



Growth Groups Material
(5 studies on 2 Timothy)
Feb-Mar 2025
LEADERS GUIDE

Teaching Schedule

<i>In our gatherings we will work through a 5-part series:</i>	<i>30 Jan – 2 Feb</i>	2 Timothy 1:1-2:2
	<i>6-9 Feb</i>	2 Timothy 2:1-13
	<i>13-16 Feb</i>	Thu Church: 2 Timothy 2:14-3:9 Sat/Sun: Overall Deputation (CMS)
	<i>20-23 Feb</i>	Thu Church: Overall Deputation (CMS) Sat/Sun: 2 Timothy 2:14-3:9
	<i>27 Feb-2 Mar</i>	2 Timothy 3:10-4:8
	<i>6-9 Mar</i>	2 Timothy 4:9-22

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Additional Resources

We've put together some additional resources that might help you as you make your way through this series:

<https://jannalianglican.org.au/2timothy/>



Introduction

If you knew you didn't have long, what would be your final words? What's so important that you'd just have to say it while you still could? Paul writes to Timothy at what he senses is the very end of his life. He's in prison in Rome for sharing the news that Jesus is King and Saviour of the world (see Acts 20-28). History tells us that Paul was probably executed during the reign of Emperor Nero (AD64-68). This letter is therefore Paul's way of *passing the baton to Timothy*, before he loses his chance. At the time of the letter, Timothy is the leader of the churches in Ephesus, and is facing challenges including opposition from ungodly, influential false teachers. Paul urges Timothy to guard the true gospel that had been handed down to him by Paul. He must stand firm and continue declaring the truth. This task is not without reward, however: Paul often lifts Timothy's vision to the wonderful future hope Christians have because of Jesus.

Although the letter is written to a church leader, it's relevant for all of us. The things Timothy is encouraged in are the same aims for all believers: to be godly; to stand firm in sound doctrine; to pass on the gospel to others. As such, it's best not to think of the letter as 'one pastor writing to another pastor about how to be a pastor', but rather as 'one Christian writing to another Christian about how to be a Christian'. As we adopt this mindset will see that we share the same gospel as Paul and Timothy, the same eternal hope, similar challenges. And, of course, the same call to emulate the Lord Jesus in his cross-shaped life: suffering then glory. It goes without saying there's a lot at stake if the true gospel isn't guarded from error and handed down to others.

We're praying for God to use this letter to grow each of us in Christ-like character so that His gospel would be guarded and promoted.

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Note for leaders:

- Leaders' notes look like this (dot point, grey shading)
- Please refer group members to the QR code on page 2, if they would like to explore further resources.
- As usual, please don't feel compelled to do every question. I encourage you to tailor the study to suit your group.

Note: it will be tempting throughout this letter to diminish it's applicability to 'the everyday Christian' because it's written to Timothy (a church leader) and much of it focuses on his role as a leader. Please work hard to avoid this temptation and remind people that many of the principles and encouragements Paul gives to Timothy are relevant to us all. The things Timothy is to aim for, like godliness, endurance amidst suffering, faithful adherence to the Bible, is the same for all Christians.

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Study 1 | 2 Timothy 1:1-2:2 (members book page 6)

Introduction

1. 2 Timothy is considered to be Paul's last letter, written to his dear friend and Christian brother Timothy. Look up the following verses to get acquainted with Timothy. What can we know about Timothy and his role? (Acts 16:1-3, Rom 16:21, 1 Cor 16:8-11, Phil 2:19, 1 Thess 3:1-2, 1 Tim 1:3)

- This is an orientation exercise to help us have some understanding of the context of the letter. Timothy was a younger believer Paul met on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3), but who became his closest companion in missionary work. Paul often speaks of him very highly. It appears Timothy was appointed by Paul to lead the church in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3) and it's his work there that is the likely context for both of Paul's letters to him.

