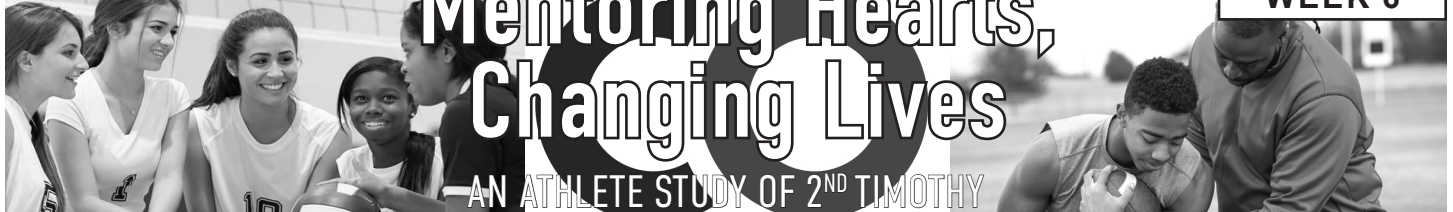


Mentoring Hearts, Changing Lives

—AN ATHLETE STUDY OF 2ND TIMOTHY



EYES UP

In all the ups and down of a season, how do you handle the pressure and keep the joy of the game? Check out the response from the Oklahoma softball team! *“The only way that you can have a joy that doesn’t fade away is from the Lord.”*



Do you understand what these young women are saying? Your circumstances *do not* determine your disposition. Your attitude has nothing to do with external factors. It’s not the circumstances, but what you *believe* about your circumstances that matters. In the book *Search for Significance*, Robert McGee points out that your beliefs determine your thoughts, your thoughts determine your emotions, and your emotions determine your actions. These ladies bear witness to this important point. As Coleman said, *“We worked our butts off and we want to win, but it’s not the end of the world because our life is in Christ and that’s all that matters.”*

I think Paul would issue a hearty, “Amen.” He is not a victim of circumstance. He worked and toiled. He might shake his fist in the air in prison saying, “God, didn’t you see what I was doing for you! Don’t you know that I would be better out there!” No, Paul *believed* that his captivity held nothing compared to his freedom in Christ. He *believed* that though he was bound, God’s is not. He *believed* that his suffering was for the benefit of God’s people—and considering he authored much of the Bible from a prison cell, I’d say he was right.

When you feel like your circumstances are beating you down, remember, eyes up! It isn’t your circumstances that matter. It’s your belief about who God is and who you are that matters.

2 TIMOTHY 2:8–13

⁸ Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, ⁹ for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! ¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

¹¹ The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

“I am no longer bound.”

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, *“I Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. This comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”*

I don’t know what may make you feel trapped. Scan the QR code to reflect on what Christ has done to set you free.



DISCUSSION

What is something God has taught you so far through this study that you’ve put into practice?

1. For what did Paul suffer? (8-9)

2. What is the only requirement given to live with Christ? (11b)

3. Does our faithlessness change God’s faithfulness toward us, and what reason is provided? (13)

4. How might the pattern of Jesus and Paul (regarding suffering & reward) motivate and encourage Timothy?

5. How can Paul’s eternal perspective help you endure suffering?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

The Bible strongly encourages believers to count the cost of discipleship. Maybe it’s already cost you friends or something more. If not, it probably will. Talk to your Coach today!



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WEEK 6



STUDY NOTES AM I IN?

“In Christ.” You may hear that phrase get thrown around but what does it mean? Essentially, it refers to someone who has come into a relationship with God through Jesus. John 14 provides the path, where Jesus states, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*” We receive this *by grace through faith* plus nothing (Ephesians 2:8–9). We need God’s grace because our sin separated us from God for eternity—*the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus* (Romans 6:23). So, the only two options are death or life—are you in?

Paul challenged Timothy to remember this truth saying, “**Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David.**” The fact that Jesus rose from the dead validated that the promise God gave to King David around 1,000 BC.

However, if Paul **preached the gospel for which he was suffering, bound with chains as a criminal**, it may raise questions about the power of the gospel. Paul had his eyes up. He understood that his bonds weren’t because God lacked power. Quite the opposite. **The word of God is not bound!**

MENTORING HEARTS REQUIRES MOTIVATING ENDURANCE

Paul endured **for the sake of the elect by God, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Jesus Christ** by believing it. By implication, Timothy should also focus on **eternal glory**. We don’t mentor out of mere duty, but because we *love* our disciples and those who will someday know God through them.

Paul reminded Timothy of his endurance because of the gospel. He then introduced a **trustworthy saying**. This three-verse section (2:11-13) introduces what was probably a repeated saying within the early church. Remember, people didn’t have published Bibles like we do. Instead, church leaders taught short memorable statements of truth. This is similar to the quoting from three different Bible verses in the introduction to the notes—assuming you have those passages memorized.

Paul makes four if/then statements. We’ll address these four truths rapidly.

The first “trustworthy saying,” “**If we have died with him, we will also live with him.**” Romans 6 says, “*Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death... in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may*

live a new life.” Essentially, it means those who identify with Christ’s finished work on the cross will also live with Christ eternally.

The second “trustworthy saying,” “**If we endure, we will also reign with him.**” *What* must we endure? Throughout the letter, Paul encourages Timothy to endure suffering for the sake of the Gospel.

Also, our endurance is tied to our “reign.” In a kingdom parable, Christ taught that faithfulness with *earthly* responsibilities has *kingdom* consequences. Those whom Christ finds faithful will receive kingdom rewards. As a good father, this motivates Paul to challenge his son.

The third “trustworthy saying,” “**If we deny him, he also will deny us.**” Since “we” refers to believers, these words can intimidate us, perhaps even cause doubt regarding our salvation. However, like the second “saying,” this statement *only* addresses faithfulness and resulting rewards, *not our salvation*. You could paraphrase this entire verse, “When we suffer *with* and *for* Christ, he will reward us by delegating greater authority and responsibility in his kingdom. When we say ‘No’ to following and suffering for him, then he will say ‘No’ to us in those same areas.”

The final “trustworthy saying,” “**If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.**” God is not like us. Even when we are *unfaithful*, *He* is unchanging, fully consistent. He *cannot* be otherwise.

We think God acts like us. Who could blame him if he did? But if he did, God would deny his *attributes*. By his very *nature* God keeps his promises. Is there anything God *can’t* do? Yes. This verse teaches that “*he cannot deny himself.*” God remains faithful when we are *unfaithful* because he cannot and would never choose to stop being who he is. Just as humans can be counted on to be *faithless* due to *our* nature, *God* can be counted on to remain *faithful* due to *his* nature.

GOD’S FAITHFULNESS MOTIVATES ENDURANCE

Does our suffering mean God is *faithless*? No. Living sold out for Christ may cost us something—one day maybe even imprisonment. That’s certainly a reality



for many Christians world-wide. Persecution and martyrdom happen every day for our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. A reported 5,600 Christians died for their faith in 2022—Christians who will live, reign, reap reward, and experience the faithfulness of God through Jesus.

God is faithful, so we can endure. Even when bound by suffering, fear, or uncertainty, God’s Word is not bound!

