

# THROUGH THE BIBLE

## 2 TIMOTHY 1-2

**Dateline: Rome, Italy - 62 AD.** A ship from Alexandria arrives with a special passenger - *Paul, leader of Christianity, prisoner of Rome.* Paul was arrested in Jerusalem for insurrection. He was held for two years in the Roman stockade at Caesarea.

As a Roman citizen it was Paul's legal right to appeal his case. He opted to stand trial before the Emperor.

We have no record of his encounter with the Caesar, but I'm sure by the time Paul was done, it was Nero who felt like he was on trial... Count on Paul to present the ruling Roman with a compelling witness for Jesus.

Imagine this showdown in Nero's palace, *the apostle of the Gentiles stands before the king of the Gentiles.*

At Paul's conversion, Jesus had predicted that Paul would "bear (His) name before Gentiles, (and) kings."

*Now the moment has come... Apostle Paul confronts the king of the Gentiles, with the King of all kings.*

Secular historians note a marked change in Nero around the time of his meeting with Paul - 62-63 AD.

*Nero went nuts.* He went insane. Its possible Nero's rejection of the Gospel helped to cause his demise.

Demon possession probably best explains his behavior. Nero ended up one of the cruelest rulers of all time. He even murdered his own wife and mother.

Nero was an egomaniac. He showed off by building stadiums and erecting pagan temples - *but the city of Rome was out of room, and Nero needed more space.*

On July 19, 64 AD a fire started in the woodsheds near the Circus Maximus. Later it was reported that Nero's servants were seen running from the sheds just before the blaze started. The fire engulfed the city. It raged for 10 days and torched 2/3 of downtown Rome.

Everyone suspected Caesar Nero to be the arsonist.

He'd burned his own city, just so he could rebuild it in honor of himself... "Nero fiddled while Rome burned."

And when the fingers started pointing at Nero, he needed a scapegoat. So he blamed Rome's destruction on the Christians. Nero launched a massive crusade to persecute the followers of Jesus.

He burned them at the stake to light his parties.

Nero clothed Christians in animal skins - threw them to wild dogs - and watched them get *mauled...*

Christians under Nero were crucified - executed by gladiators - and torn apart by ferocious lions.

Nero's persecution was *relentless* and *merciless*.

Finally, in 65 AD he arrested the two champions of Christianity - Peter and Paul. For Paul, it was his second arrest... That same year Peter was crucified upside down – a few months later, Paul was beheaded.

For the moment, Paul's head is on the chopping block. He's in Rome's maritime prison. *I've been there.* It's a dungeon – a cold, dark, damp subterranean cave.

In Paul's day it was *rat-infested* and *sewer-infected*.

The prison that held Paul was just off the famous Forum. There he heard the mindless chants of pagan worship. He smelled sacrifices burning to idols.

Paul wasn't far from where the Coliseum would later be constructed. In years to come, the Coliseum would become a graveyard for Christians. The site might've been chosen because it was already a killing field.

Picture Paul - chained to a dungeon wall. He hears the screams of fellow believers being tortured for their faith. He knows at any moment he could be next...

*Welcome to Rome!* And in such dire straights what's his priority? *He writes a letter.* As he awaits a date with the executioner He pens his final words to a friend.

Verse 1, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus...” Paul isn't awaiting death, his mind and heart are full of the promise of eternal life in Christ!

Hanging over his head isn't a gloomy cloud but a glorious sunrise! Jesus has guaranteed him eternal life!

Paul writes, “To Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Warren Wiersbe points out, “Paul added “mercy” to his greetings to pastors – 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus. Paul knew that pastors need mercy!”

I couldn't agree more! A pastor is always trafficking in issues way over his head. *Who am I to speak of God, and represent Him?* It's a sobering responsibility.

James 3:1 warns pastors, “Let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” Pastors need to hear that, but I'm also glad that God tempers His judgment with mercy.