2. If you were given an opportunity to share your final words in life, what would you say?

- The aim of this question is to simulate Paul's circumstances. As you read the letter you get the impression that Paul is leaving his 'final instructions'. The idea of our 'final words' usually helps us focus on what we consider most important. That is certainly the case for Paul throughout the letter. It's good from the outset, to understand Paul's frame of mind when writing. Paul wants to ensure that Timothy sees the incredible preciousness of the gospel message, and as a result, want to guard it and pass it on faithfully.

Read and Discuss

3. Read 2 Timothy 1:1-2:2. What appears to be Paul's main concern in this section? What repeated concept alerts us to this issue?
- a. How does Paul's own example relate to this issue (verses 11-12)?
 - b. How does Paul's reference to other people relate to this issue (verses 15-18)?

- The big idea in this section is that Timothy would not be ashamed of the gospel (v8). The idea comes through in many verses, including:
 - The Spirit of power, love and sound judgment, rather than fear (v7)
 - Paul's own willingness to suffer and not be ashamed (v12)
 - Perhaps, the negative example of Phygelus and Hermogenes who deserted Paul (v15); and
 - The positive example of Onesiphorus who wasn't ashamed (v16).
- As Paul's imprisonment demonstrates, it's probable that the threat of imprisonment and hostility was real for Timothy if he publicly preached the gospel.

4. Verses 9-10 are a summary of the gospel. What does Paul emphasize? Given Paul's circumstances, why do you think he chooses this emphasis?

- The same gospel can be expressed using different words, with different emphases. Here, Paul seems to emphasize God's call on his life, according to his purposes (c.f verse 11 where Paul's divine appointment is referred to) and the future immortality which God promises his people, and which Paul is looking forward to.
- These anchors, God's call in the past, and eternal hope in the future, help Paul endure the suffering he's presently experiencing.
- The gospel reminds us that our life, and eternity are in God's loving hands, no matter our present experience. Timothy needs to remember his eternal safety in God's hands, if he's to persevere without shame, and ensure opposition.

5. List all the instructions Paul gives to Timothy. How would you summarize them in one idea?

- List
 - Rekindle the gift of God (v6). This is probably a reference to some gifting for ministry and teaching that Paul saw emerge when he first met Timothy
 - Don't be ashamed (v8).
 - Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching heard from Paul (v13)
 - Guard the good deposit (v14)
 - Be strong in God's grace (v2:1)
 - Commit the truth received from Paul to other suitable men (v2:2)
- A suitable summary might be something like: "Timothy is to faithfully pass on the gospel" or "continuing teaching what he's learnt from Paul, without shame". What have you and your group come up with?

6. The 'good deposit' in verse 14 is a reference to the gospel truth. In what sense does the gospel need guarding and protection? What are the dangers?

- The gospel is susceptible to misinterpretation and distortion by false teachers. This was clearly a concern for Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3).
- If false teaching is not opposed, and/or the true gospel not adequately passed on, the true gospel might be lost.
- The true gospel, because of its saving power, is akin to a precious treasure God has passed into the custody of his people, you and me. It must be carefully preserved and used as intended – to be proclaimed to save people.

Reflect and Apply

7. In all likelihood, we're going to look foolish at some point if we're determined to pass Jesus on to others. When has shame held you back from sharing the good news that Jesus is King? How has this passage addressed that feeling of shame?

- This is an open question to invite reflection from group members. Can they recall an incident in which they were too afraid or ashamed to be public in their Christian faith? It will be important to acknowledge with care when people make themselves vulnerable and share any examples. Members can be reminded that God forgives our weakness, so long as we don't outright deny Jesus and consistently reject his work in our lives.
- How does this passage help us: Hopefully, the examples of Paul and Onesiphorus, and the truths of the gospel help us to put aside shame and share our faith boldly.

8. One key part of guarding the gospel is passing it on to others (like Paul did to Timothy, v13; and like Timothy is instructed, v 2:2). What would have been the consequences for you and me if Timothy and his generation hadn't taken up Paul's baton and passed on the gospel that was handed on to them? Is our generation any different in this respect?

