

Study Guide for 2 Timothy

Welcome to our second small group Bible study guide. This study guide will provide a different approach than our previous study on Proverbs. Whereas Proverbs was a more topical series and did not focus on interpreting specific passages of scripture, this study guide will bring a greater focus on interpreting the passage. As such, this study guide will offer questions to deepen our understanding as well as questions to guide our application.

A limited number of interpretive notes will be provided. The general intent of this study guide, however is not to provide you with answers, but to guide you in studying and applying God's word for yourself. Leaders Supplements are Available Upon Request

These studies were created with the help of the Expositors Bible Commentary by Ralph Earle and the New International Biblical Commentary by Gordon Fee.

Word Studies have been done with the help of A GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT and Other Early Christian Literature by Walter Bauer and the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament edited by Gerhard Kittel.

Study 1: Introduction to 2 Timothy (1:1-5 and 4:9-22)

Before coming to this first study, be sure that you take the time to read the entire letter. Preferably read it several times. It is also important to pray that the Holy Spirit would guide you in understanding this book which he inspired.

The Structure of the Letter.

It is helpful to gain an overall picture of the text by examining how it is put together. In this brief letter of 2 Timothy, there does not seem to be any significant transitions. The letter flows together as a personal appeal from Paul to Timothy. Yet while this letter has a strong sense of continuity, one can discern several different concerns, which do not exactly divide along chapter divisions. The following is a simplified outline of the letter.

1:1-5	Greetings (Thanksgiving)
1:6-18	Paul appeals to Timothy to not be ashamed of Gospel
2:1-13	Renewed appeal to be Strong
2:14-26	Appeal to be an approved workman
3:1-9	Rejection of False Teachers
3:10 – 4:8	Appeal to Endure / Preach
4:9-22	Closing Personal remarks

While each of these appeals center around Paul's overall desire that Timothy stands firm and continues the ministry, we can recognize that the letter is divided into four main appeals. Each of these appeals can be further divided into small interrelated paragraphs. However, it is on the basis of these four appeals which we will structure our studies.

Questions to Deepen Understanding

1. What does this letter tell us about the author and recipient and their relationship with each other?
2. With special reference to the final chapter of this letter, how would you describe Paul's reasons for writing the letter?
3. What key phrases or verses stand out to you as important in this letter?
4. What is your overall impression of the mood or tone of this letter?
5. What key themes do you see in this letter? What is the main theme?

Questions to Guide Application

1. Can you relate to the sense of urgency in Paul's writing? Should we share this sense of urgency regarding God's work in this world? Do we?
2. Can you relate with Timothy? Do you see yourself as a worker / soldier / minister / missionary playing a role in God's grand scheme? Why or Why not?
3. Do you think it is possible to appreciate this letter apart from being actively involved in serving God?
4. Can you relate to the relationship between Paul and Timothy? Who is Paul in your life right now? Who is Timothy?
5. At this first glance, what passages or verses speak to you?

Study 2: Be Not Ashamed 2 Timothy 1:6-18

Interpretive Helps

Word Study: *swfronismov*" (sophronismos) In verse 1:7 it is translated "self discipline" in NIV and "sound mind" in KJV. This word carries the thought of prudence and good judgment with respect to morality but can also carry the idea of not being deceived by false teachers.

Questions to Deepen Understanding

1. Verse six begins with the word "For this reason". What does this refer to? What is the reason Paul reminds Timothy to use his gift?
2. Is there anything in this letter which gives us a clue as to what Timothy's gift was?
3. What things does Paul not want Timothy to be ashamed of?
4. What reasons does Paul give for not being ashamed?
5. How does it serve Paul's appeal to mention those who have helped and hurt him (Verses 15-18)
6. Summarize in your own words, what Paul wants from Timothy in this passage?

Questions to Guide Application

1. In what ways has God gifted you for service?
2. Is there anything in this passage, which encourages you to serve the Lord?
3. Have you been ashamed to testify about our Lord? In what situations (with whom) do you notice this most?
4. In what ways can this passage help you resolve these feelings.

Study 3: Be Strong 2 Timothy 2:1 to 2:13

Interpretive Helps

Word Study: ὑπομένω (hupomeno) In verse 2:12 it is translated “endure” by the NIV and “suffer” by the KJV. The word carries the idea of remaining when others leave. Endure is the better translation, for it does not necessarily imply physical sufferings.

