

2 Timothy Study Notes

By James West

Background Information

For expanded information, refer to the background information for 1 Timothy. Paul wrote this letter from prison in Rome after being arrested for the second (and final) time. The date was possibly around A.D. 66, shortly before his martyrdom in A.D. 67. Nero had burned Rome to the ground in A.D. 64, and was blaming the Christians for it. As Paul was a prominent leader of the 'sect', it is likely that Paul was high on the list of suspects, and his movements reported to Rome. Now, as a hated prisoner in Rome, he still writes with a note of triumph. It seems that he has already made his first defence before the Roman judicature by this time (4:16), and was forsaken by his friends in that event. Due to this, and other circumstances, he is quite alone. He desires Timothy to come and visit him before his death, and writes with a deep sense of urgency.

Chapter 1: Exhortation to Boldness

(v. 1) Timothy is reminded again of Paul's apostleship. He is not just a sincere and caring man. He is indeed an apostle – a sent one – and so his writings must be recognised as coming from God. To be 'in Christ Jesus', Paul reminds Timothy, is to be a partaker of the promise of eternal life. It seems that Paul is picking up almost where he left off in his previous epistle to the younger man, where he dwelt on the promise of eternal life, and the living God. What greater motivation to faithful service, than to be reminded of the glory to come?

(v. 2) The greeting is almost the same as that in the previous epistle, with the difference that Paul calls him 'my dearly beloved son'. How tenderly ought we to express our care to those that we labour among in the Lord! Our desire for them all should be to enjoy God's grace, mercy, and peace.

(vv. 3-4) The remembrance of Timothy's kindred spirit brought great joy and comfort to Paul's lonely heart as he sat in that dark prison. As if to strengthen the bonds of affection between them, Paul relates his own example of untainted service to God, and then points out that Timothy also displays unfeigned faith. The life of the younger man was a great cause for thankfulness to well up in the apostle's heart. Paul prayed for him night and day. Is there anyone that you pray for like that? He greatly desired Timothy's company, and remembered Timothy's tears, probably recalling their last parting. Now, if Paul held Timothy so dear to his heart, how does the Saviour hold us to His heart? And do we give him cause to joy, and Timothy did to Paul?

(v. 5) What better way to stir up Timothy to exercise his gift and to inspire him to devout living than to remind him about his godly mother and grandmother? If you have had a godly father or mother, or a godly mentor, you can thank the Lord for them, for it is in God's mercy that He gave them to you, to encourage, nurture, and inspire you. Simple gratitude to God will observe these things, and show us what we owe Him in return.

(v. 6) The memory of his grandmother, his mother, his own faith, and the gift bestowed by the laying on of Paul's hands was all designed to stir Timothy up to put it gratefully to use. Paul was

instrumental in the imparting of the gift, and so it was appropriate that Paul should exhort him to continually revive its use. He earnestly desires Timothy's success in ministry, and so is unwilling to let him lapse in his usefulness. What was the gift? It was, no doubt, a spiritual enablement for the ministry that God had called him to. We ought not to think that usefulness in any capacity is our own doing. That is to glory as if we had not received our abilities. Neither are we to neglect the use of our gifts. To do so is ingratitude. See also the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30.

(v. 7) It does not seem, however, that simple laziness was Timothy's battle, but that it was rather a battle against fear. In such a heathen city as Ephesus, it would have required no small courage to evangelise, or to oppose the false teachers. Persecution across the empire was hotting up at this time, and we know that there was never a shortage of evil men to cause trouble for the first missionaries of the Gospel wherever they went. What better man to inspire courage in Timothy than the Apostle Paul, writing from prison, awaiting the day of his execution, and yet undaunted by fear? Persecution was no new phenomenon to Timothy, but the temptation to shirk the more confrontational aspects of the ministry must have been a constant pressure.

Paul shows that God has not given us the spirit (attitude) of fear, but of power, love, and of a sound mind. Not only may the word 'spirit' refer to an attitude, but it may also refer to the Holy Spirit. Maybe a deliberate ambiguity is intended here, for if we have the Spirit of God, then it only remains for us to walk in the power, love, and sound mind that He provides. The incapacitating attitude of fear does not come from God, and is not part of the Spirit-filled experience. If we know that God will give us the mind and strength needed for His work, then we will willingly submit to it, looking diligently for His grace (Hebrews 13:6).

Note that love is here presented in contrast to fear; i.e. if we love God, we need not fear man (see also 1 John 4:18). Likewise, Timothy needed not to fear man if he would be animated by God's love, walking in His power, and of a sound mind. This sound mind seems to be similar to the heart and mind that is kept in the all-surpassing peace of God in Philippians 4:6-9. It is the state of being *in one's right mind*, and also refers to a calm vigour of mind (*The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Bagster). It is essentially the state of having one's mind stayed on God (Isaiah 26:3).

(v. 8) Since God has made provision for Timothy to boldly bear witness to the truth of the Gospel, then he ought to do so unashamedly (see 1 Timothy 6:13). There was also a temptation to shrink back from being identified with Paul in any way, so as not to be incriminated with him in the work of the Gospel. God's power was readily available, in order that Timothy might face any opposition in the cause of the Gospel.

(v. 9) Further reasons are here given as to why Timothy – and indeed all of us -- ought to stir up our God-given abilities (see verse 6), namely: that our eternal salvation is secure, and that we are called with an holy calling; that we are not called according to our own goodness, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was granted to us in Christ by the mind of God, even before the world was created – showing that we owe our service to God.

(v. 10) Further reason (see verse 9): Our purpose in the scheme of grace has been so clearly defined in these last days through the appearing of Jesus Christ. We who live in these last times have been privileged to see God's plan of eternal salvation for mankind carried out by Jesus' death and resurrection.

(vv. 11-12) Impressed by the weight of his own calling, Paul explains the importance of his work to Timothy. Paul's deep understanding of the grand scheme of salvation, and of the believer's calling in Christ Jesus served to explain why he was willing to suffer. Furthermore, that which sustained Paul through his troubles was his understanding of God's dependability. He knew that God would not disappoint his expectation of eternal glory and immortality. Not only this, but Paul's labours had been for eternal interests, and he could trust that he would receive appropriate rewards in the day of Christ. It is quite clear that Paul relates these things about himself, in order to inspire Timothy.

(v. 13) It is imperative that preachers hold fast to the form (pattern) of Scripture's sound (healthful) words. We are not to come up with anything new and ingenious. We are to simply trace the very pattern of what God's own Spirit has breathed. Paul showed that the right qualifications for studying and teaching God's Word were faith and love (see 1 Timothy 1:14 & 19 and 6:11). We know that the man of God must hold the mystery of the faith in a good conscience, and so it becomes evident that faith and love summarise the character of such a man. Paul further states that these qualities are only possible because of our precious Saviour, Christ Jesus.

(v. 14) Referring back to the pattern of sound words (verse 13) Paul instructs Timothy to 'hold fast'. To put it another way, Timothy was not to let go of the truth at any cost (Prov 23:23). Only by walking in the Spirit could he preserve himself against error.

