

2 TIMOTHY VERSE BY VERSE

Session 3 | 2 Timothy 2:1-7

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-7 | ADVICE TO BELIEVERS

- Verse 1 –
 - Though these words are directly to Timothy, they are fully Pauline (not based on prophecy) and can be safely applied directly to the believer.
 - Based on the fact that Phygellus and Hermogenes **turned away** (1:15) and Onesiphorus was faithful (1:16-17), Paul prays for Timothy to **be strong**.... It is easy to drift, and difficult to **be strong**.
 - It is interesting to note that the imperative, **be strong**, is in the passive tense.
 - Grace is not something you can actively be strong in, because grace is a gift that you receive, through faith.
 - Therefore, Paul says, in effect, "take every advantage of the blessings of grace, resting in grace and strengthened by it, never abusing it but always standing in it."
 - Note that Paul instructs that it is **grace** in which our strength is sourced. Rather than saying, *be strong in the law that is in Moses* we are to **be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus**.
- Verse 2-
 - As further indication that this instruction to Timothy is applicable to all the body of Christ, Paul instructs Timothy to take the Pauline teachings and pass them to **faithful men** who will, in turn, pass them to others. This makes the material non-exclusive to Timothy.
 - Note that **of me** is not *about me*, but *from me*.
 - The Greek phrase is used four other times in the New Testament, always with the meaning *from me*. (John 4:9, Rom 11:27, 2 Tim 1:13, Rev. 3:18).
 - In other words, Timothy is instructed to commit Pauline theology to faithful men who can teach others.
 - The Greek word translated **commit** is παρατίθημι [paratithemi]. It is from *para* (along side) and *tithemi* (to give).
 - *Paratithemi* is always used in the New Testament in giving something to someone who will have to take an active role in receiving it.
 - *Tithemi* by itself is an act of giving that requires no response from the recipient in order for it to do its work.
 - For example, Jesus says "I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn 10:15, 17,18), using *tithemi*. The life is given (and the price of redemption paid) whether the sheep receive it.
 - Or Romans 9:33, "I lay in Zion a stumblingstone," such a stone is what it is regardless of response.
 - *Paratithemi*, however, is always given with the option of doing something with it and becomes of naught if the recipient does not receive it.
 - Therefore, Timothy could lay the teachings of Paul down before faithful men, but it would only be valuable if they took these up themselves.
 - When a believer *commits* Pauline teaching to others, he/she cannot force them to take it. "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."
 - Ideally, one *Pauline believer* committing the truth to another, and then that person being **able to teach others also** is the way to change the world!

- Verse 3 –
 - The command to **endure hardness** is to be fulfilled **as a good soldier of Jesus Christ**. Paul will use three examples of Christian service, and **good soldier** is the first.
 - The word **therefore** lets us know that these three examples are illustrative of the **faithful men** who should carry the Pauline gospel.
- Verse 4 –
 - Paul gives further encouragement about being a **good soldier** (v. 3), namely being *unentangled* with **the affairs of this life**. The word **affairs** is *πραγματεία* [pragmateia], from which we get *pragmatics*.
 - This should not be used to build any kind of aesthetic lifestyle, free from worldly goods, for even a soldier takes care of the logistics of food, clothing, shelter, etc. But a soldier is always ready to enter warfare because he has managed affairs in such a way that there is not entanglement.
- Verse 5 –
 - Paul’s second example of **faithful men** is as one who will **strive for masteries**.
 - The Greek verb is *ἀθλέω* [athleo], from which we get *athlete*.
 - The athlete must *play by the rules* (i.e.: **strive lawfully**) or he will not win the competition.
 - While the *faithful one* in the Body of Christ is not under the law, he or she cannot “make it up as they go along.” There are theological rules, moral rules, social rules, etc., and these cannot be abandoned.
- Verse 6 –
 - Paul’s third example of **faithful men** (v. 2) is that of **the husbandman that laboureth**.
 - The Greek word *γεωργός* [georgos] is translated **husbandman**. It is from *ge* (the earth) and *ergon* (to work).
 - Thus it speaks of *one who works the earth*, that is, a farmer.
 - While the previous two examples focus more on the diligence of the **faithful men**, this verse focuses on the reward. It is the farmer who gets *the pick of the crop* and who will be **first partaker of the fruits**.
 - On all three, success only comes through long-term diligence and hard work. The body of Christ is needful of those who will “try, try again,” until it succeeds, being faithful to the end.
- Verse 7 –
 - Paul gives the command to **consider what I say**. The word **consider** is an imperative (a command).
 - It is followed by the phrase **and the Lord give thee understanding in all things**.
 - However, the word **and** is the English translation of the conjunction *γάρ* [gar], a word that is translated as *for* 1027 out of its 1067 usages.
 - The word is translated as *and* only in two other places (Acts 8:39 and 1 Thes. 4:10), and in neither place is it used as an “additional” type conjunction.
 - I believe that the way this verse should be interpreted is that *when we consider what Paul says, then (and only then) do we have full understanding of all things*.
 - This understanding comes from **the Lord** because the Lord gave the revelation of the mystery to Paul.
 - In fact, Colossians 1:25 shows that *without Pauline doctrine, we have an incomplete, “not filled” Bible*. The Pauline epistles are *essential* to having **understanding in all things**.