

WEEK 3 To coach a heart, we must speak to a heart



THE BIG PICTURE

So far we have looked at the individual histories of Paul and Timothy. Now we'll begin to observe how Paul communicated with Timothy. Throughout our study of Paul's letters, we want to pay attention to both what Paul says and how he says it.

Big Picture
Puts passage in larger context.

Paul and Timothy, the two (content and delivery) work as a team, each one leveraging the power of the other. Paul wisely retrieves all he knows about his "son" in order to effectively remind him of what he must know about God. Which now in just a few introductory lines, he draws Timothy to his side in order to put his arm around him and speak truth directly into his heart.

DAY 1: Coaching hearts begins with our clear identity

OBSERVATION

1. What words or phrases does Paul use to identify himself in the greeting? (1)
2. What words or phrases does Paul use to identify Timothy in the greeting? (2)

Observation
What does it say?

INTERPRETATION

3. Why might Paul use these words or phrases to describe himself? (1)
4. Why might Paul use these words or phrases to describe Timothy? (2)

Interpretation
What does it mean?

5. In this introduction, what does Paul dwell on, who he and Timothy are in Christ or how well they perform their given duties? (1-2)

2 Timothy 1:1-2

¹ From the apostle of Christ Jesus by the promise of life eternal, Timothy, my dear child. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord!

Daily Passage
Full passage being studied.

Keeper Quote

Jesus came to announce to us that an identity based on success, popularity and power is a false identity- an illusion! Loudly and clearly he says: 'You are not what the world makes you; but you are children of God.'

—Henri J.M. Nouwen

APPLICATION

6. How would you describe your own situation with your own attitudes or positions would you use those words? How would you use those words?
7. Would your answer change depending on your relationship with the one you are communicating with? Why or why not?

Application
What does it mean for me?
How can I apply it?

LA Rams' Coach John Robinson never criticized his players until they knew he had unconditional confidence in their abilities. After that, he might say, "Look, you're 99% terrific, but that 1% could make a difference. Let's work on that." While a coach at USC, that's what he told Marcus Allen, then a junior and later one of the NFL's greatest running backs—but only after two years of building Allen's confidence.¹ Robinson's patience demonstrates what is required to coach a heart.

People give up trying for two reasons: 1) They doubt they can do what is required, and 2) They expect their efforts to produce results.² The solution to the heartless

In his last letter to Timothy, Paul (Found) and Timothy knew Timothy's greatest enemy—himself. Will Paul abandon me or regret our relationship? Has he forgotten me? Does he care? Have I embarrassed his tough reputation by my softer personality? Do I have "the right stuff"? Will I ever see him again? Will I lose my salvation? Was I ever a true believer? Could God ever use me again? Each wave brought a larger one, and the tide rose daily. Watch Paul—thoughtfully and succinctly—speak to Timothy's heart, addressing his greatest fears, and perhaps ours.



Paul introduces himself as *an apostle of Jesus Christ*, a man personally appointed by Jesus Christ, with his direct authority, representing him as an ambassador of the Gospel. Unlike the first eleven, Paul became

an *apostle* after Jesus' ascension. When listed with other leaders such as "elders" or "prophets," the title of "*apostle*" always comes first, reflecting both the chronology of their appointment and their primary authority within the Church. Paul makes this distinction clear in 1 Corinthians 12:28, "*And God has placed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, gifts of healing, helps, gifts of leadership.*"

No one on earth possessed more authority than Paul. Yet Paul's *authority* did not fuel his persuasion. Rather, he motivated on the basis of his *relationship* with Timothy and Timothy's relationship with Christ. It was heart-based.

Once you learn to quit, it becomes a habit.

Paul further states that *the will of God* established his authority, not any human will. Timothy had read this self-description in Paul's first letter. But here Paul uniquely adds, *to further the promise of life*. Ironically, Paul, facing *death*, presents this mission of *life* as central to his apostolic mission. If Timothy needed anything, it wasn't confidence in Paul's words, but in the Messiah's work as foretold by the Old Testament prophets and settled *in Christ Jesus* (see Who's on First?).