- The logical answer here is simple. We would never have heard the gospel and been saved if previous generations (going all the way back to Paul and Timothy) had not passed it on. We must do the same by faithfully presenting and teaching the gospel to the next generation.

9. Draw up your own “family tree of faith” as far back as you know it. Who passed the gospel on to you? Who have you made it your task to pass the gospel on to, just as someone passed it on to you? Include these people too. Thank God for the people who have shared and taught the gospel to you, and pray for your own efforts to pass on the gospel to others.

- This is more creative exercise to get people remembering (with gratitude) the people that have passed on the gospel to them. This might relate to people who shared the gospel with them (leading to salvation), or it could also mean people who have taught and trained them, helping them mature as a Christian.
- The crucial take home point from this exercise and this passage is that we too are confident (rather than ashamed) and willing to pass on the gospel to others.

Study 2 | 2 Timothy 2:1-13 (members book page 9)

Introduction

1. Can you recall a difficult task or project you've been involved in that has required perseverance? Tell the group about it? What kept you going?

- One of the big themes of the letter, including in today's passage is enduring through hardship. This an open question helping members to begin appreciating that it takes perseverance and endurance to complete difficult tasks (or tasks which throw up challenges). In all these cases, we need some reason to keep going.

Read and Discuss

2. Read 2 Timothy 2:1-7. Paul uses three metaphors (verses 3-6) to describe what Timothy is to be like in his task. Identify each metaphor, then consider the following questions:
 - a. What attribute or attitude is Paul encouraging Timothy to adopt?
 - b. What is the aim, reward or intended outcome in the case of each metaphor?

- Verse 3-4: the soldier. The attribute promoted is to be single-minded and focused on the task, despite the suffering. The controlling aim is to please the commanding officer.
- Verse 5: the athlete. The attribute promoted is integrity to the rules of the sport. The aim/reward is the crown (or medal in an Olympic setting. Ancient sports contests, like the Olympics would have been well-known in the ancient Greek world of Paul and Timothy.
- Verse 6: the farmer. The attribute is hard work. The goal is to share in the fruit of the hard work – the crops nurtured.

- c. What common idea is Paul trying to get across? That is, what kind of life is Paul encouraging Timothy towards?

- Paul seems to be saying that the essence of the Christian life, especially for leaders, is the pattern of suffering/hard work now and reward later. The two cannot be separated. You don't attain the final reward or successfully do your job, apart from the present sacrificial hard work now.

3. In verses 8-10, Paul shifts from the three metaphors, to giving Paul encouragement as he approaches his difficult task. What three encouragements does Paul put forward? How might these things help us persevere when living as a Christian is hard?

- You might find more than three.
 - 1 – Jesus Christ is risen from the dead (v8) – he is the Christ, the King.
 - 2 – The Word of God is not bound – we have a powerful tool in our hands that will advance, despite any opposition (v9)
 - 3 – our proclamation of the gospel will bring salvation to God's chosen people (v10).
- As we find it hard to endure suffering, or even hard work/sacrificial ministry service, these things remind us that our efforts are worth the cost.

4. Verses 11-13 contain a poetic hymn (perhaps known to early Christians, or otherwise adapted by Paul from another source). What is the comfort in verses 11-12a. What is the warning in verses 12b-13?

- There are two comforts in verses 11-12a, that essentially parallel each other, saying the same thing. The comfort is that if we die/endure with Jesus (that is, endure hardship or hard work) we will also live/reign with him. Again, we see here the pattern of suffering then glory which characterizes Jesus life, and ought to characterize ours too. Remember – this pattern does two things for us – it helps prepares us for real persecution and suffering, But second, it should also move us to willingly pursue sacrificial service in gospel ministry.
- The warnings in 12b-13, like in 11-12a, parallel each other, saying the same thing. In short, if we deny Jesus by actively, or progressively turning from him, then he will disown us (see Matt 10:32-39).
- Verse 13 has confused commentators because God's faithfulness is usually good news for believers. However, two reasons would suggest this is meant as a warning, not a comfort. First is the word 'faithless'. Though a different word, this is akin to denial. If someone is lacking in faith in Jesus, they do not meet the condition of salvation. And 'faithlessness' is something worse than weak or little faith. Second, is the poetic, parallel structure of verses 11-13. It seems best to see this is a 4-line stanza, with lines 1-2 corresponding to each other, and lines 3-4 and corresponding to each other. According to this approach, God's faithfulness is seen in his commitment to judge people according to the standard he has revealed (i.e. if you don't trust Jesus you aren't reconciled to God).

