

LESSON 7

Faithful Servants

Materials

- RBP transparencies 1, 9, and 10
- Lesson 7 case study from resource CD
- 2 Timothy 1:8 verse card from resource CD

Scripture Focus

2 Timothy 1:1–8

Key Verse

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim. 1:8).

Overview

The book of 2 Timothy was the last inspired epistle from Paul’s pen, containing his final thoughts to the Christian world. Paul wrote it with an awareness of his impending death. Today we will meet the writer (Paul) and the recipient (Timothy) and be introduced to the letter’s theme, faithfulness.

Topic

Faithful servants of God.

Theme

Faithful servants of God must be servants of faith.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will see the priority of faith in Christ to faithful service for Christ, and will evaluate what principles from this lesson will further his faithfulness at this time.

Outline

- I. Introduction (2 Tim. 1:1, 2)
 - A. Paul, the writer (1:1)
 - B. Timothy, the reader (1:2)
- II. Servants of Faith (2 Tim. 1:5)
- III. Servants of Faithfulness (2 Tim. 1:3, 6–8)
 - A. Paul (1:3)
 1. Serving faithfully
 2. Praying faithfully
 - B. Timothy (1:6–8)
 1. Stirring up the gift (v. 6)
 2. Shoring up the spirit (vv. 7, 8)

Getting Started

Zombies Are Out

For years college students have lacked adequate sleep, living like zombies or perked up with caffeine. Students have even bragged about their few hours of rest. But recent studies have shown that sleep deprivation is related to poor academic performance. So universities are trying to promote better sleep habits, some using slogans like, "Want A's? Get Z's." Adequate sleep is a prerequisite for academic success.

Ask: What are some prerequisites for being a faithful servant of God? What would be a catchy slogan to promote faithful service to God? (Questions 1, 2)

Searching the Scriptures

I. Introduction (2 Tim. 1:1, 2)

A. Paul, the writer (1:1)

Years before Paul wrote 2 Timothy, God had laid hold of Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road. And through the messenger Ananias in Damascus, He told Saul that he was to be an apostle to the Greeks and to kings, as well as to the Children of Israel (Acts 9:15). Saul, who is also called Paul, was an apostle of Christ by the will of God (Gal. 2:8). He did not appoint himself to that role, nor did any human authority appoint him.

READ: 2 Timothy 1:8. **ASK:** What did Paul mean by calling himself the Lord's prisoner? (Question 3)

Paul reminisced as he sat chained in prison. Note how many times memory is mentioned. Paul had memories of Timothy (2 Tim. 1:3), of Timothy's tears (1:4), and of the faith that Timothy and his forebears possessed (v. 5). Paul even wanted to stir up some memories in Timothy's mind (v. 6).

ASK: What faithful servants of God do you reminisce about every so often? (Question 4)

B. Timothy, the reader (1:2)

Timothy, whose name means "honoring God" or "honored by God," accompanied Paul during periods of his missionary journeys. Paul apparently led Timothy to Christ, probably during the visit to Lystra on the first missionary journey (1 Tim. 1:2). When Paul returned to Lystra on his second missionary journey, Timothy had such a good reputation that Paul recruited him to join the team (Acts 16:3).

Sometimes Timothy traveled with Paul, while at other times Paul moved on from a city, leaving Timothy behind to build up the believers (1 Tim. 1:3).

See 2 Corinthians 1:1, Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1, and Philemon 1.

Paul also would send Timothy to a church as his personal messenger (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Thess. 3:1, 2) or summon Timothy to join him (2 Tim. 4:21). Timothy, with others, accompanied Paul on his way to Jerusalem after the third missionary journey (Acts 20:4, 5).

Timothy was with Paul in Rome during his house arrest, or first imprisonment, when Paul wrote Philemon (v. 1). In fact, the two ministered together so often that Paul mentioned Timothy as the joint sender in six of his epistles.

Timothy and Paul were uniquely like-minded regarding their concern for ministry and for churches (Phil. 2:19–23). They formed an effective and faithful ministry team.

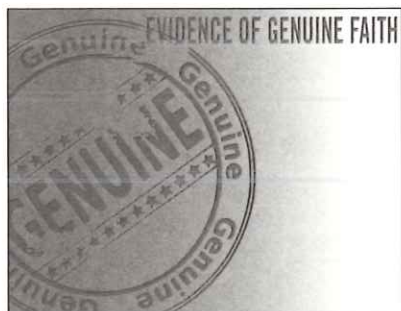
ASK: What are some other ministry teams, perhaps a husband and wife, who have worked well together for years through good times and bad? (Question 5)

II. Servants of Faith (2 Tim. 1:5)

READ: 2 Timothy 1:5. **ASK:** What was in Timothy, Eunice, and Lois? (Question 6)

The faith of Timothy; his mother, Eunice; and his grandmother, Lois, came to Paul's mind. Paul described their faith as an "unfeigned" faith. In English we refer to those who play a role on stage as actors. An actor pretends to be someone he is not in a situation that is not really his own. The Greek word for actor was "hypocrite," without the negative connotations that we place on the word. Paul's word "unfeigned" could be translated "unhypocritical."