Timothy, co-citizen of Israel, ways: Eunice, citizen of I

Ephesian church etc. So when Paul identified himself as *dear child*, it spoke volumes for the entire letter. The heavy-haul to his delegates on suffering. Paul's son was *Timothy*... his son.

Do you have "favorites" among your athletes? It's not only "OK," it's inevitable and essential. Jesus trained many disciples. He also had "favorites" on his team. Clearly, the Perfect Coach invested more time and attention in Peter than anyone else. It's not even close.

Paul did the same with Timothy. While Paul named many teammates in his letters, nobody received the same time and attention as Timothy. It's not even close. The real "favorites" question? Does your relationship rest on eternal values rather than self-centered ones?

Paul closes with a customary greeting offering *grace, mercy, and peace*. These contain key ingredients in Paul's recipe for recovery. It introduces us to the two guiding dynamics in their relationship: authority and empathy. As an apostle, Paul spoke with authority. As a caring father, Paul spoke with empathy.

Tough balance? You bet. But watch Paul seamlessly weave these two threads together throughout his letter. When Paul spoke with apostolic authority, he never yielded his fatherly love for Timothy. When he spoke with fatherly compassion, he never yielded even one minor apostolic truth. One relationship never precluded the other.⁴ Like a good coach, Paul intuitively knew when to wear which hat. He also knew the danger Vince Lombardi warned about, "Once you learn to quit, it becomes a habit."

Study Notes

Deeper explanation of the passage. All answers can be found here.

Heavy Lifting
In-depth look at issues in the text.



HEAVY LIFTING

Lost & Found: Onesiphorus of Ephesus "arrived in Rome" and "eagerly searched for...and found [Paul]." Onesiphorus evidently both ministered to the apostle's needs and informed him of Timothy. (2 Tim. 1:17).

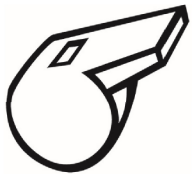
Who's on First? The chosen word order of "Christ" and "Jesus" in identifying our Savior may not seem significant. However, to Paul and his Greek readers each order had great meaning. In either case the first word of the compound name indicated

which emphasis was uppermost in the writer's mind. "Christ" (Greek for "Messiah") prioritized His Divinity and the theological hope of the Old Testament promises. "Jesus" prioritized his humanity and the historical Personhood with the name given for his incarnation).³

2 Timothy 1:3-4

³ I am thankful to God, whom I have served with a clear conscience as my ancestors did, when I remember you in my prayers as I do constantly night and day. ⁴ As I remember your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.

TRUE COACHING STORY



The U.I.L. had just opened up track events for a wheelchair division. Our school had an athlete that was very interested.

As his Coach I did not know how to coach someone in a wheelchair, until I came from that 18-yr old athlete in a wheelchair. He said, "People do not live in life unless they put them there."

Our staff then just rolled around this young man. To see this young man develop was nothing less than the work of the Lord. Watching him in practice or race in a meet was such an inspiration to not only our whole track team but to the coaches as well.

He never looked down or became frustrated. Having our kids, coaches, and entire community witness this was enough for me to know that God is in control!

True Coaching Story
A coach's personal experience.

Key Verse for the Week: 2 Timothy 1:7

⁶ Because of this I remind you to rekindle God's gift that you possess through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a Spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Key Verse for the Week
Main scripture to tuck away.

Pro Quote

*Once you learn to quit,
it becomes a habit. —Vince Lombardi*

DAY 2: Coaching hearts expresses gratitude and acceptance

OBSERVATION

1. Did Paul ever forget Timothy? (3)
2. Describe Paul's attitude toward Timothy during this time of separation. (3)
3. How did Paul continue to personally support Timothy in his ministry? (3)

INTERPRETATION

4. Why did Paul want to see Timothy again? (4)
5. Why might Paul mention "gratitude" as it related to Timothy? What would that one statement do to Timothy's heart? (3)
6. Why might Paul mention a "clear conscience"? How is this experience different from perfection? (3)
7. How might Timothy react when he read that he was always in Paul's prayers? (3)
8. How can remembering someone's tears cause a desire to be together? (3-4)

Timothy's fears were addressed in these potent words from Paul? (3-4)

APPLICATION

10. How emotionally connected are you with your athletes? Can you think of particular athletes who need to know how much they mean to you?