Reflect and Apply

5. Are you prepared to endure suffering and/or work hard for the cause of the gospel? How does suffering give us the opportunity to imitate Jesus more and more?

- This is a hard question to answer in the absence of severe hostility. There are some other indicators of our preparedness to suffer, though.
 - Are we willing to tell people the hard and unpopular things in the Bible?
 - Are we willingly looking for ways to serve sacrificially in the cause of the gospel. If we're willing to give up personal comfort, by choice (through sacrificial commitments) to make much of Jesus, perhaps we will react in the same way if/when personal comfort is taken from us.
- When we suffer for the cause of the gospel, we're doing exactly what Jesus did. He died so that others might be saved. The very process of internally counting the cost and reconciling our cost with the spiritual benefit, forces us to adopt the mind of Christ.

6. This passage points Christians to our eternal hope several times. How does a joyful anticipation of our eternal future help us to endure suffering or hard work in the present?

- This is an invitation for the group to join the dots that have been raised in this passage. The more we look forward to our future glory, the less attached we become to the comforts of this life. When we grow in that mindset, present suffering or hard work, though painful, seems inconsequential.

7. Is there a costly decision or behaviour that you need to re-commit to if you are to apply this passage to yourself? What is it? What is stopping you? (Some possibilities might include: being public about your faith in certain contexts, helping regularly in a ministry, giving financially to gospel causes).

- This is an invitation to be much more tangible and specific in applying what has been learnt. Many of us do serve in different ways – which is wonderful. Honour those people!
- However, it's also tempting for us all to withdraw and waver in being committed to ministry service that requires regular time and effort. It's good to challenge group members – does their service cost them anything significant, and/or take them out of their comfort zone.

- If the opportunity arises, encourage people to write down, and plan to do what they've identified. Staff would be very happy to speak to people about different needs around church.

8. Of the three metaphors that Paul uses in the passage, which one do you most associate with? And which attribute is missing from your life as a follower of Jesus (the single-mindedness of a soldier; the integrity of an athlete; or the work ethic of a farmer)?

- As an alternative to questions 5-7, this might help bring the passage to life for people, and the way they ought to be shaped by what they've learnt.
- Are they more prone to distraction by the things of the world, rather than the single-minded focus of the soldier. Are they tempted to take shortcuts, rather than follow the established rules of suffering then glory, like the athlete. Are they lazy and unwilling to work hard, unlike the farmer.

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Study 3 | 2 Timothy 2:14-3:9 (members book page 13)

Introduction

1. Have you ever been scammed (or know of someone who has been scammed)? Why are scams often effective? What are the consequences of being scammed?

- This is an opportunity to begin with a topic that many people will be familiar with. Does anyone have personal experience of being scammed. Scams are usually effective because they look like the real thing (e.g. the personal calling you, or the email you get looks legitimate). The consequences of being scammed vary, but they are often serious – losing a lot of money in some instances.
- This idea is relevant because this section speaks a lot about the false teachings and ungodly false teachers who are having a negative impact on the church.
- One of the crucial signs of legitimate faith will be godliness (v19, 22)

Read and Discuss

2. Read 2 Timothy 2:14-26. Attempt to build up a picture of the problem facing the Ephesian churches where Timothy was a leader? What can we learn?