(v. 15) Some negative and positive examples are now cited to encourage Timothy to remain faithful. There had been a mass turning away from Paul in Asia minor, and Phygellus and Hermogenes were possibly leaders in the apostasy. These failed to exemplify the very character qualities that Paul was seeking to uphold in this first chapter (pure conscience, faith, boldness, love, faithfulness).

(v. 16) Onesiphorus, on the other hand, was an example of exactly what Paul was exhorting Timothy to do. Onesiphorus had diligently searched for Paul, and found out where he was imprisoned. The testimony Paul gave of him was that '...he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.' Timothy was already aware of how Onesiphorus had diligently ministered to Paul in Ephesus.

Questions from Introduction and Chapter 1

1. The _____ of Timothy's _____ spirit brought great joy and _____ to Paul in his loneliness.
2. Godly parents or _____ are God's _____ to you, in order to encourage, _____, and inspire you.
3. We can only be _____ to God because we have _____ our abilities from Him. We should not _____ the use of our gifts, for to do is _____.
4. *The incapacitating attitude of _____ does not come from God, and is not part of the _____ experience.
5. *'A sound mind' refers to the state of being _____, and also refers to _____.
6. That which _____ Paul through his troubles was his _____ of God's _____.
7. *The right _____ for studying and teaching God's Word are _____ and _____.
8. _____ was an _____ of exactly what Paul was exhorting Timothy to do in chapter 1.

Chapter 2: Exhortation to Spiritual Self-Discipline

(v. 1) Turning very deliberately to Timothy, the Apostle commands him, 'Be strong'. A believer must decide to 'be strong', in order that he might stir up his spiritual gifts, set aside fear, love others, have a sound mind, partake of persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, hold fast the form of sound words, adhere to the truth, and stand faithfully beside those who are suffering for the cause of Christ.

Spurred on by the faithfulness of God, and the testimony of others, Timothy is commanded, 'Thou therefore, my son, be strong...' But this can only be done in the grace (undeserved help) which is in Christ Jesus. Praise God, it is possible to be strong in Christ's grace! When a believer starts depending upon himself and his own wisdom and goodness, he will soon fall in a heap.

(v. 2) Travelling with Paul, and sitting under his teaching in many places, Timothy had probably heard more of Paul's teachings than anyone else. And moreover, because of those 'many witnesses' – those who had sat and listened with him, observing Timothy's professed faith and commitment to the Gospel and to Paul -- a great obligation and necessity was laid upon him to practice and preach everything that he had learned. The courage and strength of others was contingent, humanly speaking, upon Timothy's own strength and courage in Christ. Let no one claim to be an island, or despise the fact that his life is an example for good or evil. We cannot blame others for the pressure of this responsibility. It is sovereignly laid upon us. 'If those who hold influence over others fail to lead toward the spiritual uplands, then surely the path to the lowlands will be well worn. People travel together; no one lives detached and alone' (J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 19).

With all his heart and might, Timothy was to pass on the baton of truth to others. He was to train faithful men, for faithful men will be faithful to teach others also. A spiritual leader may at times say to himself, 'Why should everyone's eyes have to be on me? Why should I be set forth as an example? The strain and the pressure is too great. Why can I not live in obscurity, minding my own business, away from the heat and pressure of the public eye, and people-problems? The antidote for Timothy to guard against such an attitude was to turn 180 degrees, throwing himself wholeheartedly into shaping others lives for the glory of God.

(v. 3) It is to be assumed that ministering to others is a battle, but along with that struggle will be all the grace necessary to carry out the task. The Christian soldier must endure hardness. That is, he must persevere through afflictions, persecutions, distresses, psychological pain, and discomfort. It is a battle for godliness – an agonising battle for godliness in himself and others. We are reminded of Paul's words in 4:5: '...endure afflictions...' By acknowledging God's sovereignty in afflictions, the believer who feels weakened and even distressed can nonetheless be strong: 2 Cor 12:10 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.' A good soldier will keep going in the face of opposition, but an irresponsible soldier will lose sight of the task, and will become recreant to his trust.

(v. 4) In verses 4 to 6, Paul uses illustrations from three occupations of life, to exhort Timothy to single-mindedness, self-denial, and hard work in his service to God.

First, we see the example of a **single-minded soldier**. If we are busily engaged in spiritual warfare, occupying ourselves with living for Christ and others, then we will not be entangled with

unnecessary activities. The appointed purpose for every Christian (not the least, every minister) is to please the One Who has chosen us to do battle for Him in this world.

(v. 5) Second, we see the example of a **self-denying athlete**. Paul repeatedly refers to the athletic world when applying truth to his readers. Here he refers to the self-discipline involved. There must be a denying of our own selfish inclinations, and a resolute determination to do what pleases Christ alone. This is no small requirement. For every believer, a militant pursuit of godliness must become an all-consuming, life-consuming occupation. This is not to say that all must be pastors or foreign missionaries, etc., but all must fulfil their God-given capacities, battling for godliness in themselves and others around them, and saying 'no' to their own natural inclinations. God will reward those who have warred according to God's revealed will in the Scriptures, not pleasing themselves or deviating from His commandments.

The athlete must play according to the rules of the game. In New Testament times, athletes would compete for the privilege to wear a wreath on the head, referred to as a 'crown'. There are no shortcuts to the reward. He cannot cut corners and cheat. In the spiritual contest, God is not only sees the outward man, but he also sees the inward man, and the heart-motives. The Holy Spirit must be allowed to bring the whole man into conformity to the exacting requirements of God's athletic arena.

(v. 6) Third, we see the example of a **hard-working farmer**. If a minister will work hard in give himself wholly to the work that God has given to him, he will see great rewards in his own life. He will be the one to reap the greatest benefits from his toils. He will enjoy the eternal rewards that Christ will give him at the judgement seat. He will enjoy the wisdom gleaned from his own study of the Scriptures. He will experience the fruit of the Spirit in his own life. He will experience the abundant Christian life, because he gives himself wholly to it. To be sure, his ministry will be a blessing to others, as God surely intends it to be, but God will see to it that the man himself enjoys the spiritual and eternal benefits of all his efforts.

But notice that these rewards come to the farmer who *works*. He must work the field. It is not enough to throw in the seed. He must first plough the ground. He must also water the seed, and protect the plants from insects and diseases. He must maintain his machinery, study the weather patterns and seasons, and a hundred other things in order to be successful in his work. It is hard work. Working hard is the difference between being successful and being an utter failure in the ministry. So it is with every Christian. If we apply ourselves to knowledge, and cry out for wisdom, and seek for God as for hidden treasures, and walk with Him every step of the way, then we will see fruit in our lives. If we just try to get by, however, then we shall see little or no fruit at all.

(v. 7) 'Consider': or 'perceive with the mind, think about, ponder' (Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary). This is similar to what we find in 1 Timothy 4:15, where Paul commands Timothy to meditate upon what the Apostle is saying. The obligation is laid upon every minister to seriously consider the need for single-mindedness, self-denial, and hard work in the ministry. Truly, the Lord will give understanding about these things to the man of God who cries out for it.

