

The Church Is United Under Godly Leaders

Summary and Goal

The success of the church is measured by its faithfulness to the gospel. That's one of the reasons God equips the church with godly leaders who are willing to endure hardship for the sake of the gospel and passing on sound teaching to the church. Though charged with guarding the good deposit, leaders are not expected to do this in their own strength because the Holy Spirit lives in them to make them strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. We, in turn, should unite under godly leaders for the advancement of the gospel and to act as disciples who make disciples.

Session Outline

1. Godly leaders live unashamed of the gospel (2 Tim. 1:8-12).
2. Godly leaders guard the gospel through sound teaching (2 Tim. 1:13-14).
3. Godly leaders find strength in the grace of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:1-7).

Background Passage: 2 Timothy 1:1–2:13

Session in a Sentence

God gives the church leaders who are called and empowered by Him to live, proclaim, and guard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Christ Connection

Near the end of his life, Paul wrote to Timothy, one of his closest partners in ministry. Paul instructed Timothy on how to fulfill his calling as a leader in the church by living unashamed of the gospel, faithfully preaching the gospel, and finding strength in Christ. Because Jesus died to serve the church, pastors and leaders are called to live sacrificially to serve the church as well.

Missional Application

Because Jesus humbled Himself and served us to provide our salvation, we pray for and support the pastors given to us by God as they lead us in our mission of making disciples.

Group Time

GROUP MEMBER CONTENT

Introduction

EXPLAIN: Use the paragraph on page 84 in the DDG to raise the idea that the church's leaders have great influence upon the church.

The church, since the time she was called out of the world and formed, has risen and fallen around her leaders. When leaders are following Jesus and living for His glory, the church tends to follow that example and flourish. When leaders aren't focused on rightly dividing the Word and preaching the whole counsel of God, the church tends to drift away from her strong foundation.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



What are some ways you have seen leadership affect the culture of an organization? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

SAY: In 2 Timothy, Paul wrote to his young protégé Timothy to encourage him to hold strongly to the gospel and God's Word. Paul was hopeful that Timothy would hold to the pattern of sound teaching because Timothy's integrity and effectiveness as a leader were at stake, and consequently the health of the church that he led.

SUMMARIZE: The success of the church is measured by its faithfulness to the gospel. That's one of the reasons God equips the church with godly leaders who are willing to endure hardship for the sake of the gospel and passing on sound teaching to the church. Though charged with guarding the good deposit, leaders are not expected to do this in their own strength because the Holy Spirit lives in them to make them strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. We, in turn, should unite under godly leaders for the advancement of the gospel and to act as disciples who make disciples.

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Point 1: Godly leaders live unashamed of the gospel (2 Tim. 1:8-12).

READ: Ask a volunteer to read 2 Timothy 1:8-12 (DDG p. 85).

⁸ So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me his prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God. ⁹ He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. ¹⁰ This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹ For this gospel I was appointed a herald, apostle, and teacher, ¹² and that is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day.


EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 85) to emphasize that Paul encouraged Timothy to stay strong in the gospel by reminding him of the gospel.

What would encourage young Timothy to stand firm on the gospel? According to Paul, the answer was the gospel itself. God saves through the finished work of Jesus Christ, not by our works but by His grace through faith. Salvation is a gift from God, a rescue from the cords of death, and a pardon for our sentence of eternal damnation. Paul made it clear to Timothy that God saved him according to His purpose and grace determined before the beginning of time. Therefore, believers need not be ashamed nor afraid.

- Paul wrote that before time began, before the foundation of the world was laid, God chose to set His affections on Paul and Timothy—as well as you, me, and every other sinner saved by grace. Because of this gospel, our identity is secure—we are the beloved children of God. Knowing that the God of the universe, the One who created heaven and earth, has chosen us enables us to live with boldness and faithfulness, whether facing disagreements or death.

Commentary: The apostle Paul saw Timothy as a “dearly loved son” (2 Tim. 1:2). They had journeyed with each other for a long time, since early on in Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-5). As Paul was locked away in chains in Rome awaiting his death, his thoughts turned to encouraging Timothy in the faith. Timothy was reared in the Lord as a result of having a grandmother and mother who walked faithfully with Jesus (2 Tim. 1:5). While Timothy’s mother was Jewish, his father was Greek and most likely not a believer (Acts 16:1). But Paul became a spiritual father to Timothy. In this letter, Paul encouraged Timothy not to succumb to fear and faithlessness but rather to “rekindle the gift of God” (2 Tim. 1:6) and remember that God had not given them “a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment” (2 Tim. 1:7).

