



2 Timothy Growth Group Studies

**Trinity Church Adelaide
Bible Study Series 2026**

2 Timothy

What would you like your last words to be? It's a pretty sombre thing to consider, isn't it? Captain Lawrence Oates famously said "*I am just going outside and may be some time.*" before leaving his comrades in the hopes that his sacrifice would enable them to survive the Antarctic expedition. As we turn to 2 Timothy, we come upon the Apostle Paul's last recorded writing in scripture. It is here that his pastoral heart, his gospel conviction, and his trust in God, all are on display.

Some time has passed since Paul wrote 1 Timothy. Back then, Paul was on the road, engaging in mission, and had sent Timothy to lead the church in Ephesus. Timothy was a young teacher, and Paul wrote to encourage him and strengthen him for this ministry of running the church in the face of false teaching. In 2 Timothy, Paul is no longer free, but imprisoned (1:8, 12, 16; 2:3, 9; 3:11-12; 4:16-17). He knows he is facing death any day now (4:6-8). He longs for Timothy to carry on his gospel mission and his opposition to false teaching (1:13-14; 2:1-7, 14-26; 3:14-17; 4:1-5). And - on a personal note - Paul longs to see Timothy one more time (1:3-5; 4:9, 13).

As we turn to Paul's last words, there is much to be encouraged and challenged by. Will we entrust ourselves to the God who defeated death, sin and evil, even when it means suffering? Will we stand against false teaching? Will we live to please our God - our ultimate commanding officer - even when it means sacrificing pleasure and comfort here and now?

Study 1 - Guarding the Gospel

2 Timothy 1

As Paul remembers Timothy, he recalls that both Lois (Timothy's grandmother) and Eunice (Timothy's mother) had a faith which now lives in him. How far back can you trace your Christian family history?

What in the world around us might make Christians feel timid or ashamed of being Christian?

Read 2 Timothy 1

Was there anything new or peculiar that you noticed as we read the passage?

Unlike any other letter, Paul makes a reference to his apostleship being "*in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.*" Where else do you see Paul discussing new life - resurrection life - in 2 Timothy 1? Why might this be on his mind when writing this letter?

What do we know about Timothy from the rest of the New Testament? Look at the following passages and complete the table below:

Passage	What it tells us about Timothy
Acts 16:1-5	
Acts 17:13-15; 19:21-22	
1 Corinthians 4:14-17	
Philippians 2:19-23	
1 Thessalonians 3:1-6	
1 Timothy 4:12; 5:23	

Based on all these passages, what kind of man is Timothy? What do we know about him?

Why does Paul give thanks for Timothy?

Paul urges Timothy to “*fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*” What gift do you think this might be? (hint: check out 1 Timothy 4:13-14)

How do we see each of the three persons of the Trinity at work in 2 Timothy 1?

Why might Timothy - and others, like Phygelus and Hermogenes - have been tempted to be ashamed of Paul, or ashamed of the gospel? What does Paul call Timothy to do instead?

A family friend, Ash Haymed, shares with you over dinner *“I’m all for being a Christian, but it’s something that’s meant to be private. The other day this new hire started at work, and one of the first things he said was that he was a Christian, and that he’d seen me before at a Christian conference. I wanted to die - imagine what my colleagues think of me now!”* How would you respond to Ash?

Paul’s big instruction for Timothy in this passage is to *“Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”* (v14; also in 1 Timothy 6:20) But how is Timothy to guard it? We should think less of guarding by keeping it hidden and secret, like keeping money in a safe, and more like ensuring that it is shared and spread well, like in investing money in different endeavours. The gospel is guarded by being lived out and shared with a world that deeply needs it. And the gospel is guarded by being faithfully entrusted to godly men and women who can in

turn, entrust it to others (more on this in 2 Timothy 2!). This is all done in the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in God's people. But we do have a responsibility on our end to cooperate with the Holy Spirit too!

