



LEADER'S NOTES: 2 TIMOTHY

LMAP 2026

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STUDY ONE: 2 TIMOTHY 1:1-7

FAN THE FLAME OF GOD

☞What things have influenced and/or shaped your life?☞

- ❶ As you read the opening of this letter, what do you notice about Paul's priorities as reflected in the way he writes?

Christ is central, in the first three verses he mentions Christ Jesus three times (in the letter Christ Jesus is specifically mentioned 12 times and Jesus Christ once, God mentioned x15, Lord x13, in all, God is mentioned in some form or other (Father, Son Spirit etc) x46, Paul's goal is to point to Jesus and to emphasise God's work and His power.

Paul is concerned that the message of the gospel is preserved and passed on to others, he highlights how faith has been passed on.

Paul prioritises prayer, and prays "constantly" night and day.

His role as an apostle appointed by Jesus and the authority and responsibility of his role is important as he brings the gospel message to the Jews, but particularly to the gentiles.

- ❷ Paul has spent many years intentionally partnering with and training Timothy in ministry, (see Acts 16:1-5, 17:10-15, 18:5, 19:22, 20:4; Philippians 2:19-22, 1 Corinthians 4:15-17) how does Paul see their relationship, and what does his affection for Timothy cause him to do?

Paul calls Timothy his son, he remembers him, he prays for him, he writes to him, he reminds him of important truths, encourages him, challenges him to stay firm in his faith and points him to Jesus.

- ❸ What do we learn about Timothy's upbringing? (See also Chapter 3:14-15 & Acts 16:1-5)

He was born to a Jewish mother and Greek father in Lystra. Although his father doesn't appear to be a believer and he wasn't circumcised as an infant, he has a faithful mother and grandmother who taught him the Scriptures from his infancy and when they came to faith in Jesus (when Paul first went to Lystra in Acts 14), passed that faith on to Timothy so that he is already a believer and a young man of faith when Paul returns to Lystra (Acts 16), he is then taken by Paul as a young man and follows Paul and is disciplined by him. Having grown up with both Jewish and Gentile heritage is significant for him as he ministers to both alongside Paul.

- ④ In verse 3 Paul reflects on his “ancestors” (sometimes translated “fathers” or “forefathers”) and in verse 5 Paul highlights Timothy’s mother and grandmother. What role have others, particularly parents, played in both Paul and Timothy’s faith?

Paul sees the faithfulness of his forefathers as shown in Scripture, and the faith passed down through the Scriptures, as fundamental for his own faith. We find out in Galatians 1 and Philippians 3 that he has been brought up in the instruction of the Scriptures. Faith passed down through his Jewish heritage is important to Paul. Paul highlights the faith of both Timothy’s mother and grandmother who taught him the Scriptures and shared the gospel with him, so faith passed down through the generations is also a feature for Timothy. One of the important themes of the letter is passing on the faith and careful handling of the Word of God. He uses language from the Old Testament indicating that the patterns shown in Scripture are fulfilled in Christ and then carried on through first the apostles and then believers. For example the commissioning of Timothy is referred to in language similar to Moses passing on leadership to Joshua, indicating that Paul sees this as a pattern for ministry.

- ⑤ Who has shaped your faith through discipleship, teaching or training, and how has this helped you to grow/ flourish/ serve? Who have been examples of faith to you and how has their faith encouraged you?

Hopefully, people will share encouraging stories of their faith journeys.

- ⑥ What is the “gift of God” that Paul says is in Timothy? (See also v. 14 & chapter 4:5 as well as 1 Timothy 4:11-14)

Some think that this is the gift of the Holy Spirit. However, it makes more sense that this is the gift of word based ministry into which Timothy is commissioned by the laying on of hands, as per 1 Timothy 4:11-14, and hence the instruction in 2 Tim 4:5 to fulfill his ministry. In verse 14 he calls Timothy to “guard the good deposit”, which is essentially the same thing.

- ⑦ What does Paul mean by “rekindle” or “fan into flame” (also translated: “stir up”, “keep ablaze”, “keep alive”) this gift? (See also v. 14 & chapter 4:5)

Some say that the idea of “re-ignite” means that Timothy may have been starting to slacken off or started to drift, so Paul wants him to fire up again and not lose sight of how he began. Or he may have been discouraged by the difficulties in Ephesus, and so Paul wants to remind him to look to Jesus and be encouraged by him. The word can also be translated as “keep ablaze/alive” so Paul may be urging him to persevere, to not give up, and continue in the power of the Spirit to fulfill his calling to share the gospel and teach the Scriptures faithfully.