(vv. 8-9) The veracity of the Gospel is based on the resurrection of Christ. When believers are tempted to be discouraged in the work that God has called them to do, let them remember that the power of the Gospel they preach is the same power that raised Christ from the dead. This was why

Paul was willing to suffer for the Gospel. He was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for he knew that it was the power of God to deliver all men from sin, Hell, and the grave. Yes, Paul was imprisoned as if he were a criminal, 'even unto bonds' – possibly meaning that he had chains around his wrists even as he penned the letter. But just as he had committed the keeping of his soul to the Saviour (1:12), he had absolute faith in the message of the Gospel, knowing that it could not be contained by man's devices, and would penetrate all the strongholds of the Wicked One, and would spread like seeds in the wind to the dark reaches of the empire, despite what the Roman government might do to stop its progress.

(v. 10) Paul's deep desire for the spiritual welfare of men, and his persuasion of the power of the Gospel to saved and transform lives propelled him onward in the cause of Christ. Neither stripes nor imprisonments could stop him, for being convinced of the power of the Gospel, he had committed himself to the publishing of it, so that, were it not for human weakness, one would think the apostle was hard-wired to an incessant ministry of reconciling souls to God. He knew that God had chosen him to reach the chosen with the saving message. He himself was enveloped, saturated, and consumed with that very desire – '...that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.'

(vv. 11-13) Here are some changeless truths for the believer to take hold of. Note that these are mentioned in the context of persecution, and are to bolster Timothy's courage in the face of suffering, showing him that Christ is faithful, and that the hope of the believer is certain. The first two statements describe the genuine believer, and the second two describe the unbeliever.

1. 'For if we be dead...' The believer has died with Christ, and will certainly live with Him in glory forever. Union with Christ makes a believer dead to the law, to sin, to himself, and to the world. The fruit of this is seen in his life of self-denial (see verses 4 and 5), and in some cases, martyrdom.
2. 'If we suffer...' In chapter 3:12 we read: 'Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' The Christian must accept the fact that the world does not appreciate the truth of Christ and the Gospel. At a fundamental level, the world hates the followers of Christ, and the true God. When a believer manifests the fruit of godliness, the world sees it and hates it (John 15:24). They would rather humble the followers of Christ, than repent of their own prideful ways. To one degree or another, true Christians will be persecuted, by Satan, and by the world. Though we are dishonoured by the world, God will greatly honour us, and we will reign with him (Rev 3:21).
3. 'If we deny him': It is a characteristic of the unsaved to deny Christ.
4. 'If we believe not': Although the unbeliever will not acknowledge the truth of God, it does not change the fact that Jesus Christ is alive, that His kingdom will come, and that He will reward the just and punish the wicked. God's truth and His program will march right on, while unbelievers will be consumed by the machinery of His justice.

(v. 14) Preachers are to warn both publicly and privately against the error of being entangled in word battles. This involves confronting those who are actively doing so. There are those who want to twist the Scriptures, removing them from their context. There are those who want to foist or force an incorrect meaning upon a word in the Scriptures. If a person knows and studies the Bible with a good and an honest heart, he will be able to compare Scripture with Scripture, and he will not have a

point to prove, for he will allow God's words to stand in their own light, and to speak for and interpret themselves. Hymenaeus and Philetus (v. 17) were probably among those whom the apostle was thinking of when he wrote this. They were subverting the hearers, convincing some that the resurrection of the saints had already happened, and turning them away from the believer's hope. There are those who will approach the Scriptures with a haughty arrogance, claiming to be teachers, but being blind to the whole context of Scripture.

Never forget the following golden rule of Bible Interpretation: 'When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense. Therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages, and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise. God, in revealing His Word, neither intends nor permits the reader to be confused. He wants His children to understand.'
(Author Unknown)

A man recently said to me that he disagreed with a preacher who was too firm about what the book of Revelation teaches. This same man confessed that he did not agree with the concept of the millennium, and the idea that many of the events of Revelation were yet future, seeing that Christ proclaimed, 'It is finished!' when He hung on the cross. His premise was a faulty understanding of what Christ meant when he spoke those words. I told him that I believed most of the book of Revelation to be future, and that I was firm about what I believed about it, and how I preached it! It is not wrong to earnestly contend for the truth. Earnestly contending for the truth is what had landed Paul in prison. He was earnestly contending for the truths of the Gospel. What Paul was addressing here, however, was a battle which involved the twisting of Scripture's words and meanings, simply because of some point that one wanted to prove, or some perverse attitude they had, or some deep-seated pride. Yes, there is a battle to fight (v. 4), but we need to know what spirit we are of if we are going to fight in that battle. We see that Christ was very efficient with his words when he dealt with perverse minds. He was straight to the point.

(v. 15) 'Study': to *use speed*, that is, to *make effort, be prompt or earnest, to give diligence, to labour, or study* (see Strong's definitions). 'The word contains the notion of persistent "zeal"' (Guthrie, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, Rienecker & Rogers) The preacher will not be able to stay on the right path in the ministry, unless he deliberately sets about doing so. 'If any man please God, it will be as the result of deliberate intention and a careful life' (Barnes). 'Study to show thyself approved' does not only mean that a pastor will devote his time to Bible study, reading resource books, and preparing for sermons, although it certainly includes that. He will pay attention to his walk with God, to his own character, and to every aspect of marriage, family, and ministry. He will think carefully about his work, and he will plan deliberately. He will meditate upon his responsibilities, and give himself wholly to them (1 Timothy 4:15).

In contrast to those who twist God's words to the destruction of themselves and others, the faithful student of the Bible must 'rightly divide' the words of Scripture. That is, he must cut a straight course. The expression 'rightly divide' can refer to a farmer who ploughs straight furrows in his field. It can also refer to a stone mason who squares his stone to the right shape. The preacher must interpret the Scriptures correctly. To do so requires that he maintain a close walk with God, and interpret the Scriptures carefully and honestly.

(v. 16) We must keep our distance from those who disregard the sound words of Scripture – those who want to continue to sprout off their own notions, crossing the boundary of reverence toward the truth (profane speech), and whose talk is so much empty noise (literal meaning of ‘vain babblings’). After rebuke has been given (verse 14) and disregarded, they are not to be talked to any longer (Proverbs 14:7; 26:4; 29:9), for they will only grow worse and worse. In Titus 3:10 we are told to reject such people. In Romans 16:17 we are told to mark and avoid them.

(v. 17) Anybody who continues to listen to these vain talkers will find themselves being affected by their words. Like a canker (a cancer or gangrene), it will eat away at their vital organs (spiritual health). Two individuals are mentioned as examples of such heretics. Hymenaeus is mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20, but Philetus is not mentioned anywhere else. It seems that they believed there to be no future resurrection of the saints, asserting that it had already happened. In teaching this, they led some astray from the faith. This does not mean that they lost their salvation (for one cannot lose salvation), but that they were never saved, and were led away from what light they had once understood.

(vv. 18-19) It may have seemed a surprise to some to see others departing from the truth, but only God knows the hearts of men (see Numbers 16:5), and the salvation of the redeemed is the sure foundation that cannot be removed or eroded. Still, there ought to be a vigilance and an earnestness on the part of onlooking Christians to flee from error and sin when they see it in others (see Numbers 16:26; Isa 52:11). For a Christian, departing from sin and from doctrinal error is a matter of honouring and reverencing Christ, Whose name he bears.

