

Letters to Lead By

2 TIMOTHY 1:8–18

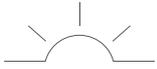
FIRST DAY: Introduction

Human nature tends to recoil from suffering and pain. We do everything in our power to avoid, alleviate, and disassociate ourselves from any form of suffering. It is natural to want to find a flaw or reason why suffering happens, in order to avoid that same pain in the future. The bad news is that suffering is inevitable in our broken world. However, there is good news! God will minister to us in our suffering, use our suffering for His glory, and more than compensate us in the life to come for all we have endured.

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul mentioned that because of his imprisonment, many in Asia had disassociated from him. Paul counseled his young protégé against such a reaction. Paul wrote, *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* (2 Timothy 1:8 CSB). Rather than disassociating from Paul, Timothy was to continue his association with Paul and to persevere in ministry by remembering God's great grace through the gospel. It is through the gospel that God's salvation, plans, power, and eternal purposes have been revealed. This great gospel is so wondrous, it is worth suffering for. Paul reminded Timothy that he had been called by God to be a minister of this great gospel, and that God would be with Timothy to give him the grace to bear up under whatever suffering might arise.

When suffering arises in your life, as it inevitably will, immerse your heart and mind again in the powerful and glorious gospel that has come to us through Jesus Christ. Take solace in the fact that God's grace is with you, will sustain you, will make suffering count for His glory, and will more than compensate with heavenly rewards!

Ask God to remind you of the great worth and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Greek phrase *to be ashamed* refers to being humiliated or disgraced by identifying with someone or something. Pastor David Guzik points out: *In the day Paul wrote this, it would seem strange indeed to follow a crucified man and call him savior. ...This is a testimony some would be ashamed of.*¹

SECOND DAY: Read 2 Timothy 1:8–10

1. Paul reminded Timothy that God had not given him *a spirit of fear*. Paul *therefore* exhorted him not to be *ashamed* of two specific things. Use 2 Timothy 1:8a to cite these two things:
 - a. *Do not be ashamed of*
 - (1) Paul was referring here to telling others about Jesus. Link this with Romans 1:16 and share your thoughts.
 - b. *Nor of*
 - (1) Notice that Paul considered himself **the Lord's prisoner**, not Rome's. What does this suggest to you?
2. Rather than being *ashamed*, what was Timothy to do? 2 Timothy 1:8b
 - a. Why do you think the *power of God* would be essential for this?

3. Paul then reminded Timothy of all that God had accomplished through *the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ*. In the chart below, use the following phrases from 2 Timothy 1:9–10 to respond to what God has done for us.

PHRASE	CROSS REFERENCE	YOUR RESPONSE
<i>Saved us</i>	Ephesians 2:1, 5	
<i>Called us with a holy calling</i>	1 Peter 2:9	
<i>Not according to our works</i>	Titus 3:4–5	
<i>According to His own purpose and grace</i>	Ephesians 2:8–10	
<i>Given to us in Christ Jesus before time began</i>	1 Peter 1:20–21	
<i>Abolished death</i>	Hebrews 2:14–15	
<i>Brought life and immortality to light</i>	1 Corinthians 15:53–54 Revelation 1:17–18	



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Three times in this chapter, Paul brought up the principle of *not being ashamed* of the testimony of Jesus or of those who *suffer* for it.

- a. Which of these acts of God stands out the most to you today?
 - b. Write your own short synopsis of the glory of the gospel message.
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4. Share something from your study today that emboldens you in your faith and encourages you not to be *ashamed of the testimony of our Lord*.

THIRD DAY: Read 2 Timothy 1:11–12

1. In 2 Timothy 1:11, Paul noted the three ministries to which he was *appointed* by God. Compare this with 1 Timothy 2:7. Why do you think Paul reminded Timothy of this?
2. According to 2 Timothy 1:12a, Paul suffered as a result of his calling to the gospel. *Nevertheless*, he declared that he was *not ashamed*. Consider Paul's sufferings from 2 Corinthians 11:23b–28. In light of this, why was Paul's boldness remarkable?

- a. What does this convey to you about the power of the gospel?

- b. How do you think Paul's example would have encouraged Timothy?

(1) Share a way Paul's example encourages you.