What might this look like for us?

It can also be an encouragement for us to “hang in there” and persevere even when things are tough, or it could be a challenge to not fall away if we are not as on fire for God as we have been in the past. (See Revelation 2:3-4 which is Jesus’ message to the church in Ephesus where Timothy is ministering)

⑧ What are the characteristics of the Spirit that God has given Timothy (and us)?
How are these characteristics made evident in our lives?

Not a spirit of fear, but of power, love and self-control/self-discipline

God’s power enables us to stand firm in our faith even in circumstances when we might be afraid or ashamed, God’s power gives us the ability to do all he asks of us, we can do nothing of our own strength.

Love and self control are fruits of the spirit (as seen in Gal 5:22-23)

Love is also the distinguishing feature of disciples of Jesus (John 13:34-35)

⑨ What role does the Spirit play in “kindling” God’s gifts?

*Timothy cannot kindle the flame (or fan into flame) by his own power. It is the Spirit who empowers and who changes hearts and gives strength. It is the work of the Spirit to open our eyes to what is needed in our lives so that we go to him for help. in the following verse (v.8) Timothy is called to not be ashamed and to join in suffering “**by the power of God**”, not in his own strength or ability. At the same time, Paul is also calling him to use all his efforts to make sure he keeps looking to Jesus and living for Him.*

⑩ What helps/ hinders you in passing on your faith?

Have a good discussion here, some of the of the most common hindrances are feeling inadequate -like we don’t know how to explain things well enough, or fearing how people will respond, and potentially losing relationship with people because they don’t like what we have to say.

PRAY:

Thank God for those who passed on the faith to you.

Ask that the Lord, through the power of His Spirit would use us to pass on the faith to others.

✂ THIS WEEK: Consider sending a note or message to someone who has been important in your faith journey to thank and encourage them. ✂

STUDY TWO: 2 TIMOTHY 1:8-18

DO NOT BE ASHAMED

☞ What do you fear? Share a time when you have been afraid,
what helped you in your fear? ☞

- ❶ What is the “testimony about our Lord” (v.8)? (See also Matt 24:14; John 3:31-36; 1 John 5:9-12)

This is essentially the gospel. The disciples were called to be Jesus’ witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), they bear witness/ testimony to Jesus: to his life, death, resurrection and ascension. That he is the promised Messiah and that he will return as king and judge and establish his kingdom in a new creation.

- ❷ Make an outline of the gospel from what Paul says in verses 9-10.

God saves
By grace not works
A plan/purpose that God had from “before time began”
Through Jesus, who conquered death and brings eternal life
Calling us to a holy calling

- ❸ What things does Paul tell Timothy to not be ashamed of (v.8)?

-The “testimony” about Jesus
-of Paul who is in prison because of Jesus
*In a shame/ honour society, fear of dishonour is a big challenge.
Jesus died a shameful death on a Roman cross which is the ultimate dishonour, and his followers continue in that dishonour, even though neither he nor they were guilty.
Paul may not actually be a criminal, but he looks like one and carries the shame and dishonour of a criminal on death row, so associating with him brings shame and dishonour by association.*

Why might Timothy be ashamed of these things?

*This shame is ultimately a fear of humans, of what might happen if people find out what someone believes or who they follow
Paul urges Timothy to not be ashamed, and to go one step further he calls him into suffering and dishonour for the sake of Jesus, because Paul believes that Jesus is worth it, and that it is better to suffer (momentarily) in this life for Jesus than to suffer eternally for ignoring him (Matthew 10:28).*

④ In verse 12, Paul says very plainly that he suffers because of the gospel, and in verse 8 he invites Timothy to “share in suffering for the gospel”. What is Paul’s attitude to suffering, and how does the gospel itself shape this? (See also Matthew 16:21, Luke 24:26-27 & 45-47; 1 Corinthians 1:18)

Paul sees suffering as part of the Christian life. It is what Jesus did, he suffered at the hands of both the Jews and the Gentiles, he suffered the agonies of the cross, he suffered the full wrath of God for sin he did not commit and he suffered death all on our behalf, so in Paul’s mind, his own lesser suffering is nothing compared to what Jesus suffered, and Jesus showed that suffering leads to glory so Paul (as well as the other apostles) can endure suffering, because the eternal future is much more important than the hardship here and now.

⑤ What enables Paul to not be ashamed in v. 12? How might this help Timothy to not be ashamed? (See also v.5)

He “knows who he has believed”.