Timothy's biggest fear may have been that Paul, hearing of Timothy's discouragement, would regret his personal investment in Timothy. Paul dealt with this issue immediately and unequivocally. His original verb tense communicates that he was presently and continually *thankful* for their relationship. First and foremost, his gratitude did not depend upon Timothy. It rightly belonged *to God*.

It was *God* who sovereignly brought them together and sent them out as a team. It was God *whom* [Paul] *served*, and bringing his relationship with Timothy into it was a welcome additional blessing. Was it work? Yes. Every good relationship is. Was it stressful? Yes. Every good relationship is. Did Paul ever wonder why God put Timothy on his team? Of course! But none of these normal issues changes the fact or depth of his gratitude.

What was serving God like for Paul? It was certainly not perfect in execution. While we read that he *served with a clear conscience*, we should not presume to equate that with a boast of flawlessness. No pride can be attributed to Paul given his immediate equation, *as my ancestors did*. Not one of Paul's *ancestors* served as a sinless saint, never experiencing spiritual setbacks.⁵ Do we need to recite most embarrassing moments? It would read like a *Who's Who* of spiritual failures!

If Timothy's ride with God felt like a roller coaster, he sat in great company. For example, no spiritual ancestor received bigger trophies than Moses or Elijah, both of whom had their low—even suicidal—moments. God saves us *knowing* we will fall many times. Paul possessed a *clear conscience* because of the affection of his heart, not the perfection of his life.

Paul now mentions one of three things he remembers regarding Timothy. *First*, God caused him to *remember* [Timothy] in [his] prayers. Paul's *prayers* were not sporadic or infrequent, but *constantly night and day*. He never stopped thinking about Timothy. He always lifted him up in prayer. Perhaps the greatest expression

of our love for others is measured by the faithful, intercessory prayers that we bring before the Father on their behalf.

How many times does someone come to mind, but we fail to lift them up before the Lord? Or we see a prayer request posted on Facebook and instantly reply with our intentions to pray, but we get distracted by our next friends' entry. If you're like me, this happens far too often.

**Appreciating that
God made us all
different from one
another opens the
door to fully coach
another's heart
just the way God
made it.**

The hard truth is that we remember the people for whom we are truly thankful, and we pray for them. Timothy neither left Paul's mind nor his prayers. This verse reminds us not only that it is good to remember others in prayer, but also that it is good to tell how much they mean to us as the motivation for our prayers.

Second, Paul assured Timothy, that as Paul would *remember* [Timothy's] *tears* it made him *long to see* him. Timothy may have thought, "How can my tears do that to you? Have you forgotten how *very* emotional I am? How can a guy like *you* ever want to be around *me* when I am like that? It's so embarrassing!"

Not to Paul. You see, Paul rejoiced in their differences. God does not need or want another Paul...and neither did Paul. As a good leader and spiritual father, he loved Timothy exactly as God made him, so sensitive as to shed tears, perhaps by shedding them at

Paul's arrest.

This strong leader saw Timothy's God-given trait as a powerful and welcome asset, not a liability. Again, he loved him just the way God made him. That's why Paul could *long to see* his son. Doing so would not frustrate Paul or drag him down. Quite the contrary. It would cause him to be *filled with joy*.

Paul remained entirely secure in how God made him and what he was called to be and do. God made him tough, focused, and tenacious. He loved the back and forth of a good debate and never backed down from a fight. It wasn't in his make-up to let *anyone* or *anything* thwart his confidence or his goals. That's how God made Paul and Paul felt very secure in being that man.

Yet Paul was equally secure in how God made *Timothy*. He knew what God had done and would continue to do through *him*. As we saw last week, Timothy was a sensitive man whom Paul could count on to care for the pastoral needs of an entire metropolitan city.

