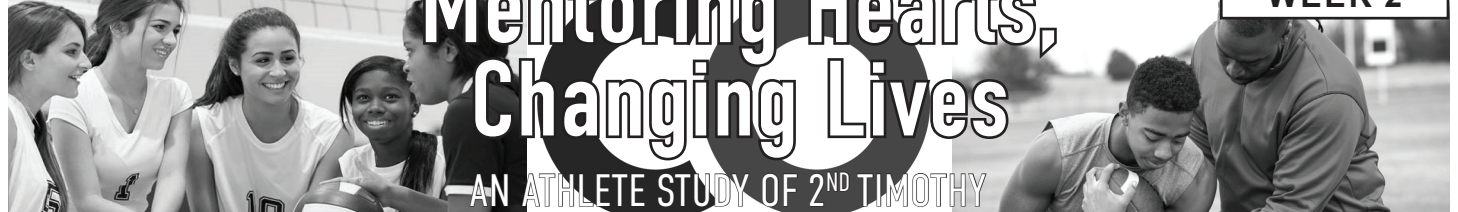


# Mentoring Hearts, Changing Lives

—AN ATHLETE STUDY OF 2<sup>ND</sup> TIMOTHY



## WE'RE ALL IMPERFECT

"I'm a professional softball player and I dropped a fly ball this season. It was embarrassing. But we're all imperfect. Remember that. Players, give yourself grace. Coaches, learn to give correction that doesn't damage confidence. Parents, give your kids space after tough games."



This is humble advice from Team USA two-time silver medalist, Morgan Zerkle. We're all imperfect—and so are those around us. This quote represents the wisdom necessary to deal with that imperfection by knowing oneself, to know those we lead, and to know those we love.

So far, we've gotten to know Paul (Saul) as a highly-trained Pharisee who persecuted followers of Christ. We also learned of his dynamic conversion. As this playbook unfolds, we'll learn of Paul as an Apostle and as a mentor. Both roles will help us understand what he wrote to Timothy. However, just as important as knowing the *writer*, we need to know its *reader*. That's what we'll do this Week as we meet Timothy in Acts 16.

This Week, we'll visit Timothy's hometown, meet his family and friends, and discover his reputation. We'll also discover a devoted man willing to do *whatever it takes* to see people come to faith in Jesus. Paul wanted Timothy to join him, but one thing stood in the way—what others considered a "flaw." Timothy knew himself, Paul knew when to push, and the rewards far outweighed the cost.

### ACTS 16:1–5

<sup>1</sup> Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.

<sup>2</sup> He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. <sup>3</sup> Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. <sup>4</sup> As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem.

<sup>5</sup> So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*It's amazing that you can love me like I am. And even when I can't, you still love me as I am.*

None of us are perfect, but God calls us to live perfectly. You might be asking how? The answer is that God loves us as we are, but through Christ, he set us free from our imperfection. When he looks at us, he sees Christ. We can't earn it or pay it back. We simply live in response to what he's accomplished in us. Scan the QR code to worship.



## DISCUSSION

What does Proverbs 27:6a mean, "*Faithful are the wounds of a friend*"?

1. What does verse 1 teach us about Timothy's spirituality and parents?

2. What was Timothy's reputation? (2)

3. Why did Paul insist on circumcising Timothy before he could join the team? (3b)

4. How do you think it might have gone if Timothy had not endured circumcision?

5. Who do you have in your life that you've invited to speak into your life—even the most sensitive areas?

6. What could change for you if someone spoke the truth in love in every area of your life? What if you could do this for someone else?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

What's holding you back from living completely sold out to Christ? Not every distraction is bad, sometimes we're running after good things, just not best things. Talk to your Coach today!



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WEEK 2



## STUDY NOTES

### WINNING STANDARDS

Legendary football coach, Bill Walsh, said, “The culture precedes positive results. It doesn’t get tacked on as an afterthought on your way to the victory stand. Champions behave like champions *before* they’re champions: they have a winning standard of performance *before* they are winners.”

Champions don’t exist because they show up and receive a trophy. They exist because they’ve done what champions do, consistently, over time. As a player, your coach isn’t doing you any favors by challenging you to anything less than a championship. As a leader, you aren’t doing those you lead any favors by lowering the bar to what they can already accomplish.

As discussed in the introduction, wisdom is required to deal with the imperfection of others. However, when it comes to standards for disciples, what does the Lord deserve other than our absolute best? It’s all about our aim. If you miss, there’s grace, but don’t alter where you’re aiming just because it’s hard to hit.

When it comes to mentorship, look for FAT people (forgive the acronym, but you also won’t forget it!)—those who are Faithful, Available, and Teachable. If you’re going to invest in someone, you need to set standards and expectations early and often. If you aim your expectations too low, you’ll be constantly frustrated. Instead, your investment is best served in those who are faithful, available, and teachable. Also, if you’re not that kind of person, why would someone want to invest in you?

### MENTORING HEARTS REQUIRES KNOWING HEARTS

**Paul** and his traveling companions **came also to Derbe and to Lystra**. There he met **a disciple named Timothy**. Paul instantly knew Timothy was a FAT person as **he was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium**. Paul was so impressed, he **wanted Timothy to accompany him** on his missionary journey. However, one thing stood in the way.

**Timothy was the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer** named Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5). As we will see next Week, Timothy had been invested in by both his mother and his grandmother. Yet, **his father was a Greek**. The original language used here suggests that Timothy’s father may have no longer been living. Timothy’s father was likely well-educated, wealthy, and held a prominent position in Lystra. However, none of that would matter to the Jews whom Paul wanted to reach with the

Gospel. If Timothy accompanied Paul to reach those Jews, **Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek**.

Although Timothy’s mother was Jewish, having a Greek father meant he would have to undergo circumcision (the removal of the foreskin on male Israelites) before anyone would listen to what he had to say. Timothy didn’t have to do this thing. But at Paul’s urging, Timothy’s willing sacrifice opened the door for a gospel opportunity he wouldn’t have otherwise had. Others took notice of Timothy’s sacrifice and **the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily**.

### KNOW HOW AND WHEN TO TEST HEARTS

Imagine the conversation between Timothy and Paul. Paul asking Timothy to join his journey, the offer of a lifetime. Timothy’s willing acceptance. Paul sharing the expectation—you’re not currently aligned with Jewish custom. To have an audience with those we’re trying to reach, there’s one thing you must do...

How would you respond to such a personal critique? Paul’s invasive ask would make most of us turn and leave. However, Paul knew Timothy before such a challenge. He knew that Timothy would do **anything** to partner in saving the lost. The question for us is if there’s anything we wouldn’t give up or let someone ask us to reach people for the gospel?

A good mentor knows when and how to probe into the heart of a disciple. As a disciple, this is something we should be inviting others into. We should give permission to our Coach and our Team that if they see any part of our lives that don’t align with God’s call for a believer’s life, they can call us out. Champions behave like champions, Christians should behave like Christians. Who is holding you to that standard?

On the day that you turn around and mentor someone else, you will be the one God uses to deliver hard news—to challenge them to live up to God’s champion call on their life. You’ll need to show them God’s Word, help them learn to study, and apply it for themselves. In doing so, you’ll need to help them see the sin in their life. Scripture overflows with God’s glory and constantly shows us how we fall short. It’s not enough to share Bible facts, you need to help them root out the sin buried deep in their hearts and surrender it to the Lord. Be the example that surrendering everything to Christ is worth it. Seek the Lord on how and when to call them out. But don’t miss the awesome opportunity to speak the truth in love.