Jesus is trustworthy, He will fulfill his promises, He will be with Paul, He has power and will use it either to rescue Paul from situations or to bring him into eternal glory.

⑥ How do we respond to the call to suffer?

No one likes the idea of suffering! It is painful and uncomfortable, so in a pain/pleasure culture we gravitate away from suffering. However, Jesus calls us to not only endure it but to embrace it. The apostles were glad to be counted worthy to suffer for Jesus (Acts 5:41, 1 Peter:3:14,17-18; 5:10). They had an eternal perspective on suffering, no matter how long we might suffer here and now, it is nothing compared to eternity (2 Cor 4:17).

How do we prepare for suffering?

To prepare for suffering we need to accept it as part of God’s plan for us, and we need to be shaped in our understanding by the Scriptures which remind us of God’s power and sovereignty, of His greater plans and purposes, of the eternal reward won for us by Christ, and of His power and presence with us in suffering, and of the purposes he has for his own glory and our good as he shapes us to be like Jesus.

We also join with one another and care for one another and pray for one another and encourage one another that suffering for Jesus’ sake is of infinite value, and it is nothing compared with the great cost and suffering Jesus went through on our behalf.

⑦ What is the “pattern of sound words” that Timothy has received from Paul? (See also 1 Timothy 4:6-7; 6:3-4 & chapter 4:1-4) How is this linked with “what has been entrusted” to Paul (v.12), and the “good deposit entrusted” (v.14) to Timothy?

This is the gospel message, and sound biblical teaching.

❶ How is what has been entrusted to both Paul and Timothy “guarded”?

*Jesus and the Holy Spirit guard God’s Word. God’s Word endures forever (Matt 24:35)
God’s purposes are always accomplished through his word (Is 46:10-11; 55:11)*

Jesus is ruling and reigning, so he is in charge of his own testimony and he will make sure his purposes are accomplished and everyone who needs to be reached will be reached. He is building his church and nothing can stand against it.

This ought to be a great comfort to us, because God still uses our feeble attempts and even the times we think we have messed it up, or even when we say things that we don’t think are significant, but somehow God uses them to make a big impact in someone’s life. He is the one in charge of revealing himself to people and bringing them into his kingdom. We are privileged that he chooses to use us, in our weakness and fumbling and mistakes to participate in his kingdom plan.

❷ What does it look like to “hold on to” the pattern of sound teaching?

To keep making sure what we are listening to and teaching is God’s word and not our own made up version. We need to check everything with the Scriptures. We need to listen to the apostolic teaching and Jesus’ own words and not just think that because we’ve been around the bible enough that we know it, to know it we need to read it, and let it shape us and our thinking (not the other way round)

❸ In verse 15, Paul seems to equate people deserting him with distancing themselves not only from him but also from the gospel message. What might cause people to “desert” or “turn away” from the truth of the gospel?

This will be covered more in later studies (see 4:3)

*More often than not, people don’t turn away from the truth of the gospel because they think it isn’t true, rather, they don’t like what it demands of them because it goes against our sinful inclinations (“passions of the flesh”), and we would much rather pleasure and temporary enjoyment, than self denial and waiting for eternal satisfaction
In our hearts we may doubt that Jesus will do what he says he will do*

People may also fear being shunned because of their faith, this is much more severe in other cultures (and yet even though the cost is higher, they are coming to Christ!!), to lose relationship with family and former friends is a big cost

❹ On the other hand, Onesiphorus is not ashamed of Paul. What can we learn from Onesiphorus about faithfulness to the gospel? How does he embody 2 Timothy 1:7?

He is committed to Paul and unashamedly seeks him and therefore he is unashamedly committed to the gospel Paul preaches, he is willing to suffer, which is a high possibility for anyone linked with a prisoner of Rome

By the power of the Holy Spirit he shows great love for Paul and risks shame and imprisonment to care for him and refresh him.

12 What fears do you have that might prevent you from sharing the gospel with others? How does God's work in guarding the gospel empower you to share the "testimony about our Lord" with others?

See questions 8 & 10 (You can skip this one if you have already had these conversations.)

PRAY:

Thank God for the truth and hope of the gospel message.

Ask that the Lord, through the power of His Spirit, would continue to guard the message of the gospel and enable us to not be afraid of suffering for it but to proclaim it without fear.