As a group, do a diagnostic: how are you going at guarding the gospel? You don't need to answer all of these in a group setting, but it's worthwhile considering.

a) Guarding the gospel *in belief*

- Do you know *why* you believe what you believe?
 - Take 30s in pairs, and explain what the gospel message is.
 - If you were to look at one of the Ecumenical creeds (e.g. Apostle's Creed, Nicene Creed), could you explain why you confess this is what you believe?
 - Trinity Church Adelaide is *evangelical, reformed* and *Anglican* in our beliefs. Could you explain what those mean?
- Do you know *why* you do what you do in church?
 - Could you explain why you have/have not been baptised?
 - Can you explain who should or shouldn't take communion?
 - How does a belief in the gospel impact how we serve and how we approach financial partnership with God's people?
 - Could you explain if Christians need to obey God's law?

b) Guarding the gospel *in evangelism*

- Are you actively praying for non-Christians in your life to come to know Jesus?
- Do non-Christians in your life know that you're a Christian?

- Would non-Christians in your life say that you want them to become Christians?
- Could you explain the gospel to a non-Christian friend if they asked you what you believe?
- Have you invited a non-Christian friend/family member to read the Bible with you? Or to come to church with you? Or to go to an evangelistic event or Explore with you?

c) Guarding the gospel *in leadership*

- What do you think is most important in Christian leadership?
- Do you pray for your Christian leaders?
- Do you pray for more godly men and women to step into leadership?
- Do you partner with those who are being trained in ministry - financially, prayerfully, and with joy?
- Do you openly pray to God whether you might be a person God wants to use as a leader of his people?
- If you're in a position of leadership, do you seek to raise up more godly men and women to be leaders of God's people?

Pray

Look over Paul's words in vv9-10 - his reflection on why God has saved us and poured out his grace on us. Doesn't that move you to delight and praise of God because of who *he is*? Take some time as a group to praise God for his grace, and pray for more and more people to come to know it for themselves too.

Study 2 - Strong in the Gospel

2 Timothy 2

What are some of the most obscure, unusual or strange ideas you've heard people say for being strong or healthy?

What indicators of a strong Christian can you think of?

Read 2 Timothy 2

Was there anything new, confronting or peculiar that you noticed as we read the passage?

Paul starts this chapter with a "*you then*" or "*you therefore*" (depending on translation). Either way, Paul is referring back to something. What could Paul be referring to when he tells Timothy to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus? Why does Timothy need to be strong in this grace?

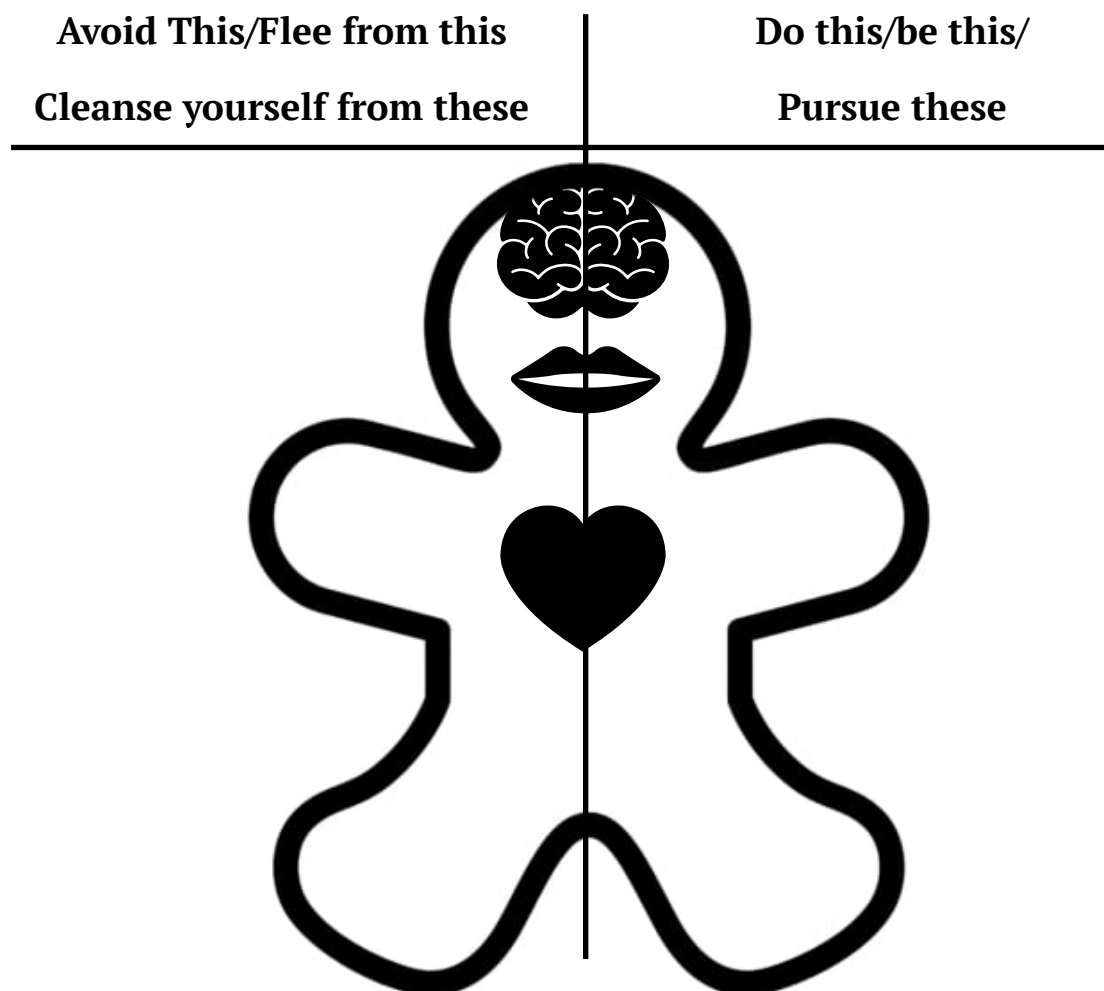
What's Paul's plan when it comes to guarding the good deposit of the gospel through godly teachers?

