



Mentoring Hearts, Changing Lives

AN ATHLETE STUDY OF 2ND TIMOTHY

WEEK 3



WHO AM I?

This question defines everything about us. How we see ourselves determines what we will and will not do. It determines who we are willing to associate with. It demands an answer, yet often gets lost in the search.

Most people don't consider themselves, their behaviors, their values, or their associations in terms of identity. Yet, that's exactly the source. We are all constantly thinking, doing, saying things that affirm or deny parts of our identity—sometimes the identity we aspire to have or the one from which we're running. When we find ourselves doing things we know we ought not to do, we're motivated by a quest for identity. Many times, looking to others for affirmation. For example, why do so many people post so much on social media? It has long been noted that posting and receiving likes or comments create an affirmation loop that floods the pleasure centers of your brain. That affirmation sometimes masks the insecurity of an identity crisis.

The world tells us to follow our heart and discover who we are inside of ourselves. That's terrible advice. We inherently know it's wrong, which is why we so often look for it in other people or things. We're designed such that our identity is shaped from the outside in, not the inside out. Our identities are granted to us as a gift from God. Who we are is directly defined by who *he* says we are.

As we open up *2nd Timothy*, the Apostle Paul seeks to reassure Timothy by reminding him of his identity. Paul reminds Timothy what he means to Paul and Timothy's spiritual legacy. Most importantly, Paul reminds Timothy of who God says he is and the gifts God has given him.

2 TIMOTHY 1:1–7

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

³I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"Following Jesus involves risk and tension. This is not a sign of Jesus' absence. In dark and difficult moments, Jesus' love and faithfulness become more tangible and real."

As we open *2nd Timothy*, we'll be going passage by passage—and we don't have space to cover everything. Going passage by passage each week may make it difficult to understand the message of the book as a whole. Scan the QR code for an animated overview of the book of *2nd Timothy*.



DISCUSSION

What character quality do you most highly value?

1. In his greeting, what words/phrases does Paul use to ID...

...himself? (1)

...Timothy? (2)

2. What did Paul remind Timothy to do? (6a)

3. Why might Paul have highlighted his confidence in the sincerity and history of Timothy's faith? (5)

4. Given this contrast between fear and what comes from God, what is implied about our fear? (7)

5. What terms or titles would you use to describe...
...yourself?

...the kind of mentor you want?

...the kind of disciple you'd like to mentor?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Lois and Eunice modeled sincere faith for Timothy. Maybe you've never seen that. If you're interested in growing in your faith through discipleship, talk to your Coach today!



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STUDY NOTES THE CENTER

QB of the Philadelphia Eagles, Jalen Hurts, wisely said, “You have to put [God] at the center of everything that you do. All my wisdom...comes from Him, in some way, shape, or form, whether that be passed down from my father, my mother, or my grandmother.”

As said in the introduction, the most important thing about us is who God says we are. Like many of us, Hurts learned his godly identity from his biological family—God’s wisdom passed down through parents and grandparents. However, that’s not true for us all. Even if your biological parents didn’t pass on a Christian legacy, you have an opportunity to have spiritual parents. Additionally, you have the opportunity to reshape your family tree—your family’s Christian legacy can start with you.

In the final letter of his earthly life, Paul opened by indicating himself as the author. His spiritual son needed help. He was on the verge of possibly throwing in the towel.

When Paul learned of his spiritual son’s heart problems, he shed fatherly tears. Paul knew Timothy’s doubts revealed his greatest enemy—fear. Timothy had many reasons for fear starting with the fact that Paul was dying in prison. Throughout this very personal letter, Paul gives insight into Timothy’s fear (and our own) as he addresses various issues and concerns.

As he opens, Paul addresses the most basic assurance, Timothy’s identity. Timothy might be asking, “Do I have what it takes?” Paul’s opening explicitly states that “Timothy, you have *everything* it takes and more.”

MENTORING HEARTS REQUIRES COMMUNICATION

Note how Paul identifies himself, “*an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.*” Although Paul became an Apostle after Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, he was an ambassador for the Risen King. It’s his hope in the Risen King that gives confidence for a man about to die for *the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus.*

Paul opens, unashamedly declaring *Timothy* as his *beloved child.* He’s not a distant boss disappointed in the failings of a subordinate. He’s a father who loves his struggling son, praying over him for *grace, mercy, and* the kind of *peace* only God can give. This isn’t just a one-time prayer either. Paul said he lifted Timothy up *constantly in his prayers night and day.*

Paul wished to see Timothy remembering the tears at their parting. Paul remembered Timothy, not only in his prayers, not only in their parting,

but also Paul is *reminded of* Timothy’s *sincere faith* and spiritual legacy that *dwells in him as well.*

Note the repeated idea of Paul’s “remembering.” Paul then switched gears to admonish Timothy to “remember.” *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God.* Timothy’s confidence may be waning. Fear may be setting in. The fire is about to die. Paul says, “Fan the flame!”

What flame did Timothy need to “fan”? We’re not sure the particular gift to which Paul referred. It probably related to some gift dealing with Timothy’s pastoral duties. However, there’s a *myriad* of God-given gifts of which we may remind *ourselves.* First, salvation by grace through faith in Jesus has to top that list. A close second, is God’s gift of the Holy Spirit. God gave us a Helper to make us more like Jesus and to pray for us. Also, the Spirit uniquely imparts to each of us Spiritual Gifts to build up the Body of Christ. Other gifts may include his Word, the Church, and the many blessings each of us have to one degree or another.

COMMUNICATE IDENTITY AND CHARACTER GROWTH

Paul reminded Timothy who he already was and the gift he’d already received. Now it was time to kick it up a notch. *God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.* You think when Paul wrote that he thought about all the tweets and tattoos that sentence would inspire?

It seems Timothy’s old adversary, fear, choked his fire. Perhaps he had a fear of failure, rejection, incompetence, or disappointment. Perhaps *all* of these, and other factors as well, fueled his fear. Regardless, Timothy’s fear, like ours, reflected an earthly and self-centered perspective, *not* one which came from God.

Good news! If our own spiritual fire has begun to burn out, God provides not only the fire, but also the three accelerants we all need: power, love, and self-control. Consider what each of those words mean, then think about the restraining force of the other two words. For instance, power may lead to abuse, but not when tamed with love and self-control.

Paul packed a lot into his introductions. Zoom out for a moment and pay special attention to the theme of our study. Consider Paul as a model mentor—notice the character, heart, and exhortation. Consider the approach to Timothy in light of a person you may one day disciple—notice the basic reminders you’ll need to provide. This especially includes God’s perspective from his Word. Not only can you learn from Paul to deal with your own fears, insecurities, and identity, but we can also learn what to look for in a mentor as well as how to disciple others.