This sensitivity may often have caused tears in his disciple because of his love for people and their welfare. Timothy also hurt deeply when people hurt him. When hurting, his confidence was shaken and his goals became delayed or obscured. Paul had no problem with that and continued to love him just the way he was.

Coach, God has wired you, your colleagues, and your team all differently. Some are tough and others are tender. Some are big picture people, and others more detail-oriented. Some feel another's pain whether they want to or not. Conversely, others *inflict* pain on those they encounter whether they intend to or not.

The more you embrace and leverage these differences (and help *them* do the same), the more all of you will experience the gratitude and joy God intended for you. Appreciating that God made us all different from one another opens the door to fully coach another's heart just the way God made it. Coaching hearts expresses gratitude and acceptance.

WEEK 3 To coach a heart, we must speak to a heart

2 Timothy 1:5-6

⁵ I recall your sincere faith that was in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am sure is in you. This is the good thing that God's gift to you is passing on of my hands.

Keeper Quote
Relevant thinking on the topic.

Timeless Weekly Truth
One big principle for the week.

Keeper Quote

When all is said, it is the mother, and the mother only, who is a better citizen than the soldier who fights for his country. The successful mother, the mother who does her part in rearing and training aright the boys and girls who are to be the men and women of the next generation, is of greater use to the community, and occupies, if she only would realize it, a more honorable as well as more important position than any man in it. The mother is the one supreme asset of the national life. She is more important, by far, than the successful statesman, or businessman, or artist, or scientist.

— President Theodore Roosevelt

Key Verse for the Week: 2 Timothy 1:6-7

⁶ Because of this I remind you to rekindle God's gift that you possess through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God did not give us a Spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Day 3: Coaching hearts affirms what is good and true

OBSERVATION

1. What two words did Paul use to describe and affirm Timothy's fate? (5)
2. Who else exhibited this kind of faith? (5)
3. What did Paul command Timothy to do? (6)

INTERPRETATION

4. Why do you think Paul used those two words to describe and affirm Timothy's faith? (5)
5. Why do you think Paul compared Timothy's sincerity to that of his grandmother and mother? (5)
6. What difference do you think it made to Timothy that Paul expressed this level of confidence in his faith?

APPLICATION

7. In a similar situation, how thoughtfully would you communicate with your athlete? Why would you select particular words or phrases? Would your words change depending on who you were communicating with? Why or why not?

Yesterday we saw that Paul had not forgotten Timothy. Indeed, Paul remembered him in his prayers and remembered his tears. That was important to know. But being forgotten wasn't Timothy's only fear. In his discouragement, Timothy likely doubted himself and his faith. You may remember from last week that although his mom was a Jew, his dad was Greek. To the Jews, he had turned away from Judaism because he was uncircumcised (until Paul removed that argument).⁶

Of course, there was nothing wrong with any of these realities that were circumstantial "givens" for Timothy. But in times of depression, doubt, and discouragement, our self-assessment becomes distorted. It lies to us. Scripture teaches that Satan himself is *the accuser of our brothers and sisters* (Revelation 12:10). We need an outside voice to remind us of the truth. As valuable as the written Word is, it often helps for that voice to have skin on.

To this end, Paul countered natural emotional distortions by telling Timothy about a third remembrance. Here, he moved his communication to a deeper level. The apostle who first preached the Gospel to his future spiritual son in Lystra could **recall [Timothy's] sincere faith**. By using the word translated "*sincere*," Paul described Timothy's faith as "non-hypocritical." Timothy's faith was real.

As such, Timothy's faith extended far beyond a collection of casually recited doctrines and creeds. His faith was *alive*! The *promise of life* (referenced in 1:1) had taken hold in his immediate spiritual ancestors. His *grandmother, Lois*, and his *mother, Eunice*, possessed a *living* faith. No doubt, Paul leveraged the admiration and emotion which Timothy held for these two women in order to anchor his son's view of reality.

Timothy never doubted *their* faith and *his* was just as *sincere*. Of course, each person must choose to follow Christ independent of another's faith. Over time, Timothy had witnessed *their* vibrant faith, then personally embraced Christ, and experienced his

own faith come *alive*. It was important for Timothy to believe his faith was real. But that was not enough.