Word Study: ἀρνεομαι (arneomai) In verse 2:12 it is translated “disown” by the NIV and “deny” by the KJV. The basic meaning is to say no. The word carries the meaning, refuse, reject, deny, disown, repudiate. Also used in John 13:38 speaking of Peter disowning Christ. Such denials are directed towards a person and usually imply a previous relationship of obedience and fidelity.

Questions to Deepen Understanding

1. Our passage begins “you then, my son, be strong...” What in the previous passage, is motivating Paul to challenge Timothy to be strong?
2. How does verse 2:2 relate to the overall theme of this letter?
3. What is Paul getting at with the three illustrations of the soldier, athlete and farmer in verse 3-6?
4. In verse 8, Paul gives a brief description of Jesus. What two things does he say about Jesus. Of all the things he could say, why these two things?
5. How does the trustworthy saying in verses 11-13 relate to Paul’s challenge to be strong?
6. What might this trustworthy saying tell us about the possibility of a Christian losing his salvation?

Questions to Guide Application

1. As a soldier for Christ, what does it mean for you to not get involved with civilian affairs?
2. To what extent are you willing to endure hardship for Christ and the gospel?
3. How does the trustworthy saying challenge you in the way you live out your faith.
4. In verse 7 Paul challenges Timothy to reflect on what he is saying, for the Lord will give insight. As you reflect on this passage, what insight is the Lord giving you?

Study 4: Approved Workers 2:14-26

Interpretive Helps

Word Study: *spoudavzw* (*spoudazo*) Translated in 2:15 as “do your best to” in the NIV and “study” in the KJV. Study is too narrow a translation making it appear that scripture study is the way to receive God’s approval. The word carries the thought of being diligent and making every effort.

Word Study: *ojrqotomevw* (*orthotomeo*) Translated in 2:15 as “correctly handles” (NIV) and “rightly dividing” (KJV). The word literally means “to cut a straight path”

In verse 18, the false teachers are saying that “the resurrection has already taken place”. This teaching is probably not saying that Christ has already returned, but rather that the resurrection has already been realized in our spiritual dying and rising with Christ. As such they are in fact denying a future resurrection.

Questions to Deepen Understanding

1. Verse 14 begins “Keep reminding them of these things”. To what things does this refer?
2. How does one become an approved worker?
3. What is built on the foundation mentioned in verse 19?
4. What is the intent of the analogy from household articles in verses 20-21? What do the noble and ignoble vessels represent.
5. Summarize in your own words, the primary message which Paul is conveying to Timothy in this passage.

Questions to Guide Application.

1. How do you distinguish between quarreling over words and true Bible study discussion?
2. How does this passage show us a Godly way to respond to quarrelsome people?
3. How would your faith be affected if you believed that there was no future bodily resurrection?
4. God’s solid foundation (Verse 19) is sealed with two inscriptions. Are you surprised by these foundational truths. How do these inscriptions encourage and challenge you?

Study 5: False Teaching Versus God's Word 3:1 to 4:8

Interpretive Helps:

The "last days" mentioned in 3:1 probably refers in general to the Christian era, the era begun with Christ's death resurrection and ascension. (See Hebrews 1:2 & Acts 2:16-21)

In 3:8-9, Jannes and Jambres are the names given in Jewish tradition to the nameless Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses. (See Exodus 7:11-12, 7:22, 8:7 and 9:11) It is unclear if Paul means to suggest that the false teachers which Timothy was dealing with were involved in sorcery or he was just drawing a parallel between their resistance to Moses and the false teachers resistance to the truth.

Questions to Deepen Understanding

1. In reference to what we have already seen of the false teachers in 2:14-26, what do you think is meant by the statement in 3:5 "having a form of godliness, but denying its power"?
2. How does the influence of the false teachers on the women (3:6-7) shed light on Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy 2:11-12
3. Why does Paul feel the need to speak about the inspiration of the scriptures at this point in the letter?
4. What should be the source and intent of preaching?
5. How does Paul's example in 4:6-8 back up his challenges to Timothy?

Questions to Guide Application

1. Do any items in the catalogue of vices hit home? Can you see any phrases in this catalogue which could be a good general description of sin?
2. How do you react to the statement in 3:12?
3. If the scriptures could be described as a tool, what work are they intended to accomplish in our lives.
4. Is it proper to evaluate a pastor's sermon? Why or Why not? On what basis would you make this evaluation? What caution should we have in such evaluations.
5. Thinking back on the entire letter, what challenges have hit home. How has God spoken to you through this letter.