



# Daily Bible Habit

## Pastoral Epistles

Thomas F. Fischer, M.Div., M.S.A.

### Focus Points...2 *Timothy* 1

#### Listen To...

Paul's last words to Timothy. As he prepares for his own martyrdom, Paul urges Timothy to remain bold and unashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### Prayer:

Father, You have called us to serve You. As You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to save us, send us Your Spirit to renew our faith. Empower us to give bold witness of our faith even in the face of possible persecution. Give us Your Spirit so that Your Word might work in our hearts today. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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#### Commentary:

Paul's *Second Letter to Timothy* is one of Paul's final writings. As Paul prepared to offer himself as a sacrifice via martyrdom, he wished to share with Timothy his final words.

Because *II Timothy* contains Paul's final words, even casual readers will notice how this letter reads as if it were a final conversation between two friends and co-workers in Christ. Paul's words are tender, if not endearing. His words are also direct and encouraging. His words were memorable for Timothy. His inspired words have endured for two millennia. They are destined to be remembered by countless numbers of believers.

Paul appears to have written this letter from his prison cell in Rome. In chains, he is at the mercy of those like Onesiphorus (1:16) who risked his own arrest by visiting Paul in prison. Unnamed previously, Onesiphorus was one of those unsung heroes of faith in Ephesus. He was invaluable to Paul and the ministry at this major center of Christianity in modern-day Turkey. He was equally invaluable to Paul in prison.

"May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains." (1:16)

The Greek original emphasizes how Onesiphorus repeatedly "refreshed" Paul. The word for "refresh" also means "to cheer one up." Even strong Christians like Paul can get down in the dumps. Like us, Paul needed someone to pick him up and encourage him in faith...especially as he faced death.

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Paul opened this letter with a warm greeting and affirmation that he has served his Lord Jesus with a “clear conscience.” (1:3) Paul recalled Timothy’s tears (1:4), which underscored the close relationship they shared in Christ.

As made evident in *I Timothy*, Paul knew that Timothy needed encouragement. “So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner.” (1:8)

Paul is not “ashamed” of the Gospel (cf. 1:12). He does not want Timothy to be ashamed either. “God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power,” Paul wrote (1:7).

Paul urged Timothy to “Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.” (1:14) These were not empty words. Indeed, these words are one of the key emphases of *II Timothy*. Because of the persecution which was going on, the Church was hanging on by a thread.

“Everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. (1:15)

If these individuals could desert Paul, no one was immune to falling away. Paul prayed “night and day” for Timothy (1:3) that he would “fan into flame the gift of God.” (1:6)

Faith, especially under duress, always needs rekindling. Paul wrote to Timothy so that his faith would be re-energized for emboldened witness and ministry.

How bold is your witness? Do you back off when the heat’s turned up? If so, read Paul’s words to Timothy with a special focus so that God’s Spirit would rekindle your faith and witness.

**Prayer:**

Lord, I know that I’m subject to weakness in my faith. When I have a chance to speak Your Truth, I find it easier to back down...especially if I might experience hardship as a result. In every case, re-ignite my faith. Re-energize my passion that I may serve You without fear and with pure joy. In Your name I pray. Amen.

Thomas F. Fischer

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