(v. 20) Paul here uses an illustration to show that some professors are false, and others are genuine. Some are honourable, and some are dishonourable. The silver and gold vessels are for admiring, drinking or eating from, or containing precious items. We may surmise that the items of wood and earth are those that are used for cleaning of vessels, or washing of one’s hands, or for containing food scraps, etc. Today, one would not expect that the compost bucket should be kept as spotlessly clean as a teacup or a breakfast bowl. Non-genuine professors are basically ignoble in character and origin, and inwardly they are contaminated with sin. Genuine believers will be characteristically more noble of character, and therefore honourable. However, Paul slightly shifts his emphasis in order to give instruction to believers.

(v. 21) If believers will purge (cleanse) themselves thoroughly from the company of the dishonourable vessels (see verse 16, and the comments on that verse), then they will be useful for the work of the Lord. Notice that the Lord sovereignly removed Judas from the company of the other disciples before he went to the cross, thus removing any encumbrance to their development in spiritual growth (John 13:10; 15:2-3). Drinking vessels would have been kept separate from a foot-washing basin, for instance. Notice the results for a believer who separates from unwholesome company: (1) He will be a vessel unto honour. (2) He will be a sanctified (consecrated and purified) vessel. (3) He will be useful to the Lord, just as silver cutlery kept clean is fit for the master of the house. (4) He will be ready for whatever the Lord wants him to do. Note Proverbs 13:20. We must not forget another provision that God has made to thoroughly equip a man for whatever God would have him to do: the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:17).

(v. 22) The believer is to run from every kind of temptation. It is growth in grace that helps us to leave the sinful lusts of the flesh behind, and to go on unto maturity in the Christian life. This is not

to say that mature believers don't have severe battles with the lusts of the flesh. But the habit of a mature believer ought to be to turn away again and again from the temptations of the flesh and the world. The course of a serious believer is 180 degrees in the opposite direction to which an unsaved person is headed. The unsaved person pursues personal gratification, but the spiritually minded believer intentionally pursues godliness. It is not an accidental or haphazard approach to living the Christian life. It is a determined, purposeful, intentional pursuit after Christlikeness. Notice that while the disciple of Christ is fleeing one thing, he is pursuing after another. These are two dynamic words in the Greek, and they demonstrate the whole-hearted, intense, single-minded, and earnest effort that we are to put forward in our day-by-day struggle for victory. Notice the various elements of this pursuit, which are opposite to the attitudes imbibed by Hymenaeus and Philetus:

- Righteousness: The breastplate of a righteous life (both *living* and *walking* in the Spirit) will safe-guard us against youthful lusts. It goes along with a good conscience – a conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ, and kept tender by obedience to His commands.
- Faith: Unbelief is the opposite of this, and is at the root of every defeat in the Christian life. It is by faith that we are saved, and it is by faith that we receive every good thing that God wants to do in our lives.
- Charity: This is the first fruit of the Spirit, and is the product of faith (Gal 5:6). It is a proof of a genuine disciple of Christ (John 13:35).
- Peace: Peace is the fruit of righteousness in our lives (Isa 32:17). It is rest in our souls, and affects our relationship with God and others around us.

The serious disciple of Christ desires to be 'a vessel unto honour', and having separated himself from contaminating associations (Psalm 1:1), he pursues fellowship with other 'honourable vessels' believers who are truly serious about serving the Lord. You need some friends who are intentionally pursuing Christ. You yourself need to intentionally spend time with godly people in the church. They don't have to have anything in common with you other than that they love Christ and are following after the character qualities mentioned in verse 22.

(vv. 23-24) Timothy was to avoid trying to answer insincere questions, wasting time on those who were not really interested in knowing the truth, but rather had a perverse attitude or a false doctrine that they wanted to promote. To get involved in such conversations can lead to the servant of God becoming argumentative, quarrelling, and bitter. Even when dealing with genuine needs, it is possible to have a wrong spirit, and to become un-Christlike while we are trying to 'lead' someone to Christ, or away from the paths of error. We need to know what spirit we are of (see Luke 9:55). Believers, and especially pastors, ought to be gentle when dealing with people, and willing to teach them the good and right way as Samuel (1 Sam 12:23). It takes great patience (this is not the usual Greek word for patience, and means to endure evil) to repeat the same counsel to people, but it is sometimes necessary, and is a mark of God's servants to be willing to do so (Hebrews 5:2).

(v. 25) There are those wilful ones who should only be warned a few times about doctrinal errors and then rejected (Tit 3:10). But there are others who are more ignorant than stubborn, and who should be shown great patience. But at all times, the servant of the Lord must be gentle (verse 24) and meek. This shows us that great humility is needed when confronting error and heresy. The goal ought to be reconciliation with God, involving repentance and acknowledging of the truth. Paul does not mean to absolve these people of wilful sin and stubbornness, but he points out that they are

also captives of Satan's deceptions. They are so easily deceived by him, especially if they are still in the realm of Adam. When reasoning with people who are spiritually blind and deceived, we ought to remember that it is a spiritual battle, and that it cannot be won in pride or fleshly anger.

Questions from Chapter 2

1. A believer must *decide* to '_____'.
2. When a believer starts _____ upon himself and his own _____ and _____, he will soon fall in a _____.
3. 'If those who hold _____ over others fail to lead toward the spiritual _____, then surely the path to the lowlands will be well _____. People travel _____; no one lives _____ and alone' (J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 19).
4. The _____ for Timothy to guard against an _____ of shrinking from the ministry was to _____ himself whole-heartedly into _____ others' lives for the glory of God.
5. A good soldier will keep going in the face of _____, but an irresponsible soldier will lose _____ of the task, and will become _____ to his trust.
6. *Paul uses what Three examples from life's occupations?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
7. * _____ is the difference between being _____ and being an utter _____ in the ministry.
8. The _____ is laid upon every minister to seriously consider the need for _____, _____, and _____ in the ministry.
9. Paul had absolute _____ in the message of the Gospel, knowing that it would _____ all the strongholds of the Wicked One, and would spread like _____ in the wind to the dark reaches of the empire, despite what the Roman government might do to stop its _____.

10. He himself was _____, saturated, and _____ with that very desire – ‘...that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal _____.’
11. The Christian must _____ the fact that the world does not _____ the truth of Christ and the Gospel. At a fundamental level, the world _____ the followers of Christ, and the true God.
12. *The Golden Rule of Scripture Interpretation: ‘When the _____ sense of Scripture makes _____ sense, seek no _____ sense. Therefore, take every word at its _____, _____, _____, _____ meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages, and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly _____. God, in revealing His Word, neither intends nor permits the reader to be _____. He wants His children to _____.’ (Author Unknown)
13. We see that Christ was very _____ with his words when he dealt with perverse minds. He was _____ to the point.
14. *‘If any man please God, it will be as the result of _____ intention and a _____ life’ (Barnes).
15. The expression ‘_____’ can refer to a _____ who ploughs straight furrows in his field. It can also refer to a stone mason who _____ his stone to the right shape.
16. For a Christian, _____ from sin and from doctrinal error is a matter of _____ and _____ Christ.
17. *What are the results for a believer who separates from unwholesome company?
- He will be a vessel unto _____.
 - He will be a _____ vessel.
 - He will be _____ to the Lord
 - He will be _____ for whatever the Lord wants him to do.