In vv3-7, Paul gives us three different images of different workers who have to exercise discipline for a reward. Complete the table below: why does Paul use each of these images?

	How they work hard/suffer here and now	What reward they are pursuing	How this connects to Christian service
Soldier (vv3-4)			
Athlete (v5)			
Farmer (v6)			

There are very few places in the New Testament where the content of the gospel is actually laid out (i.e. “this is my gospel”), but 2 Timothy 2:8 is one such place. According to v8, what is the gospel? How would you explain why this is the good news?

Skip over vv11-13 for a moment, down to v14ff. Paul gives Timothy instructions as to what kind of worker he is to be before God - one who correctly handles the word of truth and has no need to be ashamed (v15). What does this look like? What doesn't it look like? Use the diagram below and fill out both sides of it based on vv14-26.



Based on your unpacking of vv14-26, what does it mean for Timothy to be strong in the grace of Jesus Christ as a leader of God's people?

Why do you think Paul includes this trustworthy saying (vv11-13) in 2 Timothy 2? How does it connect what has come before to what comes after?

A newcomer to church, Pete Hantick, takes you aside after the service finishes. He shares *"I'm surprised that your church doesn't spend more time focussed on the identity of the antichrist - especially with the global events happening right now. Iran and Ukraine and Russia - it's Gog and Magog happening in real time! Why doesn't your church spend more time talking about these things?"* How would you respond to Pete?

In vv20-21, Paul calls for his readers to cleanse themselves from common/dishonourable "articles," in order to become instruments for honourable use, holy, useful to God and prepared for every good work. Based on your reading

of the passage, what are these dishonourable articles that Timothy is called to put off? Is there an equivalent for you, that you could be putting off in order to be holy, useful to God and prepared for every good work?

2 Timothy 2:24-26 gives a beautiful picture of being strong in God's grace to those who oppose it. The image is not of a skilled debater powerfully demolishing the argument of their opponents, but of a gentle, patient teacher, praying for their listener to come to a knowledge of the truth and repentance. There is absolutely a place for skilful apologetics, for intellectual arguments and addressing falsehood for what it is. But if our goal isn't for others to come to know Christ and love him for themselves, then our arguing is only of limited value. Not all of us are in positions of leadership like Timothy, but as members of God's church family, we do have an important role to play in one-anothering each other. It's not just a pastor's job to disciple or to instruct or to teach, but all of our work (Colossians 3:16). As you think about yourself:

- Are you quarrelsome/quick to provoke arguments and debates, and call out others for false beliefs? Whether in person or online, are you seeking the conversion of the person you are engaging with, or are you just in it for the love of the debate?
- Are you gentle - kind to those you talk to - but never seeking to instruct those who disagree with you, to the point where they wouldn't even know

that you don't agree with them? In this case, are you really hoping they come to repentance? Or do you just not want to rock the boat?

What might it look like for you to long even more for opponents to come to a knowledge of the truth - to come to their senses, escape the trap of the devil, and to repent? Share around the group, and pray for each other, as you consider the opportunities you have to instruct people in your life.

