

## 2 Timothy 1 • Providing the Right Support

### Introduction

I'm not necessarily knocking the fact that we have so many support groups and counseling options available these days, but the fact is that the areas of psychiatry, psychology, sociology and all the activities related to them are among the very youngest of sciences which really didn't exist even 100 years ago. I found myself asking, "What did Christians do before these things were available?" Well, the short answer is, "They turned to God's Word". It's truly amazing how many practical and actionable items are available in Scripture, making one wonder if there isn't a connection between the need for professional counseling and the lack of commitment to God's Word. Paul provides a personal example of how to provide the right support to others.

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,

<sup>2</sup>To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

<sup>3</sup>I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, <sup>4</sup>longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. <sup>5</sup>For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.

### [Read v.1-5]

**Q: What is Paul's present situation like?**

A: He's in prison in Rome, most likely facing martyrdom.

**Q: What spiritual idea is weighing the most on Paul's thoughts?**

A: According to v.1, "the promise of life in Christ Jesus". Paul is seeing the end of this present life coming but clings to the promise of the life to come.

**Q: And even though Paul's in prison and facing the very issue of life and death, what does Paul do on Timothy's behalf?**

A: Paul prays for him.

**Q: What seems to be the most important point of encouragement Paul desires to get across to Timothy?**

A: "For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you". (v.5) Paul reminds Timothy of those who have provided Timothy's spiritual heritage, both Paul and his relatives.

**Point:** Paul's personal example of support is to first and foremost be a praying friend.

**Application:** Some would think that the situation should have been reversed, that we should be reading a letter of encouragement from a still free Timothy to an about to be sentenced to death Paul. How does this speak to you about your own behavior in times of trial? How is this an example of being the same kind of Christian regardless of the circumstances?

<sup>6</sup>For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup>For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

### [Read v.6-7]

**Q: Is Paul suggesting that Timothy is losing his salvation?**

A: No, Paul is suggesting that Timothy is losing his zeal for the Lord, possibly his enthusiasm for the Lord's work.

**Q: How do we know this is probably a recurring problem with Timothy?**

A: Because Paul mentions it in both letters which were not written at the exact, same time.

*Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.*

1 Timothy 4:14

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**Q: What is the imagery Paul uses?**

A: Paul says that Timothy needs to stir it up as someone who would fan into flame the embers of a dying fire. It's there and available, but not very effective.

**Q: What is the source of one's "power and love and discipline"?**

A: Scripture teaches us that these are derived from the Holy Spirit.

**Point:** Paul isn't speaking about man's own efforts in v.7, but of how we've been changed by the Holy Spirit to pursue God's work in "power and love and discipline".

- **Power:** "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)
- **Love:** "and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:5)
- **Discipline:** "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

**Point:** Paul's personal example of support is to recognize and remind Timothy of his greater spiritual calling, of the wonderful gift he's received in Christ to be put to work on behalf of others.

**Application:** How well do you realize that part of personal encouragement is to hold others accountable for their gifts, office, and calling, to put them into proper practice?

**[Read v.8-11]**

**Q: We've noted that Paul was in prison in Rome. Where was Timothy at this time?**

A: From the information in Paul's letters it's believed that Timothy was most likely in or near Ephesus at this time.

**Q: Why might this be significant in the context of Paul's appeal, "do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me"?**

A: From Paul's letters we've pieced together that at this time there was a great falling away, especially in and around Ephesus.

**Observation:** In 1 Timothy, Paul repeatedly uses the phrase "some" when describing those who have fallen away:

- 1 Tim. 1:6 – "For **some** men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,"
- 1 Tim 1:19 – "keeping faith and a good conscience, which **some** have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith."
- 1 Tim. 5:15 – "for **some** have already turned aside to follow Satan."
- 1 Tim. 6:10 – "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and **some** by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
- 1 Tim. 6:21 – "which **some** have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you."

But in 2 Timothy, for which there is probably a significant span of time between the two letters, Paul uses "all" instead of "some":

- 2 Tim. 1:15 – "You are aware of the fact that **all** who are in Asia turned

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<sup>8</sup>Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, <sup>9</sup>who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, <sup>10</sup>but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, <sup>11</sup>for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.”