18. The unsaved person pursues personal _____, but the spiritually minded believer _____ pursues godliness. It is not an _____ or haphazard approach to living the Christian life. It is a determined, purposeful, _____ pursuit after Christ-likeness.
19. You need to _____ spend time with _____ people in the church. They don't have to have anything in _____ with you other than that they _____ Christ and are following after the character qualities mentioned in _____.
20. It takes great patience to _____ the same counsel to people, but it is sometimes necessary, and is a _____ of God's _____ to be willing to do so.

Chapter 3: Two Paths of Godliness – The False and the True

(v. 1) Paul warned Timothy that perilous (difficult, fierce, dangerous) times would come for the disciples of Christ. So it is today. We are taught in Scripture the mystery of iniquity is working and increasing throughout time. There have been times of great revival and times of deep depravity, but the global trend has been downward, and will reach an astonishing low during the time of the Great Tribulation.

(v. 2) The first description of these perilous times is that men will be ‘lovers of their own selves’. Secular counsellors say that mankind’s problem is that he doesn’t love himself enough. But this is exactly the sinner’s problem. He loves himself more than others, and more than God. He seeks pre-eminence in all things. He wants to have everything at his own convenience. He wants to have his ‘own religion’. He is selfish at the core. This has always been humankind’s problem, but since the development of psychology, selfishness has been dressed up to become a respectable and even an attractive thing in the eyes of the world, and sadly, in the eyes of many Christians.

We know that many people who have been abused and experienced failures of various kinds supposedly begin to hate themselves and even to want to harm themselves, but the real problem here is a refusal to repent of their own way, and to surrender to the God who loves them, created them for himself, and has made full provision for their salvation.

The two foundational principles of modern psychology, self-esteem and unconditional love, have permeated the whole of the western world, and are a peculiar fulfilment of this prophecy in 2 Timothy 3:2, for they powerfully demonstrate modern man’s deliberate pursuit of self-love. Repentance is not seen as a solution, for it damages self-esteem. The doctrine of modern psychology teaches that anything which damages your self-esteem is bad. However, in order to feel good about one’s self, moral standards also have to be dropped. What modern psychology has provided for modern man is a seemingly respectable foundation and rationale on which he may pursue his own pleasure and satisfaction as his chief end and goal.

Necessary explanations for certain words in the catalogue are included below:

Covetous: The word literally means ‘fond of silver’.

Blasphemers: Blasphemy refers to abusive speech or slander.

Disobedient to parents: The word ‘disobedient’ refers to rebellion, and also means ‘unpersuadable’. There are an increasing amount of young people who think they know more than their parents, and will not in any wise listen to them.

Unholy: Not intrinsically right according to divine character.

(v. 3) Without natural affection: ‘Destitute of love toward those for whom nature herself claims it.’ (Rienecker and Rogers)

Trucebreakers: also: implacable, irreconcilable.

False accusers: Grk: *diabolos*, same as one of Satan’s names, for he is the great accuser.

Incontinent: Literally, without power; without self-control

Fierce: Savage, untamed

(v. 4) Heady: rash; falling headlong or forward

Highminded: Greek: taphoo – to be filled with smoke, and thus lifted up. A hot air-balloon carries much the same idea. It is filled with hot air, and thus lifted up. What a picturesque description of a self-conceited person!

Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: People are more interested in tickling their senses and satisfying their own lusts than they are in seeking after God. (Rom 3:11) 'There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.' People are primarily experience-oriented, rather than God-oriented. Guilt and the fear of God interfere with this world-view, and so God, the Bible, and the Gospel are seen as something that must necessarily be shunned.

(v. 5) Many in these last days will have a semblance of godliness. They will give an impression of religiosity, but they will be strangers to the power of true religion. The life of a serious disciple of Christ demonstrates the true power of the Gospel to change a person. It demonstrates the power of God to transform a self-seeking sinner into a self-sacrificing saint. The power of God in the Gospel can turn a man away from being a lover of self to having a genuine concern for the true spiritual needs of others, and for doing the will of God and living a holy life. Paul cared nothing for mere words, but for a life transformed by the Gospel (see 1 Cor 4:19-20).

From such vain pretenders we ought to turn away. They are subverted (turned inside out and twisted), and are in no wise interested in the truth. (Prov 14:7) 'Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not *in him* the lips of knowledge.'

(v. 6) False teachers were characterised by the above catalogue, and here Paul shows that they creep into houses, and lead away foolish women. Beware of those who may creep into the church and hold a false doctrine, having a contentious spirit, a complaining attitude, and a proud, know-it-all kind of mindset. They may try to befriend you and your family outside of church, and draw you after their little click. They might not get so close to the faithful members (...but they can!), and they may tend to stay away from the deacons and the pastor, because they don't feel comfortable with Biblical authority. They will have an agenda, and they will naturally pick at the weak ones in the congregation.

Notice that they successfully pick at the carnally-minded ones in the congregation – the ones who are not doing well spiritually in the first place. It is so important to be walking close to the Lord; to be reading your Bible and meditating in it; to being responsive to what the Lord wants to show you day by day; to having a real and vital prayer life; to developing and discerning and a discriminating attitude towards error; to be staying away from sin, and to be bearing fruit for the Lord. Like bugs in the garden, they will detect the weak and sickly plants, and attack them. Like wolves in the forest, they will come and pick out the stragglers from the flock, and tear them.

Are you captive to some sin? Are you laden with evil habits? Are you captive to diverse lusts? Then you may be easy prey for these people. Notice that these false teachers will target foolish women. Women tend to be more easily deceived, and if they are not walking in the strength of the Lord, and

in healthy fellowship with other believers, then they forfeit his protection, and become easy prey. All believers, however, should be on guard. The Bible warns about men who will creep into churches, befriending certain ones, and gaining a foothold in the lives of the weak (see: Jude 4; 2 Peter 2:1; Gal 2:4; Titus 1:11).

Ephesians 4:14 speaks of the importance of teaching and preaching ministries, in order that believers may not remain ignorant, immature, and vulnerable to false doctrine. However, Paul is here showing that deception can come about through sin and carnality.

(v. 7) The women are further described as 'Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.' Paul probably had in mind some foolish (literally 'little') women who were not committed to true discipleship, and had never established a strong walk with the Lord (probably not being saved in the first place), and so had minds as listless a cotton in the breeze, hearts as weak as water, and strong, lustful passions. They wanted to hear whoever would speak smooth words to them. They wanted to be 'tickled pink' with false teaching that would annul their fears and placate their defiled consciences. They probably thought they had found liberty, when in reality they were entering into greater bondage.

(vv. 8-9) If such men (or women!) begin to interfere with the weak ones in the church, the pastor and other faithful men should be ready to 'head them off', and to warn the folks about the dangers of associating with them. That is the pastor's job. It is also every believer's job to watch out for the spiritual safety of others in the congregation.