✂ THIS WEEK: Consider sending one of our link missionaries a message of encouragement as they share the gospel with others cross-culturally. ✂

STUDY THREE: 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-13

THIS IS MY GOSPEL

☞ *What helps you to keep your focus on something important?* ☞

❶ After challenging Timothy to *rekindle* the gift of God, *hold on* to the pattern of sound teaching, *guard* the good deposit and *not be ashamed* in chapter 1, what does Paul urge Timothy to do? (v. 1-3)

Take what he has learned from Paul and pass it on to other faithful people (so he is to teach and train), he is also called to share in suffering in serving Christ.

❷ What might be our role in God's plan of continuing the work of the Gospel?

We are to grow in our knowledge and understanding of God's word and share it with others, and to disciple and train people in God's word so that they in turn will pass it on. As we have said, Jesus is responsible for his Word and for growing his church, but he calls us to participate with him in this, so we are to be obedient to him even though this will in all likelihood include suffering.

❸ Look at the three pictures that Paul uses in v. 3-6:
What things are highlighted about each one?

Soldier: doesn't get entangled in civilian pursuits, seeks to please the commanding officer

For a Roman Soldier, from the moment he joined the legion until his discharge as a veteran (meaning it was a lifetime of service), his existence was defined by discipline, hardship, routine and loyalty to Rome. Soldiers trained relentlessly. Rewards were minimal until completion of service, or victory in battle where military crowns were awarded and lucrative land and cash payouts were given.

The Roman military code included rules forbidding marriage and engagement in civilian occupations, and they swore an oath of allegiance to the Roman Republic (and Emperor)

<https://resmilitares.com/en/life-of-a-roman-legionary-discipline/>

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/blog/introduction-legion-life-roman-army>

Athlete: competes according to the rules

The road to Olympic glory has always been a hard one. It involves hard work, training, discipline and a focus on the goal - the Olympic crown (or Gold medal in the modern Games).

In the ancient games, athletes worked hard, they had to perform to a certain standard before they could even sign up, and before the games even started they were involved in rigorous training and competition of which they could be eliminated, particularly if they broke the rules which would lead to disqualification.

<https://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/shaps-research/2024/08/22/preparing-for-the-ancient-olympics-bull-wrestling-meat-only-diets-and-sex-bans/>

Farmer: hardworking, share of the crops

Farmers work long hours, starting before dawn and not finishing until sundown. Most of their work involves preparing the ground and sowing the seed, ensuring optimum growing conditions, (which includes fencing/ crop protection, fertilising and irrigation) and then there is the labour of harvesting, threshing and winnowing. Farmers must work hard and wait a long time for the fruit of their labours.

<https://factsanddetails.com/world/cat56/sub408/entry-6385.html>

<https://pgum.org/grow-and-learn/the-big-story/learn-the-story-of-jesus/understanding-jesus-cultural-insights/farming-and-agriculture-in-the-time-of-jesus/>

What things do they all have in common?

They all require hard work and single minded discipline with long term goals in mind. The long term gain/reward makes the hardship, endurance, struggle, sweat and pain worth it.

How do they help us think about living for Jesus?

Paul is wanting to encourage Timothy to think of living for Jesus in the same way soldiers, athletes and farmers think about their endeavours. Being willing to endure hardship and struggle knowing that the end goal makes it all worthwhile.

The difference for Timothy is that the eternal reward isn't elusive, it is guaranteed by Jesus who has already won the prize and who is with him and helping him and strengthening him through the trials and hardships. The end result for a follower of Jesus is so much more rewarding than a medal or a crop or a good retirement plan, it is the eternal presence of the Saviour, it is life forever with Jesus.

④ What might we find ourselves being distracted with, that tempt us to take our eyes off Jesus?

There are so many things!! Note social media as our biggest distractor. Sometimes good things that are gifts from God such as family or work or even ministry become distractions. Then there are temptations and “passions of the flesh”.

⑤ How might we be able to “work hard” without becoming legalistic?

We need to remember that we are saved to do good works, not that we do good works to be saved. So works and working hard needs to be our response to the salvation already won for us.

It is not by our own efforts that we are even able to work hard, it is through the strength that God provides. There is a tension here, we need to love the Lord with all our heart and mind and strength, so we do need to be conscious of our efforts, but at the same time it is also God who works in us. Eg. Colossians 1:28-29 - Paul uses all his effort, in the energy God provides.

⑥ What does Timothy need to “remember”?

Jesus Christ -risen from the dead.

The gospel is central

The resurrection is key

Paul calls it “my gospel” which isn’t different from what the other apostles teach (he makes this painstakingly clear in Galatians 1:11-24), this is part of the “pattern of sound teaching” that Paul has already charged Timothy to “hold on to” in 1:13

⑦ What helps us to remember what is most important?

