

FOLLOW THE PATTERN

2 Timothy 1

Ever struggle with the desire to throw in the towel?

In ministry, I'm not aware of *anyone* who spends a lifetime in ministry without at some time telling the Lord:

"Let me out of here; even if it's flipping hamburgers at McDonald's"

Remember Jeremiah?

That's Timothy's attitude when Paul writes to him.

2 Timothy contains Paul's last written words available to us.

After Paul's release from Rome at the conclusion of Acts 28, he travels throughout the known world.

Finally he's arrested and sent back to Rome.

This time opposition and arrest is by Romans rather than Jews. He writes this last letter, expecting to be condemned to die.

When Paul writes, Timothy's still ministering in Ephesus.

He's feeling like a "whipped puppy!"

He's tired, frustrated, and discouraged—ready to throw in the towel!

Paul's purpose: to use his experience as the basis for an exhortation to Timothy to "hang in there,"

to be faithful in fulfilling the ministry he's been given.

3 key words: Entrust Endure Instruct

Letter's personal tone revolves around his farewell exhortations:

Faithfulness (1:6-18) Endurance (Perseverance) (2:1-13)
 Sound doctrine (2:14-26) Apostasy (3:1-17) Ministry (4:1-8)

GREETING 1:1-2 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord*

Expansion of 3 parts of greeting indicates that Paul wants to remind Timothy of the importance of perspective.

Author: Paul—develops 3 themes:

God's authority

Assurance of **God's calling**

Future hope: promise of life

All are **motives to encourage him to keep going.**

Paul reminds him of the promise of life.

Appropriate question to ask when you feel like throwing in the towel: "What will this look like from the perspective of eternity?"

Recipient: Timothy—reflects ...

Paul's personal concern for Timothy, his son.

He demonstrates a warm love for his spiritual son.

Greeting: Normal

THANKSGIVING FOR TIMOTHY 1:3-5 *I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.⁵ I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.*

Paul is grateful to God, as he contemplates the reality that he now serves God with a clear conscience.

Though chained in a cold, dark prison cell, he's continually reminded of Timothy and of the joy they've had, serving God together.

Paul knows about the tears!

He understands the struggle. He's "been there and done that."

He's tried to serve God faithfully.

Some people present Timothy as a timid young man, perhaps not naturally disposed for ministry.

Paul has to nudge him into active ministry. I ' m n o t convinced!

Observing people in ministry, *everyone* faces discouraging times—not just Timothy and Jeremiah!

If you're going to serve God, you WILL have days when you feel like throwing in the towel. [That's why Paul ...]

Paul prays for Timothy night and day.

When Paul thinks about Timothy, he's reminded of the tears he sheds, out of concern for the church, and affliction he suffers.

Paul wants to come to Timothy. He longs to see him, to encourage him, to be encouraged by him—mutual building up and support.

It'll be a source of joy for both of them to be together again.

Paul's especially thankful for Timothy's faith,

learned from example of his mother and grandmother.

It's a sincere faith—"without hypocrisy." Timothy's heart is in it!

Implies he's been open in expressing concerns in facing difficult times.

He's not faking it—not acting like he's something he's not.

Paul's sure Timothy has it; that he'll ultimately triumph.

Paul also knows where that faith came from.

His faith was passed down as a godly heritage,
from a godly mother and grandmother.

Those who have privilege of growing up with godly parents, should never stop thanking God for that heritage.

We'll never *imagine* how different life would be, if it weren't for their faithful encouragement to follow God.

EXHORTATION TO FAITHFULNESS 1:6-18

Paul exhorts Timothy to remain faithful in spite of suffering.

Faithfulness (1st exhortation) and endurance (2nd exhortation) go together—they're two sides of the same coin.)

Call to faithfulness 1:6-10 *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.⁷ For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline [=discernment!—to see the situation as God sees it.].⁸ So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,⁹ who has saved us*

and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

God called him and gave him ability to remain faithful.

Take advantage of ability God gave you; remain faithful.

6 –**Stir up your gift**—“*revive the fire*”—get excited all over again!

7 –**Don’t be fearful**—cowardice doesn’t come from God!

God provides power, love and discernment

(=< wisdom; ability to see God’s perspective)

When we see the pressure from God’s perspective,
we’re able to hang in there in the midst of the storms.

8 –**Don’t be ashamed!** (8a, 8b, 12, 16)

Significant theme-repeated 3 times

Paul’s concern: that we not give up, embarrassed to suffer.