However, there are times when certain attendees in the church will not recognise the danger of associating with these people. When the church experiences things like that, and the pastor/s, deacons, and members are doing what they can to rectify the situation, it is imperative to trust the Lord. The Lord Himself loves the church, and gave Himself for it. He will not leave it undefended. He will make manifest the true character of the false teachers, and will expose them for what they are. He is able to do this. He knows how to catch men out in their pernicious ways and wicked schemes.

Paul mentions two men from Jewish literature who stood up against Moses, and sought to create confusion about who had the true power. The Old Testament does not speak of these two individuals, but they were written about in the Jewish Targum of Jonathan. Commentator John Gill writes: 'These were...Egyptian magicians, the chief of those that Pharaoh sent for, when Moses and Aaron came before him, and wrought miracles; and who did in like manner by their enchantments, Exo 7:11 upon which place the Targum of Jonathan has these words: "and Pharaoh called the wise men and the magicians; and Janis and Jambres, the magicians of the Egyptians, did so by the enchantments of their divinations."

(vv. 10-12) What a wonderful thing it is if we can stand as Christ-like examples before others; as approved workmen who do not need to be ashamed. Paul was able to point to his own life, which was a stark contrast from the lives of the trouble-makers at Ephesus. His was a testimony of faithfulness. Though persecuted, hated, and slandered, Paul's noble character shone through with unmistakable effulgence. Timothy knew the substance of the man, possibly more than anyone else did. Paul pointed to nine aspects of His own example, in order to strengthen Timothy to follow in his steps. The Greek word translated 'fully known' signifies that he had followed near to Paul, so as to be fully acquainted with him and to conform to his ways. Nine aspects are mentioned.

1. Doctrine: Teaching

2. Manner of life: The walk must match the talk. See also 1 Timothy 4:16.

3. Purpose: The whole life must be geared and focused towards godliness and devotion to Christ. It must be a single aim. It must not only be the most important thing. It must govern every aspect of life.

4. Faith: The Christian life cannot be lived apart from faith. The just shall live by faith, and he who God uses by way of example must demonstrate sound faith. This is to believe God and His Word when outward circumstances and feelings would seem to argue against doing so.

5. Long-suffering: Made up of two Greek words: one meaning *long*, and the other meaning *passion*. A Spirit-controlled servant of God will be patient towards all men. He may be angry toward their sin, but he will bear long with them, without losing control over his own spirit. The most supreme example in this is Christ.

6. Charity: Love; in Paul's writings, that which gives of itself for another.

7. Patience: The ability to cheerfully remain under the rule of God in any situation, and to endure. James 1:4 shows us that patience will have a perfect work in us. It will make us mature and sound as disciples of Christ. No truly effective spiritual leader can avoid this painful work of God in his life.

8. Persecutions: See 2 Corinthians 6:4-10 and 11:23-27.

9. Afflictions: At Antioch (Acts 13:50); At Iconium (Acts 14:1-5); Lystra (Acts 14:19); It was at Lystra that Timothy probably first met Paul.

Paul endured these persecutions by the grace of God. 'Endured' comes from the same Greek word translated 'bear' in 1 Corinthians 10:13, when telling how God enables us to bear temptations. These were added weights and burdens upon Paul, but he continued to run the race God had set for him, without giving in. See 2 Timothy 2:3 & Col 1:11. The apostle's intent do doubt was to strengthen the younger man for the sufferings of the work he was called to, knowing that God's grace and strength would be sufficient, and would sustain him all the way through. God enabled Paul not to give up in discouragement, and not to be sidelined by sin or Satan. The present imprisonment was not an exception to this. It simply flagged the end of his God-appointed course. According to Paul, affliction was no hindrance to God's working in and through him. His joy in God's will could only be jeopardised by a sinful response to difficulty on his part.

(vv. 12-13) Timothy is admonished to accept the fact that if he will give godly in Christ Jesus, he cannot be without persecution. Likewise, he must accept that evil men and false teachers (who were likely partners with those who would stir up persecution against the true saints) would only worsen in their tendencies. It is the nature of a God-rejecting and saint-persecuting mind, if it does not repent, to harden itself increasingly towards God's true servants, and to deepen in its deception. This ought not to surprise the true servants of God. They must be true to their charge.

(v. 14) The servant of God must stand firm like a rock, no matter what false doctrines and persecutions abound. He must remain in the same place. He must stand at his post, and guard his trust. Timothy had learned and been assured of the truth. He was not to allow himself to be

confused, deceived, and carried away with the spirit of the age. He was to remember the steadfast example of the apostle Paul, and that of his mother and grandmother (1:5).

(v. 15) Timothy was also to remember the great benefits of growing up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. His mother and grandmother had seen to it that he should be thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures from an early age, and it had had an impact upon his life to impart wisdom, and faith in Christ Jesus. Timothy was not saved out of a renegade lifestyle. He had rather grown up like a green olive tree under the guiding care of his mother, grandmother, and also of the apostle Paul. Believer, look back in your own life, and see that from a child, God has been with you. You may not have grown up with the Scriptures, or even had a happy home-life, but God led your steps at last to Himself.

Brethren, may God grant us a view of His providences in our life until now, and to see our unworthiness of His blessings upon our lives. There are many things I can point to in my up-bringing, which demonstrate God's mercy. He did not permit me to go headlong into the world, and to ruin my life with outright rebellion, and for that I am very thankful.

(v. 16) Paul now shows Timothy the importance of Scripture to anchor and equip him to help others, and to stand strong in perilous times. All of the Scriptures are inspired by God. The Greek word is a combination of the words 'God' and 'breathed', showing that the Scriptures are literally God-breathed. Yes, God used the personalities of the holy men who wrote the Scriptures, but they were the very words God wanted them to write.

The Scriptures furnish the believer with all the information he needs for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). The specific ways in which they equip the believer include the following:

1. Doctrine: teaching
2. Reproof: To show a person that what they are doing or believing is wrong (see Proverbs 6:23)
3. Correction: Literally, straightening up. The Bible shows a person not only what is wrong, but how to rectify the situation.
4. Instruction in righteousness: The word for instruction means child-training. We must remember that God calls us children (see 1 John), and so we must accept that we need to be educated in His ways, and continually trained (see Psalm 131:1-3), if we hope to walk in His righteousness.

(v. 17) God's objective in giving his Word is that we might be complete, and not lacking in knowledge or understanding. He wants us to be thoroughly prepared for the work that he has for us to do in this world. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works which he prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10). Are you using the Word in such a way as to be useful in completing those good works and ministering to others around you?

Questions from Chapter 3

1. Secular counsellors say that mankind's _____ is that he doesn't _____ himself enough. But this is _____ the sinner's problem. He loves himself _____ than others, and more than _____.
2. *The two foundational _____ of modern psychology, _____ and _____, have permeated the whole of the western world, and are a peculiar _____ of this prophecy in _____, for they powerfully demonstrate modern man's deliberate pursuit of _____.
3. Heady means: _____; falling _____ or forward
4. People are more interested in _____ their senses and satisfying their own _____ than they are in _____ after God.
5. The life of a serious disciple of Christ demonstrates the true _____ of the Gospel to _____ a person. It demonstrates the power of God to transform a _____ sinner into a _____ saint.
6. Beware of those who may _____ into the church and hold a _____, having a _____ spirit, a _____ attitude, and a _____, _____ kind of mindset.
7. False teachers successfully pick at the _____ ones in the congregation – the ones who are not doing well _____ in the first place.
8. The Bible warns about men who will creep into churches, _____ certain ones, and gaining a _____ in the lives of the _____.
9. * _____ speaks of the importance of _____ and preaching ministries, in order that believers may not remain _____, immature, and _____ to false doctrine.