*Be like God, and have a little mercy on your pastor!*

Paul says in verse 3, “I thank God...” *He does what?*

Jail for Paul wasn't three square meals - cable TV - and access to the prison library and weight room.

He's in prison. The light is dim. The air is damp and cold. Paul poops in a can. If he eats at all it's because another persecuted saint slid a few scraps his direction. The Apostle Paul is old, tired, about to die.

Yet Paul “thanks God.” There's no grumbling, no murmuring, no whining, no focusing on himself, no concern about his own plight, no worries about his future... He's full of praise and **gratitude** to God.

*Remember the pilgrims who got off the Mayflower?*

Life in the new world was tough. The first year these people made seven times more graves than huts, yet they decided to set aside a day for thanksgiving.

It really is all about perspective...

Paul says he thanks God, “whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did...” Paul is concluding his ministry with no regrets. His conscience is clear. He’s taken no shortcuts. He’s served God with integrity.

The Columbus Iselin was a ship used by the University of Miami to collect chemical, physical, and biological data on the currents of the Florida straits.

The information was accumulated to help manage ocean oil spills. But ironically while working in the Florida Keys the ship ran aground and spilled 200 gallons of diesel fuel into the ocean. Rather than being part of the solution the scientific team from the University of Miami became part of the problem.

That can also be said for many Christian ministers. We can poison what we seek to protect, if we don’t conduct ourselves in a godly and gracious manner.

Paul served God and prayed for Timothy... “as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy...” Timothy is on the outside shedding a tear in prayer for Paul, while Paul is on the inside praying for his friend, Timothy!

And when he thinks of Timothy, he can’t help but remember his family. Verse 5, “when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.” Notice, only “*genuine faith*” is detected by kids in their parents.

Kids, have an innate radar that filters out anything that’s phony. Parents, you’re children will be impressed by your relationship with God only if its real, genuine!

Acts 16:1 tells us Timothy’s dad was not a believer.

But both his mom and grandma were sincere Christians with a vibrant faith. And these two ladies had a had a profound impact on Tim. This should be a great encouragement to our single moms - and the ladies who are married to unbelievers. Single parents can still raise a child surrounded by Christian influence.

I hope all parents understand their top priority is their child's spiritual formation and development. So what if you teach the kid to read and write, sharpen their athletic skills, send them to college, turn them into good citizens... if in the end they die and go to Hell.

Christian Psychologist James Dobson comments, "I urge you as parents of young children to provide for them an unshakable faith in Jesus Christ. This is your most important function as mothers and fathers. How can anything else compare in significance to the goal of keeping the family circle unbroken in the life to come?" We need to pass down our faith to our kids.

And realize you don't pass along faith like you pass down curly hair and big feet. *Faith is not genetics or germs.* Breathing on your kid won't make them a Christian. Even proximity to other Christians is no assurance they'll become Christians themselves.

Passing down spiritual values is like a quarterback passing to his split end. It's a voluntary act on both ends. The quarterback picks the *right time* – throws the ball to the *right spot* - tosses it with just the *right touch*. A pass completion requires **timing, targeting, touch...**

And even a perfect pass has to be squeezed by the receiver and pulled into his chest. Likewise, faith is a personal decision. We use *timing and targeting and touch* to convey God's truth, but the kid has to pull it in.

Paul continues, “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” “*Timid Timothy*” was how Tim was known to his friends. According to 2 Timothy 4:5, Timothy’s gift was evangelism. He had a knack for communicating his faith to unbelievers. But because of his fears and inhibitions he allowed his spiritual gift to lie dormant.

Timothy had put his gift on the shelf. He needed to get it out - blow off the dust - start using it again.

Ever gotten out of a swimming pool on a cool day?

Once you dry off and warm up its awfully hard to make yourself go back in. This was Tim’s problem...

He’d gotten away from the struggle – *it started out just a break from ministry*. But now that he’d dried off he was having a hard time getting back into the water.

