

August 23, 2026

“Timothy, a Leader with a Legacy”
Lesson 4

2 Timothy 1:1-6
2 Timothy 3:14-16

Intro

Paul’s letters comprise a large portion of the New Testament. Timothy appears to be a co-author of several of Paul’s letters (2 Cor. 1:1, Phil. 1:1, Col. 1:1, Philemon 1:1). Paul studied under the famous rabbi Gamaliel, who he likely considered as a spiritual father. This relationship may have influenced how he felt and acted toward Timothy, as a son in the faith. Paul wrote two letters to Timothy while under arrest in Rome. Timothy’s ministry was as the pastor to the church in Ephesus. He can seem young, based on how Paul refers to him. But he was about 40 at the time of Paul’s second letter. In these letters, Paul offers spiritual guidance and encouragement to his spiritual son.

Read 2 Timothy 1:1-6

1. vs. 1: This is typical of how Paul begins his letters
 - He identifies himself as the writer, and also as “an apostle of Jesus Christ”
 - The other apostles were with Jesus during His earthly ministry
 - Paul was appointed an apostle “by the will of God”
 - He reminds Timothy that in Jesus we have “the promise of life”
2. vs. 2: Paul here identifies Timothy as the one he is writing to
 - He shows how he feels about Timothy, calling him “my dear son”
 - He is not just a spiritual “son”, but also “dear”—highly cherished by Paul
 - Paul gives his traditional greeting, asking for “grace and peace” for Timothy
 - The usual Greek greeting of the time was a wish for good health
 - Paul instead asks for spiritual health
 - God’s unmerited favor (grace), leading to wholeness (peace)
 - Paul also adds “mercy” to this greeting
 - This is every Christian’s desire for compassion from God
3. vs. 3: This verse begins a sentence that ends in verse 5
 - It was customary in letters of the time to offer thanksgiving
 - Paul offers his gratitude to God for himself and for God’s work for Israel
 - Paul is saying that he is serving the same God as his ancestors
 - He shows that spiritual heritage is passed down through generations
 - He finishes this verse by noting the importance of prayers
 - He thinks about Timothy constantly, praying for him with each remembrance
 - These frequent prayers indicate a deep love for Timothy
 - They also remind us of the need for intercessory prayer for others

4. vs. 4: Paul here desires to see Timothy face to face
Writing to him, or Timothy to Paul, isn't as good as seeing him in person
Usually Paul is the one traveling to see those he writes to
With Paul under arrest, Timothy will have to come to Paul
The cause of Timothy's tears are unknown, but they are likely spiritually grounded
Paul is encouraging Timothy's faith, and his work for the kingdom
Tears are a sign of difficult times that are challenging to deal with
Paul's desire to see Timothy would be an encouragement in a season of grief
5. vs. 5: Paul speaks of the sincerity of Timothy's faith
This means a faith that is genuine
In Timothy's case, it is because of his mother and grandmother's faiths passed on
Both of these women are Jews, who passed on their faith in God
Acts 16:1 described Timothy's mother as "faithful", likely meaning "a believer"
These two women seem to have been those who converted to Christianity
Timothy has been faithful in his devotion to God his whole life (see Acts 16:1-3)
Paul encourages Timothy to maintain that faithfulness to God
6. vs. 6: Paul here encouraged Timothy to remain active, to "fan into flame" his gift
The idea is to nurse something back to active life that may be growing stagnant
Paul encourages Timothy to keep his spiritual life and practice "glowing"
The "gift" Paul refers to here isn't specifically mentioned
It could be a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, like in 1 Cor. 12:7-10
It could be his ministerial gifts of preaching and leading
Both of these were given by the apostles by the laying on of hands

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-16

7. vs. 14: This verse begins a section founded on why we have confidence in our beliefs
Here, Paul reminds Timothy of the people he has learned from (Paul, his mother, etc)
What he learned from them is what his faith is based on
He has confidence in the integrity of his "teachers", so continue to believe what they taught
8. vs. 15: Here Paul refers to the Holy Scriptures that Timothy learned while growing up
These refer to the Old Testament
Paul describes the value of studying and learning the Scriptures
They make you "wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ"
Timothy can be confident in his faith because the OT taught about the Messiah, Jesus
Those Scriptures led him and his mother and grandmother to become Christians
9. vs. 16: This famous verse was written to Timothy as Paul gives reason for confidence in one's faith
All Scripture (OT and NT) is "God-breathed"
The messages come from God, not from man
Timothy can trust the Scriptures because they come from God
God used humans to write it down, but it is His message

Paul also says that Scripture is “useful” in four areas

- 1) Teaching reliable doctrine about God and His will
- 2) Identifying wrong and sinful behavior
- 3) Giving correction for incorrect behaviors
- 4) Showing the way to live a righteous (godly) life

All these areas are necessary to apply Proverbs 2:9 to our lives: to “understand what is right and just and fair—every good path.”

Application: Timothy’s rich heritage of faith was passed on to him by his mother, his grandmother, and his spiritual father. This is a reminder and encouragement to each of us to find the mentors we need to grow in discipleship, and then to develop into mentors ourselves. Timothy’s story shows us that spiritual heritage can come from many different places. If that heritage doesn’t come from one’s birth family, it can certainly come from the church family. Timothy is an example to us of having a spiritual heritage that lasts a long time, and continues to encourage through the tough times.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for our spiritual mothers and fathers. We are so grateful for what they have poured into our lives. Develop us into godly mentors and leaders as well, and to faithfully encourage our brothers and sisters when they face discouragement, hard times, or persecution. In Jesus’ name, Amen.