The idea here is to generate discussion on how to keep the main thing the main thing.

⑧ Why would it be a comfort that the “word of God is not bound”? How might it encourage Timothy to persevere?

The idea of this is similar to Study 2 Question 8, just as Jesus “guard’s” his word and ensures the gospel goes out and grows the kingdom, now here, God’s Word is not bound, there is nothing that can stop God from accomplishing his purpose through his word. (Is 46:10-11; 55:11)

This is a comfort, because even when people oppose the gospel, or it looks like evil people are winning, God’s purposes cannot be thwarted, so Timothy can keep persevering because there is no barrier that God cannot cross. The defeat or dishonour of persecution or imprisonment is part of God’s plan to glory.

9 Why does Paul endure suffering and persecution? (v.9-10)

"For the sake of the elect that they may obtain salvation"

He wants to win the lost to Jesus, so he is prepared to go to any length so that people will hear the saving "testimony about our Lord" (1:8)

Paul has a heart for the lost, as CMS would say, he wants to see "a world that knows Jesus"!

10 How willing are you to "endure" hardship so that others might "obtain salvation"?

What are the costs of discipleship? Are we willing to entrust the consequences of following Jesus when it affects our career or where we might live or friendships or even our children and their education?

11 Look at the "trustworthy saying" in verses 11-13:
What do these statements communicate about Jesus?

Jesus died and rose again (something he does for us)

He is reigning and ruling

He is just (he must deal with sin)

He is perfectly faithful (Ps 89:33)

He achieves his purposes, which means that he initiates our salvation because he has planned for it, because he must fulfil all righteousness

What do they communicate about us?

We need salvation,

Our inclination is to deny him and to be faithless, and the righteous thing to do for those who deny him is to deny them (Matt 10:33)

We deserve death for our faithlessness

What hope is offered?

When we trust in Jesus we are bound up with him -we participate both in his death and in his resurrection

Enduring suffering leads to glory (we will reign with him)

He is faithful, and cannot deny himself (that is, he is faithful to his word and his purposes) so the just punishment for faithlessness (death) is borne by him and he upholds both his justice and his mercy by punishing sin and bringing us into relationship with himself

Paul's urgent concern for Timothy is that he be faithful in ministry, and the encouragement here is that Jesus is faithful, and His faithfulness is what enables Timothy's faithfulness.

PRAY:

Thank God for the faithfulness of Jesus and for the hope of the resurrection.

Praise God that the gospel is not bound, and that nothing can stop Him from accomplishing His purposes through His Word.

Ask that, strengthened by grace, we would be able to persevere, keeping our eyes on Jesus until the end.

✠ THIS WEEK: Consider sending a message to someone who might be struggling or suffering -encouraging them to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus or to remember the hope of the gospel. ✠

STUDY FOUR: 2 TIMOTHY 2:14-3:9

PRESENT YOURSELF

☞ What things do you have that are “only for special” occasions/use/purposes? ☞

❶ As you look at the whole of this passage, what are the temptations that Timothy is faced with in his own life and the problems that he faces in the Ephesian church?

In his own life: temptation to engage with: irreverent babble (empty speech), controversies, youthful passions, selfish inclinations, also the temptation to not be careful in the way he handles God’s word

In the church: quarrels, false teaching, hypocrisy, ungodliness, wavering faith, waywardness, myths, people lead astray by passions, opposition to the truth, folly

❷ What do 2:14-18 and 23-25 show us about the power and importance of words, especially for someone who is a Christian leader? (See also Ephesians 4:29 & James 3:1-10).

Words matter:

Words of truth bring life, health and restoration leading to repentance, truth, faith and unity

Opposition to the truth, quarrels, controversies, lies, & irreverent babble lead to ungodliness, disunity, disqualification from faith, falling away, following passions

God’s Word matters:

It needs to be rightly handled, its truth needs to be taught

Leaders and teachers are particularly responsible for handling God’s word well, so the church is built up and grace is given, they will be held to account for their words (James 3:1). James is particularly concerned that opposing things come from our mouths (cursing and blessing) and this shouldn’t be so.

How does what we see, read and hear influence what we think and say?

What we prioritise and spend the most time listening to will shape our minds and this will come out in what we say. What we choose to listen to matters. This is a place to challenge how much time we spend on social media letting algorithms shape our thoughts and opinions rather than God’s word.