Timothy needs to grit his teeth, stir up a desire, dive back into the pool. Perhaps you’ve taken a break from ministry, and now you’re having a hard time easing back into the pool. Stir up your gifts, and dive in!

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” If the Spirit of Jesus courses through your spiritual veins, He’ll drive out fear with a supply of **power**, and **love**, and **wisdom**.

Some folks **fear failure**. But don’t be overcome. The Spirit of God gives His people **power** to succeed. The Greek term for “**power**” is “*dunamis*” or “*dynamite*.” The Holy Spirit is a source of boldness and spiritual power.



Other folks **fear people**. Yet the Spirit counters this fear with love. Perfect **love** casts out fear. What Jesus did for mankind overshadows what man can do to me.

And still other folks are **fearful of the unknown**. This is why a **sound mind** keeps us fixed on what's sure and certain. It fixates on God's Word and His promises.

In Luke 9:55 Jesus turned to James and John and rebuked them, "**You do not know what manner of spirit you are of...**" Let's not make the same mistake...

Our world today is controlled by fear... fear of failure, fear of people, fear of the unknown. But God has given us a spirit "**of power, and of love, and of a sound mind!**"

Verse 8, "**Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God...**" Timothy had gotten discouraged when looking at Paul's plight. *His mentor is in chains.*

But Paul tells him, "**do not be ashamed...**" Paul is the prisoner of Jesus, not Rome. Evil men can chain Paul, but not the gospel. It's "**the power of God.**" Timothy is involved in a movement of God that will overtake the world and determine the destiny of all men for all time.

Timothy needs to forget about the chains, and recall the salvation. Verse 9, "**who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began...**"

Paul is in prison for a moment, but God's purposes and grace have been at work since "**before time began.**"



Paul is saying, *“Don’t get tripped up by momentary trouble, and lose sight of God’s eternal purposes.”*

And keep your eyes on Jesus, verse 10, *“but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel...”* Paul is a jailed prisoner, but His Savior is risen and victorious!

And Paul’s goal is to serve him, come what may... *“to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”* Paul’s hope, faith, and calling burn so hot they can’t be doused by a temporary trial.

It reminds me of the two swamp people down on the Bayou - they treed a bobcat. One fellow climbed up the tree and shook the limb - the other bagged the bobcat.

When the cat hit the ground - fur and skin and blood started flying. The boy in the tree shouted, *“Can’t you grab a little ole bobcat?”* His partner replied, *“I can grab him alright. My only problem is letting him loose...”*

This is the problem with the gospel. Once you grasp it and its power there’s no letting go. Paul would rather *lose his head to a sword* than *turn loose of the Gospel*.

Two weeks ago an Alabama school bus driver named Charles Poland was shot to death trying to protect his kids from a crazed man seeking a hostage. Poland has been hailed a hero in Dale County, AL.

When his wife was interviewed, she spoke of nights on the porch where she and Charles would sip coffee while they watched the sun set. She quoted the reporter their favorite Bible verse. It’s 2 Timothy 1:12...

“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”

Lydia Poland commented of this verse, “That is what I hold onto right now. God knows. He is the only one who can bring closure to my heart right now.” And her faith should be commended. She not only knows the words of 2 Timothy 1:12, she knows what it means...

Paul suffers inexplicable trials. He’s treated as the dregs of the earth. Life isn’t always fair. What he endures doesn’t always make sense, but He holds on to his hope in Christ. Paul is persuaded that come what may, Jesus is committed to his ultimate triumphed.

Apparently, Lydia Poland has the same confidence.

And notice Paul doesn’t say, “*I know WHAT I have believed.*” Christianity is not faith in a set of doctrines, or precepts, or a philosophy. Paul’s faith is in a person!

He proclaims, “*I know WHOM I have believed!*”

His confidence is in the risen Christ - and he’s persuaded no matter what happens “*to-day,*” or “*on any other day*” – when it comes to “*that Day*” – when this life is over and we stand before God - Jesus will stand by our side, and receive for us His mercies and favor!