- 2 Tim. 4:16 – “At my first defense **no one** supported me, but **all deserted me**; may it not be counted against them.

The churches were turning from their faith, a kind of example of the final apostasy (“falling away”) to come in the Last Days.

**Application:** Regardless of how others around us behave, we’re still responsible for maintaining our personal faithfulness to both our walk and ministry.

**Q: What is the reality about suffering that comes about for the sake of the Gospel?**

A: When Christians suffer, they don’t suffer on their own but with Christ.

*that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;*  
Philippians 3:10

**Q: How does Paul reaffirm that such things are still in God’s control?**

A: In v.9 Paul states it comes about “according to His own purpose and grace”.

**Q: How does Paul tie this into both he and Timothy’s personal situation?**

A: Paul goes on in v.10 to explain that the Gospel has “abolished death”. In other words, people may die physically, but never spiritually. The so-called “worst-case scenario” facing them – death for serving Christ, is no deterrent at all.

**Point:** Paul’s personal example of support is to remind Timothy of his holy calling, that his life and work are striving for something far greater than mere man can achieve on his own.

**Application:** How well do you recognize that you should be encouraging others in regard to their overall calling and purpose in Christ? What might it indicate when such things are missing from a so-called “Christian” relationship?

<sup>12</sup>For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. <sup>13</sup>Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup>Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

**[Read v.12-14]**

**Q: Given the discussion to this point about where Paul was at the time of this letter vs. Timothy vs. the state of the church, what might be significant about Paul’s statement here?**

A: Paul affirms that what he’s asking Timothy to do, Paul himself has put into practice. Paul is suffering but not ashamed and trusting God to fulfill His intended purpose and calling through him.

**Point:** Some might say that Paul’s being in prison and the massive falling away of believers is proof that what was entrusted has failed, but Paul’s faith is not in circumstances but He who is greater than all circumstances and who will ultimately prevail regardless of how things temporarily look.

**Q: What does Paul ask Timothy to do on his part to guard “what I have entrusted to Him”?**

A: The keywords are “retain” (v.13) and “guard” (v.14), both given in reference to keeping God’s Word which is called “the standard of sound words” (v.13) and “the treasure which has been entrusted to you”. (v.14)

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**Point:** Paul's personal example of support is to remind Timothy of Christ the faithful Savior, that faithfulness is a two-way connection holding up His Word.

**Application:** We often attempt to console emotions, but how often do we also console one another with the fact that every Word of God will come true? How well do we encourage others even in the midst of trials and hardship to maintain obedience to God's Word?

<sup>15</sup>You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. <sup>16</sup>The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; <sup>17</sup>but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me— <sup>18</sup>the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.

**[Read v.15-18]**

**Q:** How do the men mentioned here fit in with Paul's overall teaching to this point?

A: Phygelus and Hermogenes are the worst examples, Onesiphorus the best. They're the contrast of putting into practice (or not) the things Paul has been speaking about.

**Q:** Is Paul simply "taking a shot" at those who forsook him in his time of need?

A: No, Paul is providing Timothy with an example of godliness by someone who, but all accounts, probably wasn't a pastor like Timothy. It would be a very powerful illustration of faithfulness and how it's possible for anyone to attain.

**Point:** Paul's personal example of support is to provide Timothy with a godly example illustrating that it's very possible to put into practice Paul's teaching.

### **Overall Application**

- *The first point is one of self-assessment: how well do you put these kinds of things into practice in the course of your own personal relationships? To what degree are these things reflected in the kind of encouragement and support you offer to others?*
- *The second point is more global pertaining to your church: what kind of an opportunity do you even have to interact with others on this level? The kinds of things listed here most certainly can't take place if the only contact you have with others is once a week on Sunday morning. There's an inference here that personal relationships extend well beyond formal meeting times.*
- *Finally, what is the encouragement here even in the face of a great falling away? (Hint: Maintaining the Word of God.)*