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

 What are some ways believers live ashamed or afraid with respect to the gospel? (believers may be afraid to share the gospel with others; believers might be ashamed of some beliefs of the Christian faith because they run counter to the culture; believers may refuse to stand up for the truth of the gospel when other criticize it; believers may fear the social or vocational consequences of living wholeheartedly for Jesus)


EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 85) to highlight Paul's example of remaining unashamed of the gospel even while suffering for Jesus' name.

The apostle Paul began this letter focusing on the gospel because without it Timothy wouldn't have a foundation on which to persevere. It's through the gospel that we receive justification, adoption, and assurance. Paul was motivating Timothy to embrace the fact that ministry may take him down a road of suffering similar to one that Paul had traveled. Ministry could very well cost Timothy his life. But according to Paul, Timothy shouldn't cower in shame or fear because his future in eternity was sure.

- Just as God chose to save Paul from eternity past, God also decided to allow Paul to suffer for His glory. In Acts 9, Jesus said to Ananias, who witnessed Paul's conversion, that this man would suffer for the name of Jesus as he took the gospel to the Jews and the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). Paul understood that suffering came with the call, and because of this, he didn't allow his suffering to make him ashamed of the gospel. Instead, he intentionally pressed in, counting it an honor to share in Christ's sufferings (see Phil. 3:7-11).

Application: Godly leaders are called to suffer for Christ's name. Sometimes people will use the suffering of leaders to try to discredit them. However, the church can make efforts to discern if a leader is suffering due to God's will or for their own foolishness by looking at the life of the leader. Is the leader believing, preaching, and spreading the gospel? Is he living with character that is worthy of the gospel? Is he unashamed of the gospel? If so, the church must encourage and support them just as Paul modeled before Timothy.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

 What are some ways believers can encourage their godly leaders? (believers can share with leaders what they have learned and how they are growing under their ministry; pray for them, publicly and privately; speak words of encouragement to them and refuse to gossip or criticize behind their backs; humbly submit to their leadership as they follow Christ in their own lives)

Point 2: Godly leaders guard the gospel through sound teaching (2 Tim. 1:13-14).

READ 2 Timothy 1:13-14 (DDG p. 86).

¹³ Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 86) to show that godly leaders must hold on to the gospel because it is God's guide for the holiness of the church.

The importance of the gospel is why the apostle Paul emphasized to Timothy to hold on to the pattern of sound teaching he had learned from Paul. This pattern was more than simply Paul's method of preaching and evangelism; rather, it is the truth and implications of the gospel. Like a treasure hunter holds on to a map, Timothy was to hold on to the gospel because it is God's gift to the church to steer her rightly. If leaders aren't holding on to and guarding the gospel, then they aren't leading well.

Voices from Church History

"The Church ... though disseminated throughout the whole world, carefully guards this preaching and this faith which she has received, as if she dwelt in one house. She likewise believes these things as if she had but one soul and one and the same heart; she preaches, teaches, and hands them down harmoniously, as if she possessed but one mouth."¹

—Irenaeus (c. 130-202)

- While Paul emphasizes that the gospel is of *first* importance (see 1 Cor. 15:1-4), the gospel has implications for all areas of life and doctrine so we know how to apply it in different situations. The apostle Paul saw the gospel as the sun of the Christian solar system that shines the light and gives life to everything it touches.² That's why Paul could provide practical advice to his churches and his spiritual children on matters of singleness, widows, marriage, sexual intimacy, and more.

Commentary: It's often assumed that Timothy met Paul during Paul's first missionary journey to Lystra and that he heard Paul's message and received the gospel then or that it added to what his mother and grandmother had been teaching him from childhood (see Acts 14:5-20; 16:1-2). When Paul revisited Lystra a few years later on his second missionary journey, according to Acts 16:1-5, we read that Timothy was highly regarded by the church and that he became a traveling companion with Paul on his journey. He witnessed Paul's ministry and the work of the Holy Spirit through Paul as the gospel was preached, believers were baptized, and churches were planted and strengthened. Timothy participated in Paul's writing ministry (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1), he was sent as Paul's emissary (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Thess. 3:2), and he received Paul's inspired writings (1-2 Timothy). Over the years, by his teaching and his example, Paul had laid out the blueprint of gospel ministry for Timothy, but Timothy had to be willing to follow it lest he lead the church astray or become shipwrecked in the faith himself (1 Tim. 1:19).