In other words, a life committed into the hands of Jesus Christ becomes a guaranteed investment!

Paul charges Timothy in verse 13, “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.” Here’s a really good gift - a “*pattern of sound words... that promote faith and love.*”

If you’ve been blessed to sit under a steady stream of solid Bible teaching - a “*pattern of sound words*” - you have been the recipient of a truly marvelous gift.

Richard Niebuhr once said, “The great Christian revolutions come not by discovery of something that was not known before. They happen when somebody takes radically something that was always there.”

We don’t need new truths, but a faithful reminder of all that’s biblical... we need a “*pattern of sound words.*”

Verse 15, “This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.” These were former, fair-weather friends who abandoned Paul when it got tough to be his friend.

When Paul was *jailed*, they *bailed* on their support.

Timothy knew them. Here Paul points them out.

Whereas verse 16, “The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me.” “*Onesiphorus*” means “*profit-bearing*” – and this man was certainly *a profit*, or *a blessing*, to Paul.

Onesiphorus’ mission to Rome reminds me of Alvin Straight’s journey to Wisconsin. Alvin is 73 years old. He lives in Iowa. Alvin can’t get a driver’s license - his eyes are too bad. Nor does he trust buses and planes.

But Alvin's brother had a stroke and Alvin wanted to be there for him, so he cranked up his 1966 John Deere lawn mower - and drove it 200 miles to Blue River, WS, just to be with his brother in a time of need.

This was the dedication of Onesiphorus.

He traveled from Ephesus to Rome – a more difficult journey than Alvin's. He found Paul in prison, and risked his life to stay by his side and lend his help.

Paul says of Onesiphorus, **“The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day - and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.”** Onesiphorus was a servant to Paul.

Some people give off airs. Others pollute the air. Still others are real stinkers. But Onesiphorus was a breath of fresh air... *Let's all seek to refresh one another.*

Chapter 2, **“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”** Here's the golden principle of discipleship - how we should mature believers and grow the Church...

I could go out and win people to Jesus, then spend time with them to help them grow – and hopefully in my lifetime I could win a few hundred people to Jesus.

Or I could win a few people, help them grow – then teach those few to win others and help them grow – who then could win others and help them grow...

Suddenly, the exponential effect kicks in. The impact swells to thousands, not just hundreds. It's the difference between  $2+2+2+2 = 8$ , and  $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 16$ .

DL Moody put it this way, “I would rather set ten men to work, than to do the work of ten men.” Ten people can accomplish far more than just one person.

The word “*disciple*” means “*learner*” - and every Christian should be learning and growing in Christ.

Yet the disciple doesn't simply remain a learner. The learner should become a teacher. I'm teaching you the Bible from week to week in hopes that you'll go out and teach others, and they'll teach others... etc., etc.

And when you win folks to Jesus, and help them grow, you'll encounter hardship. Satan won't allow your efforts to go unchallenged. This means you'll need to cultivate endurance. And in the next verses Paul uses three analogies to help us add fortitude to our faith.

Paul points to three occupations - *soldier, athlete, farmer*... A **soldier** leads a **streamlined life**. An **athlete** a **structured life**. And a **farmer** lives a **sustained life**.

Notice, first **the soldier**. “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.” Warfare is a full-time preoccupation.

When you're fighting for survival and freedom you don't have time to mow the lawn, or tend the flower beds. Your total attention is directed toward the battle.

And spiritually we're involved in a battle. Thus we can't allow ourselves to get too distracted by secular concerns. Sure we've got to go to work, and be good stewards of our stuff – but take your eyes off the battle!

All Christians need to develop a wartime-mentality.

Life is short and the stakes are high. We need to streamline our lives, and make sure we've put first things first. Robert Moffat said, "We'll have all eternity to celebrate our victories, but only one short hour before sunset in which to win them." Be a good soldier!

"And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."

