to someone you love. Pretend like it is the last letter you will ever write them.
2. Who is the happiest person you know? Does that person exhibit self-discipline? Is that person loving? What attributes of theirs might you adopt for your own life?
3. According to 2 Timothy 2:10, why does Paul endure his suffering? How much suffering are you willing to endure so that others may obtain salvation?
4. What does 2 Timothy 2:15 mean to you? Can you handle the word of truth well if you do not know what is in the Bible? Does handling the word of truth well include behaving rightly?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to 1 Timothy 1:14, where does the Holy Spirit live? Should you consider that when you evaluate your choices?
2. How important is it to be right when you have a disagreement with someone?
3. How do you apply 2 Timothy 2:22 to your life? Do you think the evil desires of youth are different from evil desires of adulthood?
4. Do you think people who criticize Christians are mean or captured by Satan? (see 2 Timothy 2:25-26)
5. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Can you be well trained in righteousness unless you know the Bible well? How can you get to know the Bible better?
6. 2 Timothy 4:3-4 is probably a pretty good description of many people in the modern world. How can you desire to know the truth instead of just listening to the things you want to hear? Is this hard to do with the intrusion of social media?