Leaving no room for doubt, Paul continued, by stating "***and I am sure is in you***." Paul wanted Timothy to know that he was convinced of his son's sincere and living faith. He did not say that he "believed" or "thought" or "felt pretty strongly" about it. He said, "***I am sure***."

That phrase literally means, "I have been convinced/persuaded."⁷ Paul, the professionally-trained lawyer, used a legal term to describe the level of his confidence. As if in a courtroom, Timothy's life had presented evidence over a period of more than twenty years. Paul had personally gathered, weighed, and examined that evidence. He found it convincing and persuasive. The truth was clear. The verdict was in. The case was closed. Again, Paul left Timothy with nothing to prove.

Paul spent his opening paragraph affirming their relationship and Timothy's faith, telling Timothy how often and in what ways he was on Paul's mind. Paul remembered him in his prayers, he remembered his tears, and he remembered his faith. These assurances reinforced Timothy's security in his relationship with his spiritual father.

Now it was time for Dad to bring something else to his son's mind. Like Coach Robinson, only *after* building Timothy's confidence did Paul gently remind him of his responsibilities. Timothy was already exceedingly responsible in character. Paul knew his son felt the full weight of numerous obligations and decisions. Paul needed merely to reference the burden, not make it any heavier.

Because of the reality of and confidence in Timothy's relationship with Paul and with God, Paul felt compelled to **remind** Timothy to take action. Don't miss this, coach! Paul's motivation to Timothy to heed the "challenge" portions of this letter originated from recognizing what Paul had already affirmed, namely, his secure relationship, his character,

and his faith. Timothy had *nothing* to prove to earn Paul's confidence. His life was filled with proof. As Col. Allen West has said, "A person gains self-esteem by doing esteemable things." Although Paul points out numerous natural consequences throughout the book—both positive and negative—the motivational bullets of shame or threat cannot be found in Paul's arsenal. Timothy simply needed to act on what Paul already knew to be true of him.

What did Paul **remind** Timothy to do? To **rekindle God's gift**. Each one of these words deserves our attention. First, what does it mean to **rekindle**? The word pictures fanning an ember back into a fire. Like that ember, all that Timothy needed already existed. He just needed to provide the necessary accelerant to bring it to its full potential.

What was the ember that Timothy should **rekindle**? It was **God's gift**. Paul did not challenge Timothy to meet an arbitrary standard constructed by *him*. Timothy was not responsible to *Paul* for a **gift** that *Paul* had provided. Timothy was accountable to *God* for what *God* had given to him. This is why none of the consequences that Paul will refer to come from Paul. They are *all* in relationship to *God*. Paul's role was that of Timothy's father and cheerleader, *not* his judge.

Finally, what was the **gift** Timothy must **rekindle**? Paul does not identify any **gift** other than one that Timothy would have associated **with the laying on of [Paul's] hands**. Commentators speculate that this **gift** may have been teaching or pastoring. However specific one might be, it clearly had to do with Timothy's pastoral duties. The remainder of this letter provides ample witness to that fact.

But if the ember he must rekindle referred to his **gift**, what retardants and accelerants which were impacting the fire? We'll learn more about that in Day 4. For now, it's important to remember: Coaching hearts affirms what is good and true.

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2 Timothy 1:7

⁷ For God did not give us a Spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Discussion Question
Issues raised by the week's study.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What do you think would happen if we asked God to bless something that didn't honor him?

MY PURPOSE STATEMENT:

As a result
of this study,
my prayer
is for God
to help me...

Purpose Statement
*Personalizes and
applies the week.*

Record this purpose statement on page 97.

Prayer Results and Requests

**Record Prayer Requests
& Answers**
Encourages faithful prayer.

DAY 4: Coaching hearts grows character

OBSERVATION

1. What thought does the word "For" connect to? (7)
2. Why did he believe Timothy could do what he said? (7)
3. What tendency came naturally to Timothy and what came only supernaturally? (7)

INTERPRETATION

4. What gave Paul the right to address the cowardice in Timothy's heart? (7)
5. Why was Timothy responsible to do something about it? (7)
6. What difference do you think it made to Timothy that Paul chose the words he did?

