

Walking Out the Word:
The First Epistle to Timothy

Important Background to I Timothy:

- During Paul's first missionary journey he came to Lystra in the Roman province of Galatia and apparently led Timothy, his Jewish mother Eunice and Grandmother Lois to the Lord. On Paul's second missionary journey he reconnected with Timothy who was growing in his Christian faith. Led by the Holy Spirit, Paul identified Timothy as an emerging apostle and invited him to travel with him. Paul instructed Timothy to first be circumcised, to avoid offending Jews because of Timothy's Gentile father. Timothy joined Paul's apostolic team and became a loyal son and trusted comrade. First and Second Timothy, along with Titus, are often referred to as the Pastoral Epistles, but would be better named the Apostolic Epistles. Paul is writing to his emerging apostolic son Timothy.
- I Timothy was written by Paul around 64 AD to Timothy who had assumed the pastoral assignment in Ephesus. Paul encouraged Timothy to battle against doctrinal error which combined twisted Jewish beliefs (1:3-7), and false asceticism (4:1-4) with Gnosticism. Paul encouraged Timothy to confront the false teachers who evidently had gained a place in the eldership of Ephesus. I Timothy instructs how to order worship in the church, how to raise up and release church leaders, and how to minister to a variety of people. While this letter has become a guide for pastoral leaders, it bears the marks of personal discipleship, mentoring and coaching of the young leader Timothy (1:18-19; 4:12-16; 6:11-16; 6:20-21).
- Paul reminded Timothy that he was chosen for the ministry and to fight the good fight (1 Tim 1:18). Timothy at the time of this letter was very discouraged and had some physical problems (1 Tim. 5:23). Paul charged his son in the faith to remember the "gift" that was given to him by prophecy and confirmed through the laying of the hands of the elders (4:14). He encouraged him to meditate on these positive things and to progress in his faith (4:15).

Things to talk about in Walking Out the Word:

- *Opening Discussion:* Talk about Paul and Timothy's relationship. Do you have people in your life that have served as spiritual father's or mothers to you? Talk about the impact that these relationships have made in your life.
- *I Timothy 1 and 2:* According to 1:5, what is the purpose of God's commandment in our lives? Describe a time when any of the following three things have been a problem for you: a pure heart; good conscience; sincere faith? Paul charges Timothy in 1:18 to remember those things prophesied over his life and to wage warfare. Have there been prophetic promises in your life that have helped you to stand strong in the midst of warfare? Use the notes in the *Spirit Filled Life Bible* under 1 Timothy 2 to guide your discussion on what Paul is saying concerning women's role in the church.
- *I Timothy 3 and 4:* What qualities does Paul call for in overseers, deacons and wives? Paul exhorts Timothy in 4:14 not to neglect the gift that was in him and confirmed through the laying on of hands. Are you fanning into flame the gifts and callings in your life? Are there gifts that you have neglected?
- *I Timothy 5 and 6:* What do we learn about the importance of caring for widows and family members in 1 Timothy 5? In 6:6 Paul says that "godliness with contentment" is great gain. Are you content, or do you tend to something better? According to Paul what happens when we desire to be rich?
- *Closing:* What instruction from 1 Timothy is the Holy Spirit highlighting for you to apply to your life? Take time to pray for one another that God's Word would be applied to our lives.

Walking Out the Word:
The Second Epistle to Timothy

Important Background to II Timothy:

- II Timothy was the last epistle written by Paul during his final imprisonment in Rome around 67AD. Paul stayed in the infamous Mamertine prison where criminals were chained to cavernous walls while they awaited execution. Paul was isolated in this dark fetid dungeon where food was lowered down to him through a hole in the ground. This prison was located above the foul sewers of Rome. When a prisoner died, they were simply lowered through a hole to the sewer below and the living prisoners would be forced to smell the decaying body. It is from Paul's cell that he writes this loving letter to his dear son in the faith Timothy.
- Paul is an old man now. Alexander the coppersmith had betrayed him (4:13-15) and Onesiphorus was only able to find Paul after searching (1:17). Paul was sending for his son Timothy and his words are very personal. He asked him to "bring the cloak"(4:13) because he was cold. He was also lonely with only Luke to keep him company (4:11). He knew that the insanity of Emperor Nero to persecute Christians would likely bring him to his death.
- Paul urgently writes to Timothy in order to impart the mantle of leadership to him. With Nero bent on destroying the church and with apostasy spreading through Europe and Asia, Paul knew that he could no longer travel to churches correcting error and establishing order. Timothy had served under him for fifteen years. Now in his mid-thirties it was time for him to step into a new level of leadership. Timothy had been prone to illness in his youth (1 Tim 5:23) and he tended to need encouragement to overcome his timidity (2 Tim. 1:7-8; 2:1,3; 3:12-14; 4:15). There was a chance that Timothy would not make it to Rome in time to see Paul before his death. Paul knew that this last letter to Timothy was critical.
- Paul charges Timothy to "stir up the gift of God which is in you" (1:6). Paul had laid hands on Timothy to confer blessing, share authority, and release power. Paul instructs Timothy to guard "that good thing which was committed to you" (1:14). Paul knows that the gospel will triumph (2:11-13; 4:8). Paul writes to Timothy to continue the labor of the gospel despite persecution, despite Paul's impending death, because the gospel message will prevail.

Things to talk about in Walking Out the Word:

- *Opening Discussion:* Talk about the introduction to 2 Timothy. Can you imagine what it would be like to be Paul spending his last days in the Mamertine prison? What would it have been like for Timothy to face losing a giant of a leader like Paul?
- *2 Timothy 1 and 2:* Have you ever struggled with fear like Timothy did? God is not the author of fear, what does God give us (1:6-7)? What do the lives of a soldier, athlete, and farmer teach us about the Christian life? What does it mean to "rightly divide the word of truth (2:15)?"
- *2 Timothy 3 and 4:* What characteristics of people does Paul describe in 3:2-5? How would these characteristics contribute to "perilous times" on earth? Which of these characteristics do you most need to guard against? Paul in closing his last letter to Timothy said that he was being "poured out as a drink offering" and that he had "fought the good fight" (4:6-8). As you evaluate your life presently, are you being poured out for others? Are you fighting a good fight of faith?
- *Closing:* In what areas do you presently need to be strengthened? Spend time praying for one another.