Pray

Study 3 - Convinced of the Gospel

2 Timothy 3

If you were trying to convince someone else of a controversial opinion (e.g. that pineapple really does belong on pizza, or that country music is superior to all other genres), how would you do it?

Think about some of the Christians who modelled faith to you. What aspects of their faith have really impacted you and how you consider who Christ is?

Read 2 Timothy 3

Was there anything new or peculiar that you noticed as we read the passage?

Paul opens this chapter with a warning about the last days, describing what people will be like in these days. Look through the list, and define what each of these mean and what evidence you might see that shows someone lives like this.

Characteristic	What this means	Evidence that someone does this
Lovers of themselves		
Lovers of money		
Boastful		
Proud		
Abusive		
Disobedient to parents		
Ungrateful		
Unholy		
Without love		
Unforgiving		
Slandorous		
Without self-control		
Brutal		
Not lovers of the good		
Treacherous		
Rash		
Conceited		
Lovers of Pleasure		

What does it mean to have a form of godliness but to deny its power?

We get a passing reference to Jannes and Jambres - in the Jewish tradition, these men were prominent magicians in Pharaoh's court, who opposed Moses and continually sought to undermine God's true work for Israel. What is Paul trying to communicate by referring back to them?

In contrast with the types of teachers in vv1-9, Paul outlines his credentials as a teacher of the gospel to Timothy. Why do you think Paul highlights the persecutions he experienced?

What reasons does Paul give for why Timothy is convinced of the gospel?

According to vv14-17, what things do the scriptures do?

In v12, Paul says “...everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...” For Christians in Australia today, what does this persecution look like? What about Christians in other parts of the world?

A family friend, Thy Ching, shares, “*I don’t understand why someone’s personal life impacts what kind of teacher they are. I have no idea about my statistics lecturer’s life, and I know my sociology professor is divorced and has been arrested for her involvement in a protest. But they are both fantastic teachers. Doesn’t feel like it matters how someone lives or why they’re teaching.*” How would you respond to Thy?

To say that all scripture is God-breathed is to make a claim that God inspired the writing of the Bible. Not just that God and his works in the world were the inspiration, but to say that God, by the Holy Spirit, was behind the

authorship, the wording, and the final editing process of each part of scripture to make himself known accurately to his people. Christian scholar Donald Bloesch puts it this way:

Inspiration produces a reliable testimony to the works of God because the Holy Spirit not only inspired the writers but also sanctioned what was written. He guided them toward what they were not always able to see and understand through their own power. They were limited in their vision but not mistaken in what was given to them to understand.¹

To claim that *all* scripture is God breathed and is useful for its purposes means there is benefit from *all* scripture for us too. In v17, Paul articulates that the core benefit is to equip God's servants for *every good work*. Reading, studying and applying God's word is of the highest importance.

- How much of the Bible have you personally read through (whether reading or audiobook)? Are there parts of the Bible you feel less familiar with? What might it look like to seek to read more parts of scripture - especially in our privileged position of having regular, easy access to all scripture in our own language?
- Have there been any plans and/or devotional materials you've used that have been helpful to you in reading scripture? Recognising that plans and devotional materials *aren't* inspired by God in the same way as scripture, what caveats or rules might we consider around using them?

¹ Donald G. Bloesch, *Holy Scripture: Revelation, Inspiration & Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 127.

- When you read the Bible, how much of it stays with you throughout the day? How much do you meditate on what you have read as you work, study, rest, eat, and socialise? How much do you work on memorising scripture? After all, the more you keep scripture in your mind, the less likely you are to hear but not put into action (cf James 1:22-25).

As you think through the above questions, what might it look like for you to grow in these areas? How can you as a group encourage and support one another in embracing all of scripture more and more?

Pray

You might like to pray for those in other parts of the world who:

- Are facing more intense persecution for their faith - you might like to use a resource like Open Doors, Barnabas Aid or Voice of the Martyrs to inform your prayers for those facing persecution.
- Don't have access to the scriptures in their own language - you might like to use a resource like Wycliffe Bible Translators or the United Bible Societies to inform your prayers and thankfulness for those who are helping bring *all* scripture into the hearts and minds of people from every tribe, tongue and nation.