10. *If false teachers (like those Paul is here mentioning) should begin to interfere with the weak ones in the church, the _____ and other _____ men should be ready to ' _____', and to _____ the folks about the dangers of associating with them.
11. The Lord Himself loves the _____, and gave Himself for it. He will not leave it _____. He will show the true _____ of the false teachers, and will _____ them for what they are.
12. _____ and _____ were the chief of Pharaoh's _____ who stood up against Moses and Aaron.
13. The Greek word translated ' _____' in 2 Timothy 3:10 signifies that Timothy had _____ to Paul, so as to be fully acquainted with him and to conform to his _____.
14. _____ shows us that patience will have a _____ work in us. No truly effective spiritual leader can _____ this painful work of God in his life.
15. Paul knew that affliction was no _____ to God's working in and through him. His _____ in God's will could only be jeopardised by a _____ response to difficulty on his part.
16. * It is good for believers to look back on their own _____, and to see that even from a _____, God has led their _____ at last to Himself.
17. God used the _____ of the holy men who wrote the _____, but they were the very _____ God wanted them to write.
18. The Scriptures _____ the believer with all the _____ he needs for life and _____.
19. *God's objective in giving his Word is that we might be _____, and not lacking in _____ or _____. He wants us to be thoroughly _____ for the work that he has for us to do in this world.

Chapter 4: Preach the Word!

(v. 1) Having just written concerning the faithfulness, wisdom, inspiration, and effectiveness of the Scriptures, Paul now give his younger disciple a charge (The Greek word indicates a solemn charge). Paul calls the Father and the Son to witness this charge, telling Timothy that the time is coming when Jesus Christ shall judge believers (not to determine eternal destiny, but rather rewards or loss thereof) at the time of the rapture of the church age saints. All Christians have an appointed time to die or to be raptured, and all shall give an account for their life's work at the bema seat of Christ (Romans 14:12). The Lord knows about each of His servants, and their diligence and faithfulness in service (or lack thereof) truly matters to Him.

(v. 2) The solemn charge the apostle gives is the capstone to what is said about the Scriptures in 3:15-16: 'Preach the word'! This is what will truly feed the souls of those who come to hear the preaching. This will truly make a difference in their lives, if they are willing to hear it. It is God's message to mankind, and He will hold His preachers accountable for whether or not they spoke His words. I fear that there are many Christians around the country and the globe, sitting under the sound of man's devotional thoughts, niceties, cream, and fairy floss. They come to church with guilty consciences, wounded hearts, searching questions, doubts, fears, spiritual strongholds, and spiritual maladies of innumerable kinds. They come, and are not truly fed, but do not know where else to turn. If they cannot get spiritual food from the pulpit, who can they turn to find it? God's preachers must be men of courage; men who have exposed their own hearts to the painful surgical knife of God's Word; men who have done real business with God during the week. The Good Shepherd is looking for faithful shepherds who will comfort the afflicted, warn the unruly, bind up the broken-hearted, and loose the captives, using God's Word with skill and courage. He is searching for men who will look upon the multitudes, and will see them as sheep scattered upon the mountains, not having a shepherd.

But regardless of the response to the preaching, the preacher is to be 'instant' (persistent or present at his duty), both 'in season' when people seem to be responding positively to the preaching, and 'out of season' when they do not seem to appreciate it very much. The preacher must not be controlled by the attitude of the people he preaches to. He must be filled with the Spirit. He must reprove, rebuke, and exhort. 'It has been said that: to reprove means to correct ignorance; to rebuke means to come down hard on belligerence; and to exhort means to build up in innocence' (H. R. Hester, *New Testament Bible History*, p. 226). Notice that the pastor is to have 'all longsuffering' in doing so, and is to use doctrine (2 Tim 2:24-26; Tit 1:9). He cannot respond to fleshly attitudes with fleshliness. He must display the stability and calmness of the Lord Jesus.

(v. 3) One of the reasons that a preacher must continue to preach the Word in good times and in bad is because the general trend is that this world is becoming increasingly apostate, and intolerant to the truth. People are increasingly uninterested in receiving the 'engrafted Word' with meekness, even though it is the only thing that can truly deliver them from the misery of their ways. 'Itching ears' implies a general mindset that will no longer put up with sound truth, but is looking for spicy bits of information, things new, things entertaining, ear-tickling anecdotes, jokes, and sentimentalism. Biblical preachers should be grieved about this, but they should not be surprised. They should not be discouraged by it. Numbers may dwindle, because the message doesn't appeal to people's lusts. It is a consumer mentality that we are seeing. It is a mentality that switches the

channel when the preaching gets tough, rather than squarely facing the issues addressed. The man of God must determine at the outset that he will follow Christ's example. He did not fail, nor get discouraged. He just kept going, and did a deep work in the faithful few who were willing to stay and follow Him. The faithful pastor in these last days will not be like one of those hirelings that can be 'heaped' to wherever the lustful listeners want him to stand. He will stand at his post, and continue to fulfil his duty.

(v. 4) Many people now are not interested in truth, but rather in something that will entertain. Truth seems no longer relevant to them. See also Matt 7:17-27.

(v. 5) The pastor in the last days must keep his eyes wide open, understanding and taking in all that is happening around him. He must keep his eyes on the Lord, yes, but he must consider well what he sees. As a shepherd, he is to be vigilant, or he cannot protect people. He must monitor situations that are happening in the lives of his people. He must be prayerful about these situations. He must be willing to undergo difficulties for the sake of his work. He must not be lazy or fearful in the ministry. He must do everything that the Lord gives him the strength to do.

(vv. 6-8) Paul has talked about the false teachers. He has talked about the wayward listeners. He has talked about Timothy. Now, as one passing the baton on to his faithful disciple, he turns to mention himself and his impending departure. He is now ready to be poured out, like a drink offering. We ought to see our lives as existing for the glory of God. It was time for him to depart, and for Timothy to take up the baton. He was rejoicing in his life's work, that he had fought well, finished well, and kept the faith (probably implying that he had kept the rules of the game). He knew His Lord, and he had full confidence in His goodness to reward him for his labour, and all those who, like him, looked expectantly for the Lord's return. The 'crown of righteousness' is probably the absolute splendour of righteousness itself, enjoyed by all the saints in glory.

(v. 9) Here and in verse 21, Paul urges Timothy to come to him quickly, knowing that his own departure was at hand (v. 6). Paul was truly a 'lover of good men', and his condition was such that only a single-minded servant of Christ could truly minister to the depths of his loneliness.

(v. 10) Demas has an eternally shameful report, in that his love for the world engulfed any love that he may have professed for Christ and His servants. We have no indication that Crescens or Titus fell into the same trap, but they are mentioned to highlight the loneliness of Paul's condition. Dalmatia (to where Titus departed) is the region identified as Yugoslavia until the 1990's, and it was no doubt for the Lord's service that he went there.

