



# Mentoring Hearts, Changing Lives

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

ZERO WEEK



## A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE

On Monday night, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, my wife and I turned on some football as an afterthought because we needed to fold laundry after putting the kids to bed. The game featured two very good teams, the Bills and Bengals. Early in the first quarter, Buffalo Bills safety, Damar Hamlin, tackled Cincinnati Bengals' wide receiver, Tee Higgins. As Damar began to stand up, he wobbled a bit, stood for a moment, but then collapsed on the field.

Nobody knew what happened. They showed the replay over and over and nothing seemed out of the ordinary. The next thing we know, they were performing CPR on the field. My wife doesn't really care about football, but she's a medical professional. She understood what those words meant more than I did. Only later did we learn that Hamlin had gone into cardiac arrest. His heart had literally stopped beating.

The whole world seemed to stop in those tense minutes. We sat, laundry unfolded, watching as broadcasters scrambled to keep the coverage going—completely shaken by what had happened. Damar was taken off the field by ambulance after being stabilized and the teams were sent to the locker rooms to settle down before play resumed. Eventually, the game was indefinitely suspended because we all understood that, in that moment, football didn't seem all that important.

Not to be morbid, but modern medicine only provided a temporary fix for Damar. Sure, he may live to be 100 years old, but our hearts will only beat so many times before they quit. It's a timer that is counting down. The most important thing about you is what you think happens when the timer reaches zero.

PHILIPPIANS 3:4b–6

<sup>4</sup> ...though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"Where would I be without Jesus?" The Bible says "all have sinned" and "the wages of sin is death." Sin may be fun for a moment, but it doesn't last. It's empty. And, at the end of the road, sin leads to an eternal separation from God in Hell.

Hell is what our sin deserves, but God loved us so much that he made a way. We can be saved from sin and Hell by grace through faith in Jesus. That means full surrender. Is it worth it? Scan the QR code to hear those that say it is.



## DISCUSSION

What is something today that 200 years ago would have seemed impossible?

1. Where does Paul imply the false teachers were placing confidence? (4)

2. What was Paul's standing according to the "law" used by the false teachers? (7b)

3. What did Paul say really mattered and how is it acquired? (9)

4. What does Paul mean that "everything is loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus"?

5. What are some ways you've previously defined success?

6. How have those ideas been challenged or changed?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

I hope you live a long, happy, and fruitful life. But what if you don't? Are you sure that you'd go be with Jesus? If you have any questions, don't wait. Talk to your Coach today!



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## STUDY NOTES

### STAT SHEET

A post on Twitter rightly said, “Can we put Pistol Pete Marivich’s NCAA scoring record in perspective? He scored 3,667 points in 83 games over 3 years. If you took the nation’s top 83 single-game scoring performances in the last 3 years (2020–2023), you’d have a combined 3,465 total points.”

Pistol Pete was selected as the third overall pick in the 1970 NBA draft. So, you may not have heard of him. But, keep in mind, he set these records *before the NCAA introduced the 3-point line!*

If anyone could have confidence, Pete could have confidence. Tragically, Pistol Pete passed away at the age of 40 due to a rare heart defect. Although he could have confidence on the court, death is an opponent none of us can face on our own and win.

### WHO WROTE 2 TIMOTHY AND WHY?

Our study this semester will focus primarily on the book of *2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy*. Before we get there, it’s important to understand about the book’s author and its recipient. The Apostle Paul penned two letters (sometimes called “epistles”) to Timothy, a young pastor, a man he disciplesd from his youth. *2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy* is obviously the second letter.

Paul was and is a spiritual legend for many of us. Paul battled false teachers his entire ministry. But, by the time he wrote Philippians 3, he was fed up. These false teachers said you had to “*do this*” and “*do that*” to be saved. Like many people, these false teachers basically said, “You have to be like us if you want to succeed” (ever heard that before?).

These men boasted their stats, but that’s when Paul pulled out his: ***I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, [Paul stood] blameless.***

We’ll unpack the whole “persecutor of the church” bit next week. For now, it’s sufficient to say that Paul had done *everything* right according to the standards of the false teachers—even the things he had no control over. He didn’t get to choose where he was born or what happened to him as an 8-day old baby. His stats were impeccable. But, he concluded, ***Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus***

***my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.***

Paul sat in prison, having lost everything, saying that it was all worth it. Not only that, his impeccable stat sheet didn’t amount to crap (Literally, the word “rubbish” is a vulgar word meaning “refuse,” so “crap” is a valid translation). What mattered was “*faith in Christ.*”

That’s the only hope any of us have. The trophies of our lives will fade into oblivion, but in Christ, we can not only experience eternity, we can invest in it as we invest in others. That’s why Paul wrote *2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy*, as a mentor investing in his disciple. However, it also provides a model for us if we want to make our lives matter as a disciple following a mentor and as a mentor who disciples others.

### WHY STUDY 2 TIMOTHY?

Empowered by God’s Holy Spirit, the Apostle penned a masterpiece of passion and perspective for his son in the faith, who had lost both. John tells us that Jesus came *full of grace and truth* (John 1:14). Most of us tend to fall on one side of that equation or the other. Some unload the truck of truth without much regard for grace. Others, so careful not to hurt someone’s feelings, leave the hard truths virtually ignored. In this study, for the mentor, we will explore both what to say (truth) and how to say it (grace). To be like Christ, our communication with a “Timothy” must be full of both.

Paul doesn’t finger-poke into Timothy’s chest while shouting into his face to “man-up.” Many times someone needs exactly that, but this wasn’t one of them, and Paul knew it. Neither does Paul offer a wishy-washy, feel-good, kum-ba-yah Hallmark card. This letter—coming from a hard-driving, results-oriented, seasoned veteran—puts an arm around this young man’s shoulder and sends a caring-but-firm message into his heart.

Let’s state the obvious: Athletes need coaches. To perform at their highest level, every athlete needs someone who can encourage and polish what they do well. Likewise, every athlete needs someone who can recognize and reduce—perhaps even eliminate—what they do poorly.

As we walk through our study, we’ll examine the necessary elements that mentoring hearts requires. You might be starting to look at your own “stat sheet” and thinking, “Oh, I can’t do that, this isn’t me.” Just hang in there. We’ll get your crap sorted out as we go along.