Why do our words and teaching of the truth matter?

People’s salvation and eternity is at stake. Words are a life or death situation, and it is God’s Word that is life giving.

③ How has the Ephesian church been contaminated? What image is used to describe this contamination?

They are being influenced by false teaching, which leads people to ungodliness. Their hearts are sick - Matt 15:18 (What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart and this defiles a person)

Gangrene is a type of *tissue death* caused by a *lack of blood supply*, most often caused by an infectious agent.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gangrene>

④ What is Timothy to do? (see 2:15, 16, 19, 22-23 & 3:4)

The church needs cleansing from the infection....

He is to get rid of the "infectious agents": avoid irreverent babble, depart from iniquity, flee youthful passions, have nothing to do with ignorant controversies, avoid "such people"

He is to bring God's Word to the church: he is to rightly handle God's word, and teach patiently and kindly, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

Look at 2:19-22

The language Paul uses in this section recalls the building of the temple (1 Kings 7:10) and the sacrificial system of worship there, where unclean people and implements (such as bowls etc.) needed to be cleansed by sacrifices and washing (Leviticus 14:52, Numbers 19:17-19).

⑤ Timothy is asked to "present himself" to God (v.15), and in this section, people are likened to "vessels" (i.e. pots, bowls, utensils etc.) and the call is to be cleansed so that their use goes from "dishonourable" to "honourable". Now that Jesus has come and done away with the temple and its sacrifices, how is this cleansing achieved? (See Ezekiel 36:24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Hebrews 10:19-23, 1 John 1:7-9, Revelation 7:13-15)

God himself will cleanse his people and give them a new heart, and give them his Spirit

Jesus washes, sanctifies and justifies his people

Jesus blood opens the way for us, he sprinkles our hearts clean

Jesus blood cleanses us from sin and he forgives us and cleanses us from unrighteousness

We are washed by the blood of the Lamb

❶ What will be the result of this cleansing? (v.21)

*Set apart as holy, and useful to the master, ready for every good work.
Instead of being overcome by passion -pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace.*

What might it look like to be “ready for every good work” (v.21), and to “pursue righteousness” (v.22)?

guilt taken away, no shame, burden lifted, wanting to respond to God’s grace by living for him, loving God and wanting to please him rather than ourselves

❷ What will characterise the “last days” (3:1-7)?

Selfishness, opposition to God, abuse, disobedience, arrogance, pride, recklessness, etc.

❸ What does it mean that people will “have an appearance of godliness” but “deny its power”(v.5)? (See also Matt 23:27-28)

The problem is that people who have all the characteristics as mentioned above, will dress themselves up and make themselves look respectable and infiltrate the church. These are the ones Timothy is to avoid. They are essentially hypocrites who might to all intents and purposes look like a follower of Jesus, but have no understanding of grace or the gospel, so lack the power of the resurrection and the Holy Spirit in their lives.

❹ How is this a problem particularly for the church?

We can’t see people’s hearts, and sometimes their words can have an element of truth that makes them believable. Jesus spotted them straight away and called them “whitewashed tombs” - full of uncleanness and death. They are masters of disguise and “worm their way” or “creep” in to the church

Who do such people prey upon? (See 1 Timothy 5:13 & 2 Timothy 4:3-4)

The literal translation is “little” women, which has been translated as “weak willed”, “gullible”, “idle” or “foolish”. The type of people described in 1 Tim 5:13 as “idle, going about from house to house, gossips, busybodies who talk nonsense and say things they ought not to”. And lest you think Paul is making a generalisation about women (he isn’t, he is targeting a very particular type of person) or speaking only to women here, 2 Tim 4:4 tells us that people (both men and women), will listen to what their itching ears want to hear to suit their own passions.

What makes them easy prey?

*“Creeps” (who can be men or women) prey on such people because
They are overwhelmed/burdened by sin so they are anxious and guilty
They are lead by their passions -they want their own way and want to keep doing what
they want seeking quick fixes, and going from one “solution” to the next without
discernment (and they have no discernment because they don’t know the truth)
and even though they are always “learning” they never actually come to a saving
knowledge of the truth, they just don’t understand the gospel*

❏ Why are they likened to “Jannes and Jambres” (4:8) ?