- As we read it seems that there were certain influential people leading people astray by saying that the resurrection had already taken place (perhaps in a spiritual sense?). This has led to lots of fighting about words (v14), empty speech (v16), foolish disputes (v23) and quarreling (v23). These behaviours are ungodly and not suitable for believers.
- There is still a place for correcting error though – just do it gently with love.
- A possible implication of believing that the resurrection has already taken place is that there is no incentive to be godly, and/or endure hardship, awaiting future glory.

3. What kind of leader does Paul want Timothy to be?

- Correctly handling the Bible, not teaching error (v15)
- Godly – pursuing purity of life not ungodly passions (v21-22)
- Not quarrelsome, but gentle – particularly in teaching others and addressing opponents (v24)

4. Verses 20-21 seem a bit odd. How does Paul's imagery teach us about the connection between godliness and effective ministry leadership?

- Clearly Paul is drawing a contrast between
 - good/effective leaders (represented by the gold and silver vessels for honourable use) whom God will use; and
 - bad, ineffective leaders (represented by wood, clay and dishonourable use)
 - The key difference comes in verse 21 – those who purify themselves. This refers to godliness, and perhaps also, distancing oneself from false teaching. But the language of purity, particularly in the context of verse 22 indicates godliness is in view.
 - Therefore, there is a direct link between the godliness of the teacher/leader and their effective use by God.

5. Read 2 Timothy 3:1-9. What stands out to you from this list of different types of ungodliness? Are you in danger of falling into any of these behaviours?

- There is a long list of ungodly behaviour here. Group members might feel surprised about some of the things included. It's not hard to see that these characteristics remain very much alive in this day and age. They weren't ancient problems.
- Note: the *last days* is a repeated Bible term that refers to the age between Jesus first and second coming. I.e. it described the time back then, for Paul and Timothy, and it remains applicable now.
- It's good to reflect with humility on our own ungodliness. Which one confronts us the most?
- Holding to the form of godliness by denying its power refers to someone who might do the religious things, and tick the right boxes, but inside they remain rotten. Gordon Fee: "They liked the visible expressions, the ascetic practices and the endless discussions of religious trivia, thinking themselves to be obviously righteous because they were obviously religious" (c.f. Titus 1:16)

6. According to verses 6-9, why is ungodliness such a grave concern when it comes to leaders?

- We must notice the link made between verse 5 and 6 by the word *for*. It is these ungodly people that seek to take advantage of people by false teaching.

- Jannes and Jambres (v8) are not named in the Old Testament, but ancient and medieval sources identify them as two of the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses in Pharaoh's presence. Read what happened in Exodus 7:8-13.

Reflect and Apply

7. Today's world is filled with all sorts of mixed-messages, hype, and straight-out lies. What issues do we need to talk to the next generation about so that they'll be following Jesus firmly for years to come?

- This question springs from the reality of dangerous false teaching that Timothy is encountering, and which is ruining the faith of some people. The challenge of discerning and resisting false teaching (even appealing distortions of the truth) remains today – even if the specifics of the error are different.
- Have a discussion about what are the most common or concerning errors that people are exposed to today. Some ideas include:
 - The authority of the Bible..."it can't possibly say X because we've come along way in society and understand X better". Most errors will spring from this root problem:
 - E.g. God won't send people to hell;
 - People of other religions are saved too;
 - our gender/sexual orientation/sexual activity doesn't matter.

8. Imagine one of the other members of your growth group has developed some false and unhelpful ideas about a particular Christian doctrine. How are we to interact with such a person? What is our manner? What is our aim?

- The guidance to Timothy in this regard is unambiguous in verses 24-26. We're to be gentle and patient – but able to teach. That is, we don't avoid the matter. But we don't go in guns blazing. The aim is always that people in error would come to their senses (escaping the captivity of the devil) and continue in knowledge of the truth.

9. Imagine you're tasked with choosing and appointing a ministry leader (maybe a staff person, or a voluntary growth group leader). From this passage, what kinds of things would you be looking for?