(v. 11) It is true that Luke was with Paul here in his final Roman imprisonment (as in his first – see Colossians 4:14), but Paul loved all of his fellow-labourers, and missed them terribly within those cold stone walls. As H. C. Lees commented, 'Paul had a genius for friendship. No man in the New Testament made fiercer enemies, but few men in the world have had better friends. They cluster around him so thickly that we are apt to lose their personality in their devotion.' (*St. Paul's Friends*, p. 11, cited in *Spiritual Leadership*, O. Sanders, p. 65).

Now we find the aged apostle seeking to draw John Mark to his side, maybe with consideration to a cloud which may have hung between them since the days of the younger man's early involvement in Paul's missionary endeavour, due to what Paul perceived as a defection from the work (see Acts

13:13; 15:36-39). Even though it seems that there had been a reconciliation by the time of Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 1:24 – these two epistles written at that time), it may have disturbed Paul in his old age that an shadow of a question mark could be left after his decease to discourage the spirit of John Mark. If we knew that tomorrow we should suddenly be removed from this temporal existence, what relational accounts would we try to settle? What fellow souls would we seek to say something to, or what words long overdue would we utter? We can only imagine how, as the light of eternal glory began to dawn in the solitary cell, the saintly Paul was further cleansed and purified by its contemplation. He did not wish for any unfinished business to be deferred to the day of Christ.

(vv. 12-13) Tychicus could have been the bearer of this epistle, as with the book of Ephesians. Winter was coming on (v. 21), and Paul requested Timothy to bring his cloak, the outer garment, which would keep him warm. Maybe Paul was arrested at Troas, and had no time to gather his belongings. We see that Paul was not afraid to share his true feelings and conditions. Here was no false humility, or some conceited display of faith in withholding his true condition from those who could truly help him in needful and practical ways. The books were parchment scrolls, possibly of his own writings, or of copies of the Scriptures. The parchments were membranes, or animal skins, possibly containing Old Testament books. No matter that he was going to die soon. He wanted to be found diligently studying and doing what he could.

Just before my father passed away from a brain tumour, and when he could no longer speak as a result of the tumour, he was still treasuring God's Word. I remember that he gestured for me to come into his office. He showed me a little page with some very rough sketches he had made, illustrating some of the prophecies of Daniel, along with chapter numbers. I realised that he had made these sketches to help him memorise key concepts in Daniel. He could no longer speak, but he reverently looked at this little page in his hands. To this day, I am impressed with his passion to study God's Word, when he could no longer preach or even speak. Even writing was a struggle. How we need to treasure God's Word!

(vv. 14-15) Alexander the Coppersmith could be the same individual as mentioned in Acts 19:33-34 and also 1 Timothy 1:20. Did he now resent Paul for exercising church discipline toward him? Was it Alexander who was responsible for getting Paul imprisoned this second time? This could explain why Timothy was to beware of him also. Maybe Alexander even travelled to Rome to make his accusations against the apostle (see comments on verses 16-17). However, Paul trusted that the Lord would deal with him.

(vv. 16-17) 'My first answer' probably refers to one of Paul's trials in Rome.

'At such trials it was common to hear advocates for the accused, but in Paul's case no one came to his support, but everyone deserted him. The widespread desertion of the apostle may be explained by the fact that, unlike the period of his first imprisonment, it had now become dangerous to be a Christian in Rome...the thought of identifying themselves with the fearless and outspoken apostle must have been more than the Roman Christians and even Paul's companions could face.' (A. Duane Litfin, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, edited by Walvoord and Zuck)

Even though Paul's acquaintances forsook him at the point of Roman trial, Paul didn't hold it against them. He prayed for God's mercy on them. It would seem that Paul took the opportunity in the trial

to preach the Gospel to the officials before whom he was standing (Acts 9:15). He wrote that he was 'delivered out of the mouth of the lion,' by which it may be understood either of Nero himself, or of Satan, or even of the possibility of death in the arena by being thrown to the lions.

(v. 18) Paul was confident that the Lord would keep him morally and righteously entire unto His kingdom (2 Timothy 1:12). 'In doing that which is just and right, we are like one walking upon a rock, for we have confidence that every step we take is upon solid and safe ground.' (C. H. Spurgeon, *Faith's Check Book, December 1*). Far from being crippled by the thought of imminent death, the aged leader was confident in God, and praising Him.

(v. 19) Closing greetings: Prisca and Aquila were now situated in Ephesus, and had been co-labourers with Paul in earlier days. Onesiphorus was the one commended in the earlier part of this epistle (1:16-18). Erastus and Trophimus were friends of Timothy, and he would be interested to know their whereabouts. Trophimus was with Paul in Jerusalem in Acts 21:29.

(v. 20) The winter weather would soon set in on the Adriatic sea, making travel dangerous, if not impossible for Timothy, so it was needful for him to come as soon as possible, if he were to see Paul. Other friends are mentioned, of whom we know nothing.

(v. 22) The last penned words of Paul, demonstrating his own understanding of closeness a believer must seek to retain in fellowship with Christ: 'The Lord Jesus Christ *be* with thy spirit. Grace *be* with you. Amen.'

Questions from Chapter 4

1. All Christians have an appointed time to die or to be _____, and all shall give an _____ for their life's work at the _____ seat of Christ, according to _____.
2. *God's preachers must be men of _____; men who have exposed their own hearts to the painful _____ of God's Word; men who have done real _____ with God during the week.
3. *'It has been said that: to _____ means to correct ignorance; to _____ means to come down hard on belligerence; and to _____ means to build up in innocence.' – H. R. Hester
4. The _____ mentality switches the _____ when the preaching gets tough, rather than squarely _____ the issues addressed.
5. *The pastor in the last days must keep his eyes _____ open, understanding and _____ all that is _____ around him.
6. The 'crown of righteousness' is probably the absolute _____ of righteousness _____, enjoyed by all the saints in glory.
7. *'Paul had a _____ for friendship. No man in the New Testament made fiercer _____, but few men in the world have had better _____. They cluster around him so thickly that we are apt to lose their personality in their _____.' -- H. C. Lees
8. We can only imagine how, as the _____ of eternal glory began to dawn in the solitary _____, the saintly Paul was further _____ and purified by its contemplation.
9. The books Paul requested were _____ scrolls, possibly of his own writings, or of copies of the Scriptures. The parchments were _____, or animal skins, possibly containing _____.

10. Alexander the Coppersmith could be the same individual as mentioned in _____ and also _____. Alexander may have been _____ for getting Paul _____ this second time.
11. 'In doing that which is just and right, we are like one walking upon a _____, for we have _____ that every step we take is upon solid and _____ ground.' -- C. H. Spurgeon
12. The _____ weather would soon set in on the _____ sea, making travel dangerous, if not _____ for Timothy, if he did not come to Paul soon.



TAMWORTH BIBLE
BAPTIST CHURCH

Copyright 2019 by James West

This publication is published for free distribution in digital format. See the Publications section at tbbc.org.au. We do not allow distribution of this publication from other websites.