Jannes and Jambres are not actually named in the Bible, it is extra-Biblical sources from Jewish tradition that identify them as the magicians who oppose Moses. They (at least initially) looked like they could do what God was doing through Moses in the first few plagues (See Exodus 7:8-13, 22; 8:7, 18-19; 9:11). Interestingly, they can copy the actual plague, but they cannot undo it or take it away, they just contribute to making it worse! They looked like they had a similar power to Moses, but it was just an imitation, and it soon became very apparent that they had no substance behind them as the plagues went on, and they were just as affected as everyone else and their magic ran out, while God’s power went from strength to strength. The magicians opposed Moses who was there to take God’s people out of slavery in Egypt. They were trying to keep the people of God enslaved.

The “creeps” or false teachers/hypocrites who “worm their way” into church are like these magicians, they are keeping people enslaved to sin, preying on their guilt, and not giving them true hope or salvation, they just make things worse. They don’t understand the gospel so they cannot lead people to the truth, they also need to be corrected with gentleness so that they may come to repentance leading to a saving knowledge of the truth.

❏ How do we keep from being “gullible” and enslaved like these women? (See chapter 2:24-25, John 8:31-32, Galatians 5:24-25, Colossians 3:1-10, 1 John 1:8-9)

We need to trust Jesus to deal with sin, The gospel shows how sin is dealt with and the burden is lifted, thus sin and guilt no longer overwhelm us, -if we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us.

*Instead of being led by our passions, we are to flee from them and pursue righteousness, to set our minds on things that are above, where Christ is, and put to death or crucify our earthly passions, and keep in step with the Spirit
God’s word when taught faithfully in gentleness “leads to a knowledge of the truth”
and the truth sets us free, Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life. If we know the truth, we have less chance of being deceived by a liar.*

PRAY:

Thank God for the cleansing blood of Jesus, who washes away all our impurity by his own perfect sacrifice on the cross.

Ask that, by grace, we would be ready to be used by God.

Pray that we would pursue righteousness and not be led astray by irreverent and empty speech.

 THIS WEEK: Consider sending a message to someone in leadership to share how their words may have encouraged you to pursue righteousness or come to a knowledge of the truth. 

STUDY FIVE: 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-4:22

PREACH THE WORD

☞ *What is the most useful thing that has been passed on to you?* ☞

- ❶ As Paul has ministered alongside Timothy, how has he been an example to him?

Paul's whole life and attitude has been shared with Timothy. Timothy has travelled with Paul and seen him in many different circumstances including persecution and suffering and under varying degrees of pressure so he has heard Paul's teaching and witnessed his prayer life. Timothy has seen Paul's character, his purpose, conduct, faith, patience, endurance and love.

Timothy co-authored a number of letters with Paul (2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Philemon) and so he saw Paul's love and concern for the people he was writing to, and would have been able to tell if Paul was being consistent or not in how he spoke and how he behaved. Timothy's time with Paul wasn't fleeting, it was over many years, so he would have seen Paul on both good and bad days! And it is under pressure when people's true character shows, he would have seen Paul having disagreements and how he resolved conflict, and he would know of Paul's mistakes and whether he was repentant or not.

Who has been an example to you?

Hopefully group members will be able to share positive examples of godly consistent humble people who have shown them Jesus by their words and actions.

Who are you an example to?

Don't just name a couple of people... ask some questions to challenge people about what their lives look like...

Are our lives of a caliber and consistency that continually point people to Jesus?

What if we make mistakes? Is our repentance visible and reflected in changed behaviour? What are we modelling to others, especially those who are with us long term and see us when no one else does?

- ❷ In 3:11-13, Paul again, sets up the expectation of persecution as he remembers his own suffering (For an account of what happened at Antioch, Iconium and Lystra see Acts 14), and in 4:10-18 he continues to describe his suffering. How does the pattern of suffering in the Old Testament and in Jesus offer hope to Paul? (See Psalm 17:8-14, 22:12-21, 34:17-19, Luke 9:22, John 8:31-38)

As you can see this is a repeated theme for Paul in this letter and it has already been discussed in previous weeks. The goal here is to see how Paul's mindset has been shaped by Scripture and this is reflected in his attitude and the eternal hope he expresses (especially in v.18) The patterns Paul has seen in scripture of people seeking

refuge in the Lord, and God rescuing. Paul also sees the suffering of Jesus leading to his glory as a pattern to follow and reflects on how this is fulfilled in his own life. See also Hebrews 12:1-2.