3. Use 2 Timothy 1:12b to fill in the blanks concerning Paul's confidence:

a. *For I _____ whom I have _____*

(1) Notice that Paul spoke of **whom** he knew, not just what he knew. Why is this distinction important?

b. *And am _____ that He is _____ to _____ what I have _____ to Him until that Day.*

(1) The word *keep* in this Scripture connotes *an entrustment or safe deposit*. Take a moment to list any concerns that you need to entrust to God.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Paul emphasized the person of Jesus Christ by saying *whom* in 2 Timothy 1:12. Bible scholar Warren Wiersbe said, *Salvation is not the result of believing certain doctrines. ... A sinner is saved because he believes in a person—Jesus Christ the Savior.*²

- (2) *That Day* refers to the day of Christ's return. What does this indicate about the things Paul *committed* to God?

- (3) What does it mean to you to know that God is *able* to safeguard, protect, and hold? See also John 10:28–29.

4. Briefly write your own declaration of confidence in God concerning your:
 - a. Family

 - b. Friends

 - c. Circumstances

FOURTH DAY: Read 2 Timothy 1:13–14

1. After encouraging Timothy to be bold for the gospel, Paul exhorted him to *hold on to the pattern of wholesome teaching you learned from me—a pattern shaped by the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus* (2 Timothy 1:13 NLT). Using 2 Timothy 1:13, capture the emphasis of Paul's exhortation to Timothy by writing the following phrases in your own words:

- a. *Hold fast*
- b. *Pattern of sound words*
- c. *Heard from me*
- d. *In faith and love*
- e. *Which are in Christ Jesus*

(1) From this exhortation, what phrase challenges you most?

2. Second Timothy 1:14a refers to God's Word as *that good thing*. In the NLT, this is translated *precious truth*. Share a reason the truth of God's Word is *precious* to you.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The word *pattern* was used in reference to an architect's sketch. It was the standard by which the builder's work was measured and tested.

a. This *good thing* had been *committed* to Timothy. This means that it was *a deposit, a trust consigned to one's faithful keeping*. How does this enhance the value of what has been committed to you?

3. Paul exhorted Timothy to *keep* what had been *committed* to him (2 Timothy 1:14b). To *keep* means *to guard or use wisely*. Why is it essential to treat God's Word in this manner?

a. *By* what means was Timothy to do this? 2 Timothy 1:14c

(1) Why is He essential for the safeguarding of the truth? See John 16:13–14.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Paul's reference to *Asia* was not the continent of Asia. Paul was referring to the Roman province located in the western region of Asia Minor, whose capital was Ephesus.

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, Jesus addressed churches in this same vicinity.

4. Considering God's faithfulness to *keep* what we *have committed to Him* (2 Timothy 1:12), what is your response to Paul's exhortation in 2 Timothy 1:14?

FIFTH DAY: Read 2 Timothy 1:15–18

1. Use 2 Timothy 1:15–17 to remark on the reactions of the following people to Paul's suffering:

a. *All those in Asia*

b. *Phygellus and Hermogenes*

c. *Onesiphorus*

(1) What do you think motivated the reactions of *Phygellus, Hermogenes, and all those in Asia*?

(2) Compare these reactions with Jesus's parable in Matthew 13:21. What do you see?

2. Use 2 Timothy 1:16–18 to note and comment on:

a. Paul's appeal for Onesiphorus (verses 16a, 18a)

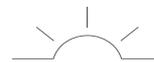
b. Onesiphorus's actions (verses 16b, 17, 18b)

(1) Commentators note that the name *Onesiphorus* can mean *profit bearing or help bringer*. Remark on how he lived up to his name.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Onesiphorus traveled some 800 miles to seek out the apostle Paul and minister to him.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

You would think that the Asian believers would have stood by Paul, but instead they were ashamed of him and at the same time (whether they knew it or not) ashamed of Christ (see 2 Timothy 4:16).³

—Warren Wiersbe

c. Onesiphorus's attitude toward Paul (verses 16c, 17b)

(1) Paul had urged Timothy not to be *ashamed* of him even though he was a *prisoner*. How do you think Onesiphorus was an example to Timothy?

(2) What does Paul's estimation of Onesiphorus suggest to you about those with supporting roles in ministry?

(a) How does this encourage you?

3. How does what you have studied today serve as a:

a. Warning (see Matthew 25:41–45)

b. Encouragement (see Matthew 25:34–40)

c. Inspiration (see Hebrews 13:3)

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. From your study this week, share a thought about the following phrases:
 - a. *Testimony of our Lord*
 - b. *According to the power of God*
 - c. *His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus*
 - d. *Abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*
 - e. *He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him*
 - f. *In faith and love which are in Christ Jesus*
 - g. *Keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us*
2. How does your study this week minister to you about:
 - a. Suffering
 - b. The call
 - c. The gospel
3. Conclude this lesson by committing anyone or anything that you are concerned about to the safekeeping of God.