- It's hard to read a letter like this and not draw the connection to choosing church leaders wisely. In short, we want leaders like Timothy, not the ungodly false teachers.
- Things to look for:
 - Correctly handling the bible, able to teach
 - Turning from wickedness and fleeing sinful passions, pursuing godliness
 - Gentleness, patience
- Things to avoid:
 - Incompetent with Bible – making errors
 - Ungodly
 - Quarrelsome
 - Overly interested in foolish, inconsequential disputes

Study 4 | 2 Timothy 3:10-4:8 (members book page 16)

Introduction

1. Throughout this letter, Paul urges Timothy to make the Bible the centre of his ministry. Have you ever felt that our church does too much 'Bible stuff' and should focus more on other things? What examples 'other things' come to mind?

- This is a bit of a provocative question – we're not endorsing this attitude. And perhaps not many members will confess to thinking like this. But it's helpful for opening our mind as we approach this passage as it places God's word squarely at the centre of Christian ministry.
- Some possible versions of the attitude alluded to above might be: more welfare activity, more community activities, more fun....the list could go on. To be clear, these things aren't bad or illegitimate. Nor should we operate our church gatherings like a lecture hall, where we are only interested in the 'boring' transmission of information. But does anyone have reservations about how much the Bible is central in our ministry?
- The real question for us is what place should the bible have in our church life?

Read and Discuss

2. Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17. How is Timothy to be different to the people we read about last time (in 3:1-9)?

- Paul is clearly drawing a contrast between Timothy, and the ungodly false teachers of earlier in the chapter. Whereas they were ungodly, and self-seeking, looking for gain, Timothy has followed Paul's example in his faithful teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love and endurance (and persecution).
- The presence of the word '*But*' in verse 10 and 14, indicates Paul is wanting Timothy to distinguish himself from the ungodly false teachers.

3. What hurdles face the Christian person who seeks to be faithful to God's word?

- Persecution (v12). Competition with imposters and false teachers (v13).
- This isn't only a reference to teachers who seek to teach faithfully, but any Christian who seeks to obey God's word.

4. In verses 14 to 17, where can Timothy find confidence to continue in gospel mission despite the promised opposition?

- Paul makes several points here.
 - First, Timothy knows and trusts the people who taught him. Whilst trusting someone isn't necessarily an assurance of the truth of their teaching, it does represent a contrast with the dodgy operators of earlier in the chapter.
 - Second, God's word is powerful. It can make us wise for salvation.
 - Third, God's word comes from God himself – it is inspired. This doesn't mean the human authors felt inspired to write. Rather, it means it is 'breathed out' (the English word for *inspire* comes from the Latin *inspire*, meaning *to breathe*) by him, through his Holy Spirit, via the agency of human writers.
 - Fourth, God's Word is useful for so many different things in implementing God's purposes for individuals: teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness).

5. Read 2 Timothy 4:1-8. What is Paul's charge to Timothy 4:1-5? What warning does Paul issue?

- These are some of the most memorable verses in the letter – and perhaps represent something of a climax.
- Timothy is to preach the Bible at all times, using it to correct/rebuke and encourage, and he's do it with patience.
- The warning is to soften or depart from biblical teaching, because people will be opposed to sound doctrine, and would rather hear teaching that affirms their desires.
- Timothy must not give into that trend. This will take self-control and perhaps hardship.

6. Why do you think Paul uses himself as an example for Timothy. What elements of his work and attitude does he emphasize and why?

- Paul is asking Timothy to follow the same path he has travelled. His life of ministry and teaching has involved *fighting* to keep the faith (that is, remain faithful to the truth).
- The reference to drink offering (c.f. Phil 2:17) draws from Old Testament priestly practice. The drink offering was when a liquid, like wine, was poured over burning meat on the altar (Ex 29:40, Lev 23:13). Here it's used to symbolize the sacrificial nature of Paul's life. He is willing, and about to be sentenced to die in service of God. This accords with Paul's appeal to Timothy to endure hardship.