In urging us not to be embarrassed, Paul reminds us of gospel:

(9) “*God saved us, not because of our works, but because of His purpose and grace which He gave us in Christ Jesus.*”

We aren’t saved by our works.

We could never be good enough to earn our way!

**It's by the work of Christ,
When we *trust Him* and *His* finished work,
God sees us IN HIM!**

8b, 10 –**Don't try to avoid suffering**

It's a "side benefit" of the gospel. It goes with the turf!
Paul knows what it means to suffer for gospel. He's in jail for it!

The worst they can do is kill us!

Jesus has made death ineffective.

Opposition can't defeat us.

Therefore, we shouldn't be *ashamed*. Boldly join the plan!

Paul's example of faithfulness 1:11-12 *And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.¹² That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.*

I'm not ashamed!

Paul has set an example for Timothy.

Paul is a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher, for the gospel.

That's why he suffers.

His commission comes from GOD.

Paul has also suffered; but he isn't embarrassed by it.

He doesn't throw in the towel!

Paul suffers => Timothy should expect no less!

When we attend **football game**—even on opponent's turf—we wear team colors. We want people to know who we're for! We see blue

and white shirts, with Manning family logo on the back! We're not ashamed! We yell and scream for our team. Why would we be less enthusiastic about identifying with *Jesus*?

Kent Hughes: Cites memorable words of **young preacher from Zimbabwe:**

I'm part of the fellowship of **the unashamed**. I have the Holy Spirit's power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made; I'm a disciple of His! I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.... I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I've stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ. I'm a disciple of Jesus."

THAT's commitment! Is that how we feel about following Jesus?

Paul isn't ashamed

because he knows Whom he is trusting.

He trusts God to protect the treasure.

He has assurance, He knows WHOM he is trusting

He *doesn't* say I know WHAT I'm trusting—though he knows *what*.

Reason he isn't ashamed: he knows WHOM he is trusting.

He's secure because he's trusting Christ, rather than himself.

He's secure because he knows Christ is able to keep what we've entrusted to Him.

God can protect the treasure

God can keep the deposit

(which Paul has entrusted to God)—it's safe with Him!

This passage suggests a "side bar" that needs clarification:

I'm often asked if we believe in the **perseverance of the saints**.

I want to say clearly: I *don't* believe in perseverance of the saints.

As Ironside used to say "*I know too many of them!*"

Paul affirms **the perseverance of GOD!**

"I'm persuaded that HE is able to keep what I've committed to Him!"

Call to guard sound teaching 1:13-14 *What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.*

Now it's Timothy's turn to imitate Paul's example

–to take the deposit entrusted to him and guard it.

Now the message has been entrusted to Timothy. He should keep it.

FOLLOW THE PATTERN Paul placed before us
We can only follow the pattern by the power of the Spirit.

God resides in us.

God makes us capable—it depends on HIM, *NOT* us!

We'll never pull it off by our efforts.

We'll never be able to hang in there and remain faithful.

Tonight we'll see what happened to Peter.

He was REALLY determined to be faithful! But, ...

Illustrations and alternatives 1:15-18

In the past some have remained faithful; some have not.

Paul cites examples Timothy knows of some who've taken each path.

Timothy has to choose which he'll imitate.

Example of unfaithfulness 1:15 *You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.*

Are YOU going to throw in the towel, like those from Asia?,

Example of faithfulness 1:16-18 *May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.¹⁷ On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me.¹⁸ May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.*

Are you going to continue in the struggle, like Onesiphorus?

In spite of cost, he remains faithful.

He has identified with me, in spite of great personal risk.

He isn't well-known.

Without this letter, we'd never know he encourages Paul.

He comes along quietly and encourages his friend and leader.

LESSON FOR US TODAY

Paul sets before us a clear choice:

Will we follow Christ faithfully?

Or, will we throw in the towel, and go back to flipping hamburgers?

Will we identify with Christ in His suffering?

Or, will we go underground, hoping to escape the pressure?
Hughes: “God is looking for a few good “nobodies”—people who know they cannot succeed in serving him in their own strength. These are the people who are able to stand tall and who will unashamedly testify about Jesus. Like Paul they’re unashamed of the gospel because in their weaknesses they rely on the Holy Spirit. These are the people who join in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. ...These are the people who keep the pattern of sound teaching and guard the gospel.”

Will WE join them?