

through the speaking of tongues (Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6). Necessary for salvation (Jn 3:5, Rom 8:9, 2 Cor 1:22).

Part B: Change Begins With You—Being a Better Worker for God

What are some weaknesses in the church work we do? What can we do to improve?

Step 1:

Ask the students to write their current church duties on a sheet of paper, and in what ways they would like to improve in their work. They can also write down work they hope to be part of in the future.

Step 2:

Have the students pass their sheets to the person next to them. Looking at their classmate's sheet, have the students write down advice or encouragements on how he can meet his goals. Give students 30 seconds and continue to pass along the paper until each student has his sheet back.

Step 3:

Ask the students to share the advice and encouragements they find useful.

REFLECTION & PRAYER



Some J2 students face a growing responsibility in church work and they can relate to the burden Timothy may have felt. It takes a patient and humble person to be wise enough to pastor everyone in a loving and godly manner. Paul encouraged Timothy to remain grounded through daily study and meditation of the Scriptures. Knowledge of God draws us closer to Him, and the closer we are, the easier it is for Him to use us as vessels, It is not Timothy's will or our wills that allow us to gently and wisely pastor members of the church and do church work, but God's.

Lesson 11

2 Timothy

Listed Scriptures

2 Timothy

Lesson Aim

1) To be a model servant of Christ.

Memory Verse

"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Tim 2:22)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

2 Tim 1-4

BIBLE BACKGROUND



Paul wrote 2 Timothy (his last letter) around 67 AD, during his second Roman imprisonment and prior to his execution. Unlike his first Roman imprisonment, which was more like a house arrest, Paul was locked up in jail and there was little hope of his release. Only Luke kept Paul company.

Unlike his first letter to Timothy, which consists mostly of practical and pastoral advice, the second letter is full of spiritual and evangelical encouragement: be steadfast and preach the good news. The two themes come from Paul's love of Jesus Christ and his love for Timothy. Paul and Timothy's close relationship is evident in his greeting, calling Timothy his "dear son," and in his wish for Timothy to come to Rome before he dies. Their relationship has progressed from teacher-student and leader-helper to father-son in the faith.

W A R M U P



You see that someone your age or younger needs some encouragement with his or her faith. This brother or sister is tempted to live a life more like his or her non-Christian or casual-Christian friends. What would you say to encourage this person? What would you do to pastor this person? Think back to the times when someone said something that lifted your spirits.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Teachings of 2 Timothy

Although Paul was imprisoned with only Luke for company, he wrote this peaceful and intimate letter of encouragement and hope to Timothy. After living difficult and persecuted years as an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul has no regrets and stands firm in his faith. He exhorts Timothy, who won't suffer nearly as much, to do the same. Paul's letter creates a model for a servant of Christ, and it gives teachings for why reaching that standard is a worthy goal.

Note: Please also refer to Lesson 10 for background on the main points in Paul's first letter to Timothy.

A. The Model Servant of Christ

Paul wrote nearly half of the books in the New Testament. Between his teachings and glimpses of his life as an apostle (outside of the Book of Acts), he is perhaps the most familiar Christian in the Bible. Although we learn about Peter and John early on through the Gospels, we only hear from them in a few short letters after their appearance in the Book of Acts. Jesus Christ is the standard whom every Christian aspires to, and Paul is the best example of a person successfully drawing near that goal.

a. Use Gifts and Apply Knowledge (1:6; 3:16-17)

Paul encouraged Timothy to "fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands." Although we don't know what particular gift Timothy received, we can see that he was timid in using it. But as we know from the para-

ble of the talents (Mt 25:14-30), if God gives us a skill, He expects us to use it. Sometimes we may think we have no talent to offer in service to God, but if we have a heart to serve Him, He'll find a way for us. A model servant must also absorb the Scriptures and apply it. He must read the Bible, meditate on it, and live it. Knowing whom he believes and what he believes keeps his faith steadier and makes following and preaching God's Word easier.

b. Evangelist (1:7-14; 4:1-5)

Jesus Christ gave the disciples the great commission: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20a). Paul's ministry reflected this as he preached through his three missionary trips and counseled through his epistles. He encourages Timothy likewise: "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Tim 4:2).

There should be no shame in preaching the gospel. Nor should we be timid. In Paul and Timothy's time, Christian persecution was rampant under Nero, but Paul was more concerned with spiritual death than physical death. He knew the value of Jesus Christ's salvation, even if others didn't, and he had no shame in himself or the God who was so much a part of him.

c. Strong in Christ (2:1-7)

Paul gives three metaphors on how Timothy can be strong in Christ. (J2 students may have other strong impressions they could discuss.)

The soldier analogy highlights three traits: endurance, focus and loyalty. Paul says to ride through the difficult or tempting times and follow Jesus Christ.

The athlete analogy highlights obedience. If life is a game created by God, then the only way anyone can win the eternal reward is by playing by His rules. Otherwise, we must face the penalties. It can be tempting to ignore God's rules because they seem contrary to being successful in the world. But His reward is infinitely better than the world's.

The farmer analogy highlights toil and effort. The farmer's hard work was fruitful so he would be duly rewarded. Regardless of the level of talent, working hard for God is encouraged. As James said, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead" (Jas 2:26).

d. Smart in Speech (2:14-19, 23-26)

The body of Christ has many parts and some are naturally not inclined to get along. It is tempting to snap, to be passive—aggressive and to get angry, but Paul reminds Timothy to not quarrel and to diffuse situations. It takes patience and humility to reduce an argument, especially when you are part of it, but the power of gentleness cannot be doubted. “Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone” (Prov 25:15).