7. What future realities does Paul include in his charge, to inspire Timothy to keep sharing the gospel? How should those realities impact us?

- In verse 1, Paul refers to the reality of Jesus second coming.
 - He is going to be the judge all
 - He is going to appear and bring his eternal kingdom.
- In verse 8, Paul has been motivated to endure by the prospect of his heavenly reward – the crown of righteousness. What precisely this ‘crown of righteousness’ is, is not clear. It certainly conveys the idea of an ‘award’ for a faithful and loyal servant. It cannot mean that righteousness (in a legal sense) is only conferred on believers in the end – as Paul teaches elsewhere that we’re justified (made righteous) already by faith in Jesus. Perhaps Paul is simply referring to that righteous being made complete as we enjoy our perfect new body and existence, free from sin and death.
- All of these future realities ought to compel us to remain loyal to Jesus, and keep enduring the cost of being faithful to him (whether that’s in godly living, or in teaching/speaking unpopular truths). Our time of hardship is temporary. We look forward to being vindicated and rewarded.

Reflect and Apply

8. Re-visit question 1. What reasons do we have for making the Bible central in all of our ministry at JAC?

- For discussion. Some main themes from this section include
 - the need to be taught well to guard us from false teaching
 - so as to ensure that our itchy ears – that is cultural trends of the day, that which is presently popular, does not dictate our agenda.
 - The Bible itself is what can lead people to salvation (v15)
 - The Bible is effective in correct, rebuking and training us to be godly, preparing us to perform good works.
- The article “Why I value expository preaching” by Murray Campbell is a helpful application of 2 Tim 4:2, to how and why churches ought to think about their sermon schedule. [Read here](#).

9. Re-consider 2 Timothy 4:3-4. How do we see that same pattern playing out in our day and age?

- This is an open question inviting reflection upon what teachings of Christianity are under threat, and which cultural trends are prevailing (leading some within Christian to depart from the truth).
- You might find some of the answers to this question are similar to question 7 last week.

10. Most of us aren't full-time Christian workers like Paul and Timothy. Nevertheless, what priorities from this section apply to all of us and why? (Hint: Read Ephesians 4:11-16).

- Ephesians urges us all to be interested in speaking the truth to one another, so that we can protect each other from false doctrine. Therefore, we should all exhibit, to some degree, the same level of concern for the truth exhibited and promoted by Paul.

Study 5 | 2 Timothy 4:9-22 (members book page 20)

Introduction

1. Can you think of any tasks or jobs that are impossible to complete as an individual? Why might gospel ministry be similar to this?

- The theme of this passage is the importance, and joy of partnership with brothers and sisters, as we go about ministry and Christian life. This opening question will allow us to acknowledge the importance of collaboration rather than individualism, in accomplishing things. This is true in most spheres of life, and is certainly true in gospel work.

Read and Discuss

2. **Read 2 Timothy 4:9-22.** Make a list of all the people who Paul refers to in this section. What can we know about them from these verses. Which people were friends/allies? Which were unhelpful?

- This is a comprehension exercise, designed to get people's eyes on their Bible. We don't learn a lot about each person but here's a possible list:
 - Friends/allies:
 - Timothy – about to come to Rome
 - Crescens – gone to Galatia
 - Titus – gone to Dalmatia
 - Luke, with Paul in Rome
 - Mark – useful to Paul in his ministry (perhaps with Timothy)
 - Tychicus sent by Paul to Ephesus
 - Carpus in Troas with Paul's possessions.
 - Prisca & Aquila – presumably with timothy, not Paul
 - Onesiphorus – in Rome, but perhaps from Ephesus?
 - Erastus – in Corinth
 - Trophimus, sick in Miletus
 - Eubulus – presumably in Rome with Paul
 - Pudens (ditto)
 - Linus (ditto)
 - Claudia (ditto)
 - Unhelpful
 - Demas – love the world and has gone to Thessalonica
 - Alexander the Copper Smith – someone, perhaps known to timothy – who did harm to Paul

3. What do you think verses 16 and 17 describe? What is Paul's reflection on God's help to him during this difficult time?

