

2 Timothy - Stay Faithful In Difficult Days



- Are you facing difficult days? Do you sometimes feel like quitting? How would you describe your ability to endure pain and hardship? Sturdy or soft?

Anybody can be faithful when life is easy and going well. True character and real faithfulness are demonstrated when circumstances are difficult. Today, people often quit their jobs when they get demanding & require hard work; abandon their marriage because they have disagreements and it requires working through conflict; or drop out of school because there is a lot of homework & requires diligent study, or neglect their health because it requires dieting & the sweat of exercise, or avoid church because the sermon made them feel guilty or someone didn't speak to them, etc. People have been spoiled by ease. They lack character and the ability to endure pain and hardship. They fail to be faithful when life is difficult. When the going gets tough, the tough don't get going; they just go!

The letter of 2 Timothy addresses the issue of staying faithful when life is difficult. The Apostle Paul was well qualified to speak to this issue. He suffered greatly for preaching the gospel in a hostile world (1:8, 11-12; 2:3, 8-13; 3:10-12; 4:14-18). Yet, Paul never quit. He remained faithful (cf. 4:6-8). Paul wrote 2 Timothy while in prison in Rome. This is not the same imprisonment recorded in Acts 28, but one a few years after being released and continuing his missionary journeys. Nero, the emperor of Rome, set the city on fire and falsely blamed the Christians to stop the criticism aimed at him. Christianity was made an illegal religion, and Christians were severely persecuted. Paul was re-arrested, put in prison, and was executed shortly after writing 2 Timothy.

Paul wrote the letter of 2 Timothy to instruct his young disciple, Timothy, on how to continue the advancement of the gospel after Paul's death. The epistle of 2 Timothy is a record of the last words of Paul (4:6-8). Last words are usually the most profound as they summarize what is most important to an individual. This letter shows us the most critical issues for Paul and what should be most important for our lives.

Central Lesson:

FAITHFULNESS is essential to SUCCESS in life and to PLEASING God.

Author: The book identifies the Apostle **PAUL** as the author (1:1). The Early Church Fathers identified Paul as the author throughout the first three centuries. They asserted this more for 1&2 Timothy and Titus than for any other epistles except Romans and 1 Corinthians.

Date: First Timothy was written about A.D. 66 or **67**. The book of Acts ends with Paul in a Roman prison (Acts 28), and the Bible gives very little detail of Paul's life and ministry after Acts 28. A study of the Pastoral Epistles requires Paul to have been released from his Acts 28 Roman imprisonment. Apparently, Paul continued his missionary endeavors, perhaps taking the

gospel into Spain as he had hoped, according to Romans 15:24, 28 and as early church tradition claims that he did. Later, Paul experienced a second imprisonment in Rome, where he was eventually beheaded.

Title: The book is named after the recipient—**TIMOTHY**, who was one of Paul's converts (1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 1:2) and closest companion. Timothy's name means "**one who honors God.**" Timothy was half Jewish and Gentile. Timothy's father was a Greek (Acts 16:1) who apparently had died before Timothy met Paul. His mother, Eunice, a single parent, and grandmother, Lois, were devout Jews who became believers in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:5). They taught Timothy the Old Testament Scriptures from his childhood (2 Tim. 3:15) but Timothy did not actually become a Christian until he met Paul.

Although Timothy was very young—probably in his late teens or early twenties—he had a reputation for godliness (Acts 16:2), and Paul took him with him on his missionary journey (Acts 16:1-5). Timothy became Paul's disciple, friend, and co-laborer for the rest of Paul's life and ministry. Paul often sent Timothy to the churches as his representative (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thess. 3:2), and at the time of writing the epistle of 1 Timothy, Timothy was serving as pastor of the church at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3).

Key Verses: 1 Timothy 4:5. (NLT). *"But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you."*

Secondary Key Verses: 2 Timothy 2:3 *"Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus"* (NLT). 2 Timothy 1:8 *"So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News"* (NLT).

Key Chapters: 2 Timothy chapter **2**.

Bruce Wilkinson, author of *Talk Thru the Bible*, comments: "**The second chapter of Second Timothy ought to be required daily reading for every pastor and full-time Christian worker. Paul lists the keys to an enduring successful ministry: A reproducing ministry (1-2); an enduring ministry (3-13); a studying ministry (14-18); and a holy ministry (19-26).**" (p.435).

Key Word: **ENDURE** (2:3, 10, 12; 4:5). **FAITHFUL** (2:13) and other similar words: reliable (2:2), continue (3:14), kept the faith (4:7).

Outline: - *Talk Thru the Bible* outlines 2 Timothy as:

- I. Persevere in Present Testing (Chapters 1-2)
- II. Endure in Future Testing (Chapters 3-4)

Bible Teacher, Ray Stedman, writes: "**This letter centers on four challenges that Paul wants to communicate to Timothy, his young son in the faith. These timeless challenges apply to today's Christians as well: 1. Guard the truth. 2. Be strong in the Lord. 3. Avoid the traps and pitfalls of life. 4. Preach the Word. If I had to write to a young person today, I am sure I could never find anything better to say.**" (*Adventuring through the Bible*, p.668).

Central Lesson: FAITHFULNESS is essential to success in life and to pleasing God.

Next Steps: ► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.