TRANSPARENCY: Display transparency 9. **ASK:** What are some evidences that a person has a genuine faith? (Question 7)



Timothy's faith was a faith that was not just acting. His profession of faith was from the heart. It was sincere and genuine. He was not playing a role when he claimed to believe in Jesus Christ. Likewise, his mother and her mother before her believed in God sincerely. Timothy stood as the third generation, at least, of true believers.

True faith has always been the only acceptable beginning for a walk with God. Abraham believed God and, as a result, was accounted righteous in His eyes. The same has been true of everyone who has come to God since.

READ: 1 Corinthians 4:17. **ASK:** How did Paul describe Timothy, his beloved son? What description, if anything, could be more complimentary for Timothy? (Questions 8, 9)

Second Timothy focuses upon the subject of faithfulness to God. We must understand clearly that faith in God has to precede faithfulness to God. One

must exercise saving faith before he can faithfully walk with God. Timothy had faith and was faithful.

III. Servants of Faithfulness (2 Tim. 1:3, 6–8)

A. Paul (1:3)

Paul lived a faithful, though difficult, life for Christ. He suffered much persecution. But certainly when he died, the Savior greeted him with the coveted “Well done, thou good and faithful servant,” for he was faithful to the end. Paul’s faithfulness in serving and in praying are seen in this section of Scripture.

1. Serving faithfully

Paul had a heritage for which to be thankful. He learned about God from his ancestors, and now he was serving God as a believer with a personal relationship with Christ. It was a blessing for Paul to grow up as a Jew with knowledge of Jehovah rather than as a pagan who served false gods.

In other letters Paul told how he had been zealous for the things of God, even while he was still unbelieving so far as Christ was concerned. Even when he was kicking against the pricks and rebelling against the Savior, he did so ignorantly. He believed at the time that what he was doing was what God wanted done because it was in accord with his understanding of the Old Testament.

After Paul became a Christian, he continued to serve God with that same kind of wholehearted dedication that enabled him to say that he served God with a pure conscience.

READ: 2 Timothy 4:7. **ASK:** What value, if any, could you assign to Paul’s finishing his course and keeping the faith? (Question 10)

Paul left us a commendable example of serving God faithfully.

2. Praying faithfully

Paul prayed for Timothy without ceasing. Certainly that brought a response from God on Timothy’s behalf, and the knowledge of Paul’s prayers would have comforted the young man.

READ: 1 Thessalonians 5:17. **ASK:** What connection do you see between 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and 2 Timothy 1:3? How might knowing that you have a faithful believer praying for you affect you? (Questions 11, 12)

Paul had a great desire to be reunited with Timothy. Whenever he thought of being with Timothy, he remembered Timothy’s tears, probably the tears Timothy had shed when he and Paul parted company. Many in our culture think it is not manly to cry and that men should not show emotions. Here a real man of God cried. Paul also cried as he proclaimed warnings from God and wrote to correct an erring church (Acts 20:31; 2 Cor. 2:4). The elders of the church at Ephesus cried when they said farewell to Paul (Acts 20:37, 38). Jesus

Himself stood by the tomb of Lazarus and wept, and just before His arrest, He expressed agony with loud crying and tears (John 11:35; Heb. 5:7).

Christian men need to be strong in their stand for what is right and brave in warfare for Christ, but at the same time compassionate, tender, and gentle. Jesus Himself was known for His meekness and gentleness. In 1 Timothy 3:3 Paul instructed that the leaders of the church must be gentle (“patient”). Undoubtedly, the emotional ties between Paul and Timothy enhanced their mutual prayers for each other.

B. Timothy (1:6–8)

Paul, the elder warrior, knew the suffering and secret of faithfulness. The younger Timothy needed encouragement in this precious character quality. So Paul exhorted Timothy to stir up his gift and shore up his spirit.

1. Stirring up the gift (v. 6)

Paul knew that Timothy was aware of Paul’s second imprisonment. He also knew Timothy’s personality and tendencies. So he put Timothy in remembrance to stir up the gift of God that was in him by the putting on of Paul’s hands (2 Tim. 1:6). The gift that Timothy possessed is not identified in Scripture, so we cannot be sure what it was. It may refer to the office that he had been given, the ministry of service among the churches as in Ephesians 4:11, or it may have reference to the enabling that God had given him to carry out his ministry; that is, a spiritual gift, as found in Romans 12:6–8 and 1 Corinthians 12–14.

READ: 1 Peter 4:10, 11. **ASK:** What do these verses teach about faithfully ministering the gift God has given us? (Question 13)

Paul exhorted Timothy to stir up his gift as one would make a fire burn brightly by stirring it. Paul was not implying that Timothy had neglected the gift or let it die down. The present tense, “be stirring,” meant that he should continually be stirring up the gift and faithfully exercising it for the glory of Christ.