Study 4 - Finishing in the Gospel

2 Timothy 4

If your group is up for it, get some small pieces of paper, and write some prompts for charades. Make sure you include some of the following prompts from 2 Timothy 4: preaching, itching ears, evangelism, pouring out a drink offering, departure, good fight, finishing a race, crown of righteousness, desert, lion's mouth.

What's on your bucket list - the experiences or travel destinations or objectives you have - for before you die?

Read 2 Timothy 4

Was there anything new or peculiar that you noticed as we read the passage?

What does Paul invoke when he gives Timothy this final written charge? Why do you think he invokes them?

What is Paul's charge to Timothy? What particular reasons does he give for why he is giving Timothy this charge?

Paul gives several images in vv6-7 to describe how he has lived his life in service to God. In the space below, choose one of them to draw a picture of (whether or not you feel you're a good artist!).

One of the images Paul uses is that he is being poured out like a drink offering. Look at Numbers 15:2-10. What do you notice about drink offerings? What might Paul be communicating about how he his life has been offered to God?

Another image Paul uses is of a crown of righteousness for him and for all who have longed for Jesus' return. He has already discussed the idea of receiving a crown in 2 Timothy 2:5. What does Paul mean by a crown of righteousness?

Paul gives a list of names of those who have left him (Demas), or who he has already sent to other places (Crescens, Titus and Tychicus) or who opposed him (Alexander). Luke is with him. Who, and what, does Paul ask Timothy to bring when he comes to Paul in Rome?

Look at the list of names in v19. Where do we think Timothy is when he received this letter? (hint: check out Acts 18:19-26).

Pulling together 2 Timothy 4 - and the letter as a whole - how would you summarise Paul's goal in writing this letter?

Victoria Verall, a Christian friend who goes to another church, shares with you *"Paul declares that the Lord will rescue him from every evil attack and will bring him safely to God's heavenly kingdom. This means that Christians know we'll be delivered from suffering and evil here and now - there's no place for being defeatist about suffering or persecution or disease. This victory is ours in Jesus - we need to believe it and claim it!"* How would you respond to Victoria?

In 2 Timothy 4, Paul sets his sights - and ours - on the return of Jesus (v1, 8, 18). On Jesus' Kingdom. On his return. Christians are called to live conscious of that day, to long for its appearing, to speed on its return. One of the tragic

names listed in 2 Timothy 4:10 is Demas, who has deserted Paul *because he loved this world*. We're not told whether this is Demas abandoning the faith or being a Christian who has embraced distraction and distanced himself from loving Jesus and his appearing. But the tragedy is clear; Demas, who was alongside Paul as a willing servant of Christ in the face of his imprisonment (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24), has decided this is too much for him. In contrast, though, Paul eagerly wants Timothy to bring Mark with him, because he is *helpful* to his ministry. What a major transformation! John Mark - the same John Mark who deserted Paul and Barnabas on their mission trip (Acts 13:13). The same John Mark who Paul refused to have join him on another mission journey, to the point of splitting from Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40). This same Mark has become helpful to Paul's ministry! There is a pathway back from loving this present world and shrinking back from the suffering of the gospel.

How about us? Do you live longing for Jesus' return more than for this present world/age? Some diagnostic questions to consider:

- How much emotional energy and time do you have invested in the things of this world? Whether sport, or the arts, or research, or world news, or TV series, or novels - do you use these things as one not engrossed in them (1 Corinthians 7:31)? Or are you a fanatic?
- How much of your rest time do you dedicate to *disconnecting* from everything - not just the things of this world, but even the things of God? Escapism - whether into novels, or video games, or streaming services - is not the cure for a love of this world.

- What's on your bucket list? And how seriously do you long to achieve all these things before you die? There's nothing wrong with travel, or enjoying God's good creation, or learning new things. But to what extent does Jesus' return date impact what goals you have?
- Where is your money tied up? Do your regular transactions and bank balance say your hope, your comfort and your dreams are more in this world, or in Jesus' return?
- What do you pray for? After all, one of the earliest Christian prayers is "come, Lord Jesus, come." Are you longing for his return in your prayer life?
- Does your approach to relating to non-Christian friends, family, colleagues or fellow parents at school drop off and pick up say you want to belong to this world, or to the coming Kingdom of Jesus? Is evangelism something you feel is part of your Christian life here and now, or an optional extra?

How might you grow in loving Jesus' return even more? In investing in the kingdom to come? Having done this diagnostic, share as a group how you might grow to love Jesus' return more and more.

Pray