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

 How must the church evaluate her leaders to know they are guarding well the gospel entrusted to them? (their preaching and teaching must correspond to the truth of the Scriptures; evaluate their lifestyle for holiness; are their words and actions displaying God's love; are they promoting Jesus or themselves)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 86) to speak about **several ingredients** essential to guarding the gospel.

To hold on to the pattern of sound teaching, Paul let Timothy know that several ingredients are essential to guarding the gospel: **faith, love, remaining in Christ Jesus,** and **the power of the Holy Spirit**

- **Faith:** Without faith it's impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Unless we “fight the good fight of the faith” (1 Tim. 6:12), we will twist the gospel and manipulate it to our own ends.
 - **Love:** Ultimately love is greater than faith because love will always remain, whereas faith will cease to be (1 Cor. 13:13). Yet love is the perfect complement to faith as we were saved by God's love (John 3:16), and God poured His love into us upon salvation through His Spirit (Rom. 5:5).
 - **Remaining in Christ Jesus:** The term “in Christ” is found throughout Paul's letters and points to our union with Christ, which includes being a part of His body and receiving the support of His church.
 - **The Power of the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is at work in the world and in believers to protect the gospel. We must do this work through the Holy Spirit's power if we are to be successful.
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FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 86).

Edification takes place through the **fellowship** Christians share with one another and the church's preaching and teaching of **Scripture**, helping people understand and internalize the whole counsel of God. Edification is building up the body of Christ, **equipping** people to live on mission for the kingdom of God.

Essential Doctrine “Edification”: Edification refers to the progressive growth and maturity of the church, both individually and collectively. The Bible talks about different ways maturity, or edification, may happen, such as through the **fellowship** Christians share with one another (1 Cor. 12:26; Gal. 6:2). In addition, edification takes place through the church's preaching and teaching of **Scripture** (Eph. 4:11-12), helping people understand and internalize the whole counsel of God. In the end, edification is building up the body of Christ, **equipping** people to live on mission for the kingdom of God.

Point 3: Godly leaders find strength in the grace of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:1-7).

READ 2 Timothy 2:1-7 (DDG p. 87).

¹ You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

³ Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in the concerns of civilian life; he seeks to please the commanding officer.

⁵ Also, if anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶ The hardworking farmer ought to be the first to get a share of the crops.

⁷ Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 87) to provide a couple of reasons why Timothy, and we, should be strong in the grace of God.

The apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to be strong in the grace of God. Timothy needed strength because the last days—the period of time in which Timothy was ministering and up through our own day until Jesus returns—would be marked by difficult times and prevalent sin (2 Tim. 3:1-9). Timothy also would need the strength of God’s grace to take what he had heard from Paul and pass it on to others who would then be able to teach still more (2 Tim. 2:2). He needed to trust others with the truth.

- Timothy was to share Christ with people and build up the church amidst a generation that was self-centered and self-focused. The apostle Paul didn’t pity Timothy or lower Christ’s standards; instead, he encouraged Timothy with the truth that he had learned from God—God’s grace is sufficient for ministry and times of suffering (2 Cor. 12:9-10). Likewise, God’s unmerited, undeserved favor would keep Timothy through all of the challenges of his own ministry.

Application: Members of the church must pray for their pastors and other leaders as they seek to fulfill their calling. Many times this calling is difficult to accomplish because pastors feel burned out, isolated, and discouraged. The body of Christ must pray for their leaders but also take responsibility and make themselves available as those who also are ministers of the gospel. Timothy wasn’t the only one with a ministry. Paul’s vision was that there be faithful servants who would step up to the plate and keep the gospel train going.

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 87).

Priesthood of the Believer: God’s intention for humanity is that we be a kingdom of priests, not just a kingdom with priests. His ultimate purpose is that we come to God **directly**, through the mediating work of **Jesus Christ**, thus eliminating the need of another priest.

Essential Doctrine “Priesthood of the Believer”: God’s intention for humanity is that we be a kingdom of priests, not just a kingdom with priests. Although God set up the priestly system in the Old Testament due to the sinfulness of humanity and people’s need for a mediator, His ultimate purpose is that we come to God **directly**, through the mediating work of **Jesus Christ**, thus eliminating the need of another priest. Because of the work of Christ on the cross, exemplified in the tearing of the curtain that prevented access into the holy of holies, Christians are free to approach God with boldness (Rom. 5:1-5; Heb. 4:14-16).

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 87) to identify and explain the **three metaphors** Paul used to explain what it looks like to be strong in the grace of Christ.