- Timothy was likely situated in Rome, facing official legal trial before the Roman authorities. The 'first defense' may have been one of the early stages of the legal process. Obviously some of Paul's local friends and supporters did not attend the hearing.
- This may have been a discouragement to Paul, but he found comfort in the knowledge that God was always with him, and indeed strengthened to speak well. (c.f. Luke 12:11-12)
- The apparent outcome at the first defense is that Paul was not exposed to punishment (and death) The reference to the lion's mouth, could refer to a number of things, though it's hard to be certain:
 - It could be an actual lion (per the custom of Christians being fed to lions in Roman amphitheaters), although Paul, as a Roman citizen is unlikely to have been sentenced this punishment.
 - Lion could be a reference to Satan (per 1 Pet 5:8);
 - Some kind of OT allusion (c.f. Daniel 6, Ps 22:19-21).

4. What is Paul confident about in verse 18?

- Paul is confidence is primarily that God will safely bring him home to the promised eternal glory of heaven. Despite the reference to being rescued from every 'evil work', it's hard to imagine Paul envisages complete freedom from earthly persecution. It could, instead, mean that Paul is confident of being kept from his own evil works: particularly apostasy and a failure of courage in the face of opposition. Alternatively, it may be a general hope that through whatever evil works Paul faces (e.g. earthly punishment including death), God will still bring home through these things to heaven.

Reflect and Apply

5. Many of the people mentioned by Paul, we are told, or can infer, were helpful to Paul in his ministry. If you are not directly involved in word ministry (e.g. teaching or reading the Bible with others) are you supporting this work in some way? Tell the group about your role. Could you support word ministry in an additional or new way in 2025?

- This is a call to find ways to emulate the many people mentioned in this section. Clearly all of the helpful ones supported Paul in some way. These are people we know very little about, nor do we know much about their activity. But their contribution was such that God sees fit for them to be named in his Word.

- This could be a time to celebrate and affirm people in the ways they are serving, and/or encourage others to find ways to help.
- IMPORTANT: this question is NOT about making value distinctions between those who are directly involved in bible teaching and those supporting indirectly. NOR should we infer the ministers are to be likened to Paul, and everyone else likened to the various named supported. This would be unhelpful. The main point is to notice that back then, as is the case now, it took lots of diverse people, all chipping in to advance the gospel mission. How are we, or can we be involved?

6. Sometimes people from our church (e.g. link missionaries, student ministers, ex-staff) end up far away from our church and it's easy to lose touch. Why is it important that we don't? What would it look like to keep up a supportive partnership with them like that which existed between Paul and others mentioned in this passage?

- Again, this question seeks to translate the network of relationships described in this passage, to our modern context.
- Have a brainstorm about what it would look like to remain in touch and encourage people who used to be at JAC – and especially people we've sent out onto the mission field (e.g. with CMS).

7. Paul has his eyes fixed on his eternal future (see verse 18). What will help you shift your hopes from this present life to our place in God's eternal 'heavenly kingdom'?

- Paul's eternal, heavenly mindset is such a clear element of his thinking throughout this letter. He's not even concerned about dying! His focus remains on the task at hand: sharing Christ. On the contrary, we're often heavily invested and distracted by earthly concerns (some of which are good, and necessary). What can we do to shift the balance of our perspective so that we think more about our eternal future?

8. Skim through this booklet, and/or the letter of 2 Timothy. What is one thing that you will take away and remember? Describe to the group how this one thing has impacted you and what you will do with it.

- This is a chance to reflect on the book as a whole. It will be helpful for most people to try and settle on 1-2 big things that have impacted them.
- Urge group members to articulate what that one thing is, and to describe to the rest of the group how they've been impacted by it.

- If your group is struggling, you could use the following sentences:

From reading 2 Timothy I've really been struck by / noticed

_____.

This seems important / relevant to me because: _____.

As a result of this I am going to: _____.

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