While rebuke and admonishment can be effective in correcting others, gentleness and tactfulness use patience and love to turn people around. “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov 15:1).

The fellowship between brothers and sisters is unique, and although it can be difficult to open up about personal feelings or troubles for fear of looking bad in front of church members, it is very satisfying to be spiritually edified through friends.

e. Prepared for Noble Purposes (2:20-22)

This is a well-known passage for most J2 students, but this never fails to serve as a reminder of the constant potential each one of them has.

The vessels in the house, recorded in verse 20, are similar to the servants in the parable of the talents: no matter how much better one seems over another, to the Master, the potential is all the same. The servant with the five talents wasn’t considered better than the servant with the two talents. Likewise, the vessels of gold and silver are not necessarily better than the ones made of wood and clay. They are all potentially useful, but only if they cleanse themselves from ignoble purposes. (Ignoble meaning “characterized by baseness, lowness, or meanness,” according to Merriam-Webster.) So a gold vessel steeped in ignominy would be less than a cleansed clay cup in the Master’s eyes.

Paul elaborated on all things ignoble in verse 22, and like Jesus Christ said in Matthew 12:43-45, the “evil desires” cannot simply be cleared out. The space needs to be replaced with righteousness, faith, love and peace.

f. Steadfast and Faithful (3:1-15)

The description of godlessness in the last days sounds familiar. We hear or see these things in the news, magazines, television shows or people we know. Not only does the world fall prey to these behaviors, but according to verse five—“form of godliness”—church members will fall prey to too. Apostasy, meaning to depart from one’s faith or religion, is a word often used for this section.

Between the godlessness and the persecution, Paul encouraged Timothy to stand firm by holding onto the teachings of the Scriptures and by looking at Paul’s example of steadfastness.

B. Motivations to Become the Model Servant

Paul offers some spiritual reminders to motivate Timothy.

a. Repay the Grace of Jesus (1:9-12)

Paul says he and Timothy were not saved and called to a holy life for nothing. In Jesus Christ’s grace there was also a purpose. Paul was humbled and in awe of receiving such mercy that without hesitation, he took the duties Jesus Christ planned for him (Acts 9:1-29; 1 Tim 1:12-17).

b. Salvation (2:8-12; 4:6-8)

Although Paul had to suffer hardships as a model servant of Jesus Christ, he knew there was an eternal reward for his resilience. Paul was secure in the knowledge that dying with Jesus, enduring hardships and keeping the faith would lead to a crown of righteousness and living and reigning with Him. Paul’s love and deep understanding of eternal life compelled him to endure hardships for “the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain salvation that is in Jesus Christ.” He stayed a model servant not only for his salvation but for others too.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

What are the three metaphors that Paul used to describe being strong in Christ, and what are their qualities that should be mimicked?

2

What type of vessel can be useful to the Master and prepared for any good work?

3

What should a model servant avoid?

4

How can the model servant stay firm?

5

How was Paul’s life an example to Timothy?

6 What was Paul's charge to Timothy?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Part A: Bolstering the Faith of Others

Think about the purpose and themes of Paul's last letter. Practice encouraging brothers and sisters by writing one of the following two letters.

Option 1:

Write a modern-day version of 2 Timothy. Think about the church, its members and society today. What advice would you give Timothy on things to avoid and things to aspire to? What encouragement would you give? What problems would you mention and what solutions would you advise? What else could you include?

Option 2:

Write a letter in response to Paul. Imagine yourself as Timothy. What are the things you would say to comfort Paul? Which of his advice helped? What challenges do you still face? What questions do you still have? What else can you include?

Part B: Godlessness

What are J2 students facing today? Paul never mentioned any specific "evil desires of youth," and while there are some inherent things, what are the new and specific things for the J2 students in your church? What godlessness of the last days are they encountering (which aren't necessarily temptations for them)?

Step 1:

Cut strips of paper and have them prepared before class starts.

Step 2:

Give a handful of paper strips to the students (with more available) and ask them to write down the temptations they face and the un-Christian behavior they encounter. They should write ONE temptation/un-Christian behavior per strip. Have them fold the pages and place in a bag.

Step 3:

Once the students are finished, pass the bag to a student and have him/her pick out a strip and read it aloud. Ask the students to discuss how this is a problem. Is

it prevalent? Ask them to discuss how they can solve the problem and the steps they can take. Ask them for ways to encourage classmates to step up and solve the problem; many times the solution is simple but the students don't want to face the consequences (losing school friends, etc.).

Step 4:

Pass the bag to the next student and repeat step three. As the bag goes around, if there are repeats the topic can be further discussed; if the students have talked it out, teachers should keep these repeated mentions in mind for future mentoring of the students.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



With his spiritual parent soon unable to guide his faith any further, Timothy is in a position similar to some of the J2 students who are starting to discover their own relationship to God as something more than an extension of their parents'. The model that Paul has set may have seemed like overwhelming achievement to Timothy, as it undoubtedly seems to most J2 students. But Paul had the key to making it easy: the Scripture. Through daily reading and meditation of the Bible, everyone can better understand who God is and what He wants. And amazingly, between His Word and His Spirit, being what He wants us to be becomes easier. Rather than being nudged in the right direction, we naturally go in that direction, easily and happily.