Paul gave three examples of what it looks like to be strong in the grace of Christ:

- The first metaphor was derived from the military. Paul encouraged Timothy to take on the mind-set of **a good soldier** for Jesus as he shared in suffering.
 - The second metaphor was that of **a disciplined athlete**. Here Paul highlighted that being strong in the grace of Jesus looks like competing according to the rules.
 - The third metaphor was of **a hardworking farmer**. Here Paul’s emphasis was on the fact that the farmer gets to experience his share of the crops.
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- It is God’s grace that enables leaders to model the important qualities of good soldiers, disciplined athletes, and hardworking farmers. When congregations have faithful men who meet these qualities, they should unite around them in obedience and support, ready to live on mission for the glory of God and the good of the church.

Commentary: There’s debate on exactly what Paul was getting at when he mentioned the farmer being the first to get a share of the crops (v. 7). Some argue that Paul was encouraging Timothy to receive pay for his ministry willingly. Others think that Paul was pointing to Timothy’s future eschatological rewards. Still others argue that Paul’s emphasis was on the spiritual fruits of Timothy’s labors (i.e., those who come to faith in Christ). In general, it’s safe to conclude that Paul’s point is “no one who labors for the Lord will fail to be rewarded.”³

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.



What is the relationship between godly leaders and godly church members? (if the leaders are godly, you would expect their congregation to follow suit; a godly congregation will likely recognize, appoint, and follow godly leaders; the qualifications for godly leaders should largely characterize the members of the church as well; godly leaders and church members mutually love and care for one another)

My Mission

EXPLAIN: The success of the church hinges on her ability to believe, live, and protect the gospel of Jesus Christ. When a church loses the gospel, the church loses. What does it look like, then, to unite under godly leaders for the sake of preserving and advancing the gospel? For one, it looks like being unashamed of our leaders when they suffer. Second, we unite under godly leaders by walking worthy of the gospel. Finally, we unite under godly leaders by being disciples who make disciples. Paul's remedy to the brokenness in society and to people falling away from the church is faithful leaders pouring into faithful people. A focused church who lives to make disciples supports godly leaders and allows them to serve with joy (Heb. 13:17).

READ the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 88), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God's Word.

Because Jesus humbled Himself and served us to provide our salvation, we pray for and support the pastors given to us by God as they lead us in our mission of making disciples.

- **How will you respond to the gospel and encourage the leaders in your church?**
- **What are some ways your group can model suffering, holiness, and hard work for the gospel to the lost around you?**
- **With whom will you despise the shame of the world and boldly proclaim the good news of Jesus, who died and rose again for our salvation?**

Voices from the Church

"Because of the unparalleled power of the gospel, it is not something the biblical writers expect us to learn on the Romans Road and then leave behind. It contains everything necessary for success in the Christian life ... The way you grow in Christ is the way you began in Christ: faith in the finished work and the empty tomb. To progress is always to begin again."⁴

—J. D. Greear

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Lord Jesus, You are the great shepherd, and as the great shepherd, You provide leaders to guide and instruct Your people in the truth of the gospel. Thank You not only for dying to save us from sin but also for granting us all that we need for life and godliness, part of which includes the leaders to whom You entrust Your flock. Fill us with the Holy Spirit so that we will remain steadfast to proclaim the gospel of the glorious, all-sufficient, and ever-gracious God. Amen.

INSTRUCT: As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 89-91), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 92) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God's Word.

Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 89-91) will help group members get into God's Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 92) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 89-91) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 3** as a part of point 3 in the session: **Too often churches are divided because their leaders don't create a culture of discipleship and grace-filled community, but rather, they get distracted by passions that are contrary to the gospel and God's Word.**



Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God's Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 1:** "A sign of a healthy leader is that he or she has healthy relationships with others; their lives are marked by the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24)."
- **Day 4:** "As culture and trends in society steadily change, we need to remain stable by equipping ourselves through the Word and the gospel of Jesus Christ."



Visit www.GospelProject.com/Blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 92) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to share specific reasons with one another that they are thankful for the leaders in their local church.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

Additional Commentary

Point 1: Godly leaders live unashamed of the gospel (2 Tim. 1:8-12).