③ How does what he says in 3:12-13 connect with 3:6-9 and 4:3-4? What hope from the story of Jannes and Jambres might be an encouragement for Timothy in suffering? (3:9)

All these passages refer particularly to those within the church ("creeps" and "imposters"), acting hypocritically and leading people astray (as well as being led astray themselves) because they do not trust or uphold God's word. Paul notes that Jannes and Jambres eventually were shown up for what they really were, their falsehood was revealed, they could not get away with their deception forever. The hope in this, is that false teachers will not get away with their lies, that truth will be uncovered, which will either lead them to repentance or Jesus will deal with their rebellion.

④ In contrast to the ungodliness of the last days, what encouragement and exhortation does Paul give to Timothy in 3:14-4:2 and 4:5,? (See also 1:6, 2:24-26)

Paul expects Timothy to stand out as being different.... "But you" (3:14, 4:5)... Timothy is to remember what he has been taught (and from whom he has learnt it, i.e. trustworthy people) and therefore hold fast to God's word, be trained by it himself and to train others with it. He is responsible to Jesus for how he lives (4:1), he is to endure suffering, fulfill his ministry, and keep his head clear.

⑤ What is the origin and purpose of the Scriptures? What are the implications of this?

All Scripture, is breathed out from God himself. This recalls creation when God speaks and brings forth life (Gen 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26,28,29), and when he breathes life into humans (Gen 2:7). God's power and his purpose come through his word. This means that everything God says will be accomplished because he has all the power and authority to do this, and that everything in all creation is subject to Him.

The purpose of God's written word is to make people "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (3:15), this means that all the Scriptures point to Jesus, and reveal not only who the Saviour is, but why we need him.

So therefore, the Scriptures are powerful, trustworthy, true, and reveal God's character, his purposes and his promises.

⑥ How does God's Word equip us for a godly life?

God's word is useful for encouraging, teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that people will not only come to a saving knowledge of Jesus, but are also equipped to serve him and live for him, and show his character in the world.

How ought the scriptures shape our own life and that of our church?

It should be central to all we do, and be what shapes our mission, our character, our mindset and our actions,

⑦ How has God's word encouraged or strengthened you, and how have you been corrected or reproved by the Scriptures?

Here is a chance to be vulnerable with our groups and show what humility, teachability and repentance might look like, as well as an opportunity to show how God's word is powerful to change us and shape us.

⑧ What does it mean to be ready "in season and out of season" to preach the word? (See also 1 Peter 3:13-16)

This is essentially being able to bear witness in our lives whenever we are called on to the love of Jesus and his saving work. This could be when things are going well or when things are difficult, often people are more likely to ask questions when things are not great because they see how differently our attitude is because of the hope we have. Note also the need for patience in teaching (4:2), as well as kindness, gentleness and respect (see 2:24 & 2 Peter 3:15).

⑨ What is one change you can make today that would deepen your investment in the Word God has breathed out for you?

I'm sure people will come up with some great, creative suggestions. How will you follow up with them about how the changes are going or if they have been implemented?

⑩ In 4:6-8, Paul prepares for his death. How does what he say here (especially v.7) relate with the illustrations he used in 2:4-6? What is Paul's hope?

Paul uses the same language of a soldier (I have fought the good fight), athlete (I have finished the race) and farmer (I have kept the faith, that is, he has sown the seed of God's word, he has been faithful in ministry to tend and care for those in his care), and so now he anticipates the promised reward, all the hardship and sweat and tears of his life in service to Jesus will pale in comparison to being counted as righteous (not because of his own actions, but because of what Jesus has done) and he will be brought safely into Jesus' heavenly kingdom.

⑪ In each chapter of this letter Paul has named two people who have turned away from or been opposed to faith in Jesus. Why might it be encouraging for him (and Timothy) to name 14 people at the end of his letter who are active in their faith and ministry?

It is discouraging when people turn away and are opposed to Jesus, and yet this is a reality that Paul acknowledges and grieves. However, even when Paul is cold and lonely in prison, there are people who are an encouragement to his heart because they are continuing firmly in their faith and ministry, living faithfully for Jesus. As someone who has spent his life bringing people to Jesus and nurturing and discipling them in their faith, it is a joy and encouragement to see them walking faithfully as per Philippians 4:1, Colossians 2:5, 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, Philemon 1:7 & see also 3 John v.4.

⑫ Looking back over the whole letter, what has encouraged you and challenged you?

PRAY:

Thank God for his Word which makes us wise for salvation, and which is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

Ask that God would equip us to be ready in and out of season to preach the word.

Pray that our church would be shaped by God's word to love Christ, live for him, and unashamedly proclaim salvation through him.

☞ THIS WEEK: Consider sending a message to someone who has been an example to you in faith, and to someone who you would like to encourage in faith. ☞