APPLICATION

7. How can you, as a coach, honor God by being His agent of wisdom in your corner of the world?
8. As a coach, you have a very visible platform from which to let your light shine and honor God. What type of "good deeds" can you do to impact the watching world in a positive way?

In this verse, Paul mentions a fire retardant that does not come from God: ***For God did not give us a Spirit of fear.*** It seems that fear had choked Timothy's fire. Perhaps he had a fear of failure, rejection, incompetence, or disappointment. Perhaps all of these, and many others, created his fear to some extent. Regardless, Timothy's fear reflected an earthly and self-centered perspective, *not* what came from God. Some scholars debate whether Paul was referring to the Holy ***Spirit*** or the human ***spirit*** or attitude (see That's the Spirit). But whichever one Paul had in mind, the effect was the same. Timothy's fear interfered with his rekindling.

Good news! If our own spiritual fire has begun to burn out, God provides not only the fire but also three accelerants that we all need: ***power and love and self-control.*** Let's look at each.

First, Paul mentioned this ***power*** (Greek, "*dunamis*") just a few years earlier when he prayed that this very church in Ephesus might know *the incomparable greatness of his power toward us who believe* (Ephesians 1:19). God had already provided it.

Second, God provides believers with the ***love*** (Greek, "*agape*") accelerant, *the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us* (Romans 5:5).

Third, God has given us ***self-control*** (Greek, "*sophronismos*"). This isn't the same word as

listed in the fruit of the spirit, sometimes translated "self-control" (Galatians 5:23). Instead, it deals more with being "sober-minded." In the NIV translation of 2 Timothy 4:5, they convey the meaning of this word as, "*keep your head in all situations.*" God has also graciously provided this third accelerant as Paul testifies in Romans 12:3, "*think with sober discernment, as God has distributed to each of you a measure of faith.*"

...we must always remind our athletes who they are and how God has blessed them.

Often we pray for God to give us something that he has *already* given us. We just don't realize it. Paul basically told Timothy that the three key players he desperately needed to win the game were already on his team, in uniform, sitting on his bench, and ready to go. Timothy just needed to put *them* in his game and pull *fear off* the field—for good.

Paul's goal was to change Timothy's life. That began with his thinking and perspective. Perhaps Paul would agree with

the old farming analogy, "Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a life." Coaching hearts grows character.

Let's step back for a moment and appreciate the heart behind Paul's opening paragraph. Reading over these words reminds me of a story I once read and still love about Tom Watson Jr. of IBM fame.

A promising junior executive was involved in a risky venture for the company and managed to lose over \$10 million in the gamble. It was a disaster. When Watson called the nervous executive into his office, the young man blurted out, "I guess you want my resignation?" Watson responded, "Resignation! You can't be serious. We've just spent \$10 million on your education!"⁹

Timothy had prepared his own resignation. Paul would have nothing of it. Nobody excels in a sport by always getting it right the first time. You do it by making mistakes and having a coach who believes in you and gives you yet another opportunity to fail and eventually get it right.

The same is true in ministry. Paul sincerely believed that Timothy's best years were yet to come. He just needed some additional confidence and godly perspective.

As we consider how to coach a heart, we must always remind our athletes who they are and how God has blessed them. This truth, once understood and believed, allows you to speak to their heart. Speaking to their heart, in turn, grants you the unspeakable privilege to change their lives, perhaps for eternity.



HEAVY LIFTING

That's the Spirit! Some interpret "spirit" (*pneuma*) as the human personality, under the Holy Spirit's influence (1 Cor. 4:21; Gal. 6:1; 1 Pt. 3:4). Most regard it as the Holy Spirit, arguing that Paul relates this

idea back to the Holy Spirit. Paul's theme contrasting man-dependent living (fear) vs. God-dependent living clarifies this point in 1:14, "Protect that good thing entrusted to you, through the Holy Spirit who lives within us."⁸