Timothy had this gift by the putting on of Paul’s hands. Paul had told Timothy in an earlier letter not to neglect the gift that was given to him by prophecy (1 Tim. 4:14). Some who had the gift of prophecy announced that Timothy had been appointed by God to a certain ministry or to have certain gifts for ministry. The group realized that God had ordained Timothy to serve Him. They accepted those prophetic words and identified with Timothy by laying hands on him (2 Tim. 1:6). The word “presbytery” is a Greek word meaning “elders.” Probably the elders of the church at Ephesus gathered around Timothy and put their hands on him, recognizing God’s call and identifying with him in the work of the Lord.

Timothy, remembering his gift and his ordination, was to serve Christ faithfully day after day.

2. Shoring up the spirit (vv. 7, 8)

Timothy’s inner spirit needed encouragement, and Paul encouraged him not to be afraid. Fear should not keep us from exercising our abilities and

fulfilling our ministry for Christ. In contrast to a spirit of fear, the Christian has been provided power, love, and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7).

God gives a spirit of power. His power works in and through the believer. God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly according to the power that works in us (Eph. 3:20).

READ: Ephesians 1:18–20. **ASK:** What two historical displays of God’s power illustrate His power toward believers, the power that works in us? **TRANSPARENCY:** Display transparency 10. **ASK:** What can’t take the place of God’s power when it comes to serving Him faithfully? (Questions 14, 15) Record learners’ answers on the transparency.

Timothy need not fear with such power on his side, and neither do we today need to fear.

The power did not stand alone. God accompanied it with love (v. 7). Love for God and the lost doesn’t come naturally. That kind of love flows from God through us. If we love ourselves, then we will stop serving God the moment any discomfort arises.

TRANSPARENCY: Display transparency 10. **ASK:** What is God’s servant able to do because he or she has God’s love? (Question 16) Record learners’ answers on the transparency.

Timothy had the love of God in him that would motivate him to love the lost even though it would cause him suffering.


God also gave a spirit of a sound mind, or self-control, self-discipline, or good judgment. Rather than being fearful in the Lord’s service, Timothy was to remember that God is in control. Rather than allowing fear to carry him away into timid withdrawal, he should exercise self-discipline and faithfully serve God.

TRANSPARENCY: Display transparency 10. **ASK:** Why is a “sound mind,” or a spirit of self-control and calm, needed in serving the Lord? (Question 17) Record learners’ answers on the transparency.

What was it that made Timothy fearful in his service? It was an underlying sense of shame. Jesus Christ said that it was possible to be ashamed of Him (Mark 8:38). Paul testified that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16), and he urged Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. Nor should Timothy be ashamed of Paul, the Lord’s prisoner. It would have been easy for Timothy to be ashamed of a man who was in jail and about to be executed. If Timothy were ashamed and fearful, then he would recoil from faithful service to Christ. If he were not ashamed or fearful, then he would boldly go forth in his ministry for Christ.

Should Timothy boldly live for, serve, and proclaim Christ, persecution would come his way. Notice the strong contrast found in 2 Timothy 1:8. Be

A Spirit for Service

Power	Love	Sound Mind
What can't replace God's power?	What does love provide?	Why is self-control needed?
		

not ashamed, but (strong word) be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. A hostile world brings affliction upon those who tell it the good news of Christ.

Paul did not hide those afflictions. He did not dupe Timothy into thinking all would be smooth when he served the Lord. He said to serve the Lord and partake of the afflictions that go with the gospel in the power of God. The gospel itself is the power of God (Rom. 1:16). As Timothy realized that the gospel was the power of God and as he proclaimed it, he would suffer in accordance with the powerful gospel that he proclaimed. Also, as he proclaimed it, God would use it to bring others to eternal life, and perhaps He would even use the suffering accompanying its proclamation to influence others for Christ. Finally, God might even miraculously deliver Timothy from certain sufferings, as He did with Peter and others, and in that way manifest His power.

Timothy was to take part in the afflictions of the gospel in accordance with the power of God—His power innate in the gospel, His power to save others even through the testimony of suffering saints, and His power to deliver suffering saints as He so chooses.

Use the case study for lesson 7 as desired.

Marks of the Faithful	
1. Forgives others as God forgives.	8.
2. Remembers and shares God's forgiveness.	9.
3. Seeks and supports godly leadership.	10.
4. Lives a genuine, godly life.	11.
5. Serves zealously in light of Christ's Return.	12.
6. Ministers thoughtfully and intentionally.	13.
7. Serves faithfully in the face of fears.	

Making It Personal

Statement of Faithfulness

Ask: If the apostle Paul were to write a statement describing your faithfulness, what would it be? What can you do to become more faithful in your service for the Lord? (Questions 18, 19)

Spirit of Fear?

Ask: Has a spirit of fear been holding you back from becoming faithful in serving God? If so, what are you afraid of? What do you need to focus on—God's available power, His love, or self-control?

If timid Timothy found the strength, love, and self-control to serve God faithfully in the midst of strife, then you can too.

Review Transparency

Use transparency 1 to review the Mark of the Faithful for this lesson: Serves faithfully in the face of fears.

Memory Verse

Distribute copies of the 2 Timothy 1:8 verse card from the resource CD. Encourage the learners to memorize the verse.

NEXT LESSON

Encourage your learners to complete lesson 8 before the next class.