“These words of encouragement also bring Timothy face to face with the reality that suffering is an integral part of ministry. Paul suffered as a servant. Timothy, too, will suffer. Paul invites him to follow in his steps in proclaiming the gospel (1:8) of which Paul has been *a herald, and an apostle and a teacher* (1:11). Paul describes himself as a ‘herald’ to focus on his role as an announcer of the good news, as an ‘apostle’ to focus on his authority in doing so (he is ‘a sent one’), and as a ‘teacher’ to focus on his goal of establishing believers in the faith. Timothy should not be fearful because, like Paul, he is counting on the grace and mercy of God and is doing God’s work (1:9).”⁵

“The language of this verse and of verse 10 sounds creedal, but Paul did not introduce it with his faithful saying formula. Ideas similar to those stated here appear in other writings of Paul (1 Thess. 4:7; Eph. 2:8-10). In verse 9 Paul gave a brief expression of the gospel emphasizing particularly divine grace. Paul also emphasized two facts about Christ in verse 9. First, he affirmed the preexistence of Christ, for the divine grace of Christ became available ‘before the beginning of time’ (‘from all eternity,’ NASB). Second, he pictured Christ as the mediator through whom divine grace comes to human beings. The availability of God’s sovereign grace through Christ would brace the wavering resolve of Timothy. It was also important for Timothy to recall that God’s saving purpose had been at work before the world was founded. In typical Pauline style, the apostle amplified themes introduced in verse 1. The phrase ‘the will of God’ (1:1) is similar to ‘his own purpose’ (1:9). Likewise, ‘the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus’ (1:1) anticipates the ‘grace given in Christ Jesus [who] has brought life’ (1:9-10). In so doing Paul underscored these themes for Timothy.”⁶

Point 2: Godly leaders guard the gospel through sound teaching (2 Tim. 1:13-14).

“By urging Timothy to keep his instruction as the pattern for sound teaching, Paul set the theological parameters for the preaching of the gospel. But Paul was especially concerned about how it was done—about Timothy’s attitude—that it be ‘with faith and love in Christ Jesus.’ The attitude with which Timothy maintained his orthodoxy was almost as important as the orthodoxy itself. How different church history would have been if the church in succeeding generations had taken this to heart. How different the church would be if this were true today.”⁷

“After the manner of artists, Paul is saying, I have impressed on you the image of virtue, fixing in your soul a sort of rule and model and outline of all things pleasing to God. Hold fast to these things, whether you are meditating on any matter of faith or love or of a sound mind. Form your ideas from this pattern in the future.”⁸

“Some of us may lose status, privileges and position if we turn to Christ. Others of us may face taunts because we are suffering even though we are Christians. The question, ‘Where is your God’ is still hurled at us, just as it was at Paul and at the psalmist (Ps. 42:3). None of these things should make us ashamed. Christ warned us that we would have to endure suffering just as he endured suffering (Luke 9:23). If we truly know him, we can commit ourselves to him and focus on the important things, namely, following the teaching and example of godly Christian leaders and, *with the help of the Holy Spirit*, guarding the gospel that has been entrusted to us, just as a loyal servant would guard his master’s treasure (1:13-14).”⁹

Point 3: Godly leaders find strength in the grace of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:1-7).

“This section resumes the call to Spirit-empowered boldness. As in 1:6-14, Timothy’s call to ‘share in suffering’ (2:3) is paralleled by Paul’s own suffering (v. 9), and the endurance to which Timothy is called (v. 1) is mirrored by Paul’s endurance (v. 10). Furthermore, both sections open with a call to stay strong in Christ (1:6-7; 2:1-2), and the exhortations are each time rooted in the saving work of Christ (1:9-10; 2:8-10). **what you have heard from me.** Throughout this letter, Paul emphasizes the message Timothy has received from him (see 1:13; 2:8). As Paul faces death, he encourages Timothy to pass the gospel on to **faithful men** who will in turn **teach others**, so that the gospel is preserved for coming generations. Using three analogies, Paul sets forth the call to service and suffering. Verse 4 calls for single-minded desire to please God. Verse 5 reiterates that one must obey God’s rules in order to succeed. Verse 6 is the least clear but seems to encourage hard work by holding out the promise of blessing.”¹⁰

“Paul concludes this section with an appeal to Timothy to reflect (cf. 1 Tim. 1:7; Rom. 1:20; Eph. 3:4,20) on the truth of his words, assuring him that God will give him understanding (cf. 1 Cor. 1:19; Eph. 3:4; Col. 1:9; 2:2) in everything ... The main point of Paul’s threefold illustration is that Timothy must be willing to pay the price and endure hardship in the ministry according to the principle ‘no pain, no gain,’ remembering that ‘beyond warfare is victory, beyond athletic effort a prize, and beyond agricultural labour a crop.’ Likewise, Timothy should be motivated by the prospect of a reward. Even Jesus endured the cross for ‘the joy that lay before him’ (Heb. 12:2).”¹¹

References

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