One name... **Lance Armstrong**. *Has there ever been a bigger fall from grace?* Stripped of seven Tour de France championships for cheating... blood doping.

He's now being sued. There's a criminal investigation underway. He'll forever bear a stigma of shame.

So what if you achieve a moment of glory, only to be disqualified later, stripped of your awards, and sent away in shame, everyone knowing that you cheated.

And the same is true spiritually. **The ends doesn't justify the means**. When a Christian takes shortcuts, or leans on loopholes, or uses manipulation to achieve his goals - even spiritual goals - it fails to please God.

For his achievements to be meaningful the athlete has to play by the rules - and so does a Christian.

Our desire to accomplish great things for God should never override our commitment to do it all God's way.

**God's work should always be done God's way.**



And finally, verse 6, “The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops.” A farmer has to eat from his harvest to sustain his strength as he works.

And while we *ministry for the Lord* we also need to be *nourished by the Lord*. If we’re always *putting out* spiritually, and never *taking in*, we’ll eventually *dry up*.

The farmer who’s *overworked* and *underfed* runs out of steam – likewise a Christian. God’s servants need to eat what they’re feeding others. **Eat your own feed!**

He concludes these analogies, “Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.”

“Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.”

You can chain the messenger, but not the message!

It’s been said of the Bible, “It outlives, outlifts, outloves, outreaches, outranks, outruns all other books.” You can’t hold down the truth of God’s Word!

Verse 10, “Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” Paul could endure persecution knowing that through his sufferings others would hear the Gospel and obtain salvation.

“This is a faithful saying...” The “*faithful saying*” he’s about to utter is one of several in Paul’s pastoral letters. The others are [1 Timothy 1:15](#); [4:9](#); [Titus 3:8](#).

These “*faithful sayings*” were liturgies used in the worship of the early church. The church recited these declarations of faith as reminders of vital truths.



Here's a taste the earliest Christian worship. They spoke in unison, "For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

I love the poetic, rhythmic, easy-to-memorize way early Christians recited crucial elements of their faith...

And notice the paradoxical structure... *if we die, we'll live... if we endure, we'll reign... if we deny Him, He'll deny us... if we're faithless, He remains faithful...*

Each of those statements teaches an essential truth on which the early Christians lived their lives...

**First the positive reminders...** Trust in the crucified Christ to put an end to your sin, and give you spiritual life... Endure hardship knowing that one day your faith will earn for you authority in Christ's Kingdom...

But **there's also two negative reminders...** If a man denies Christ, the Lord has no other choice but to deny him. He'll say, "I never knew you, depart from Me."

The last line in the liturgy is often misinterpreted, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." People use this as a license to be faithless.

They say, "See, even if I stop having faith in Jesus, He'll remain faithful to me." That's not what Paul says!

If you're faithless, He does remain faithful, but it's not *faithful to a faithless person*. He remains faithful to His Word. God tells us salvation is by grace through faith, thus if you have no faith, He can't make exceptions.

He's got to be true to Himself and what He's said! *The last line of the liturgy is a warning not a comfort!*

Verse 14, "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers." I'll never forget a conversation I had with a man at the Masters one year.

We were sitting next to the 18th green.

He was talking about some pastors he knew that had gone to seminary for years and years. He said to me, "I don't understand why a pastor has to spend that much time in school. You guys only got one book!"

He say a mouth-full. If pastors took the time they spend on other subjects - in essence, "words to no profit" - and spent it on our one book - how much better off the people would be who sit under our ministries.

In verse 15, Paul commands us all, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The phrase translated "*rightly dividing*" means "*to cut straight.*" This Greek word was used to describe a farmer in his fields plowing a straight furrow - or a carpenter cutting a board at an exact angle...

We all need to be diligent in our understanding and interpretation of God's Word. Exactness is required.

A haphazard or sloppy approach is an insult.

Carpenters have a slogan, that should speak to how we interpret the Bible. "*Measure twice, cut once.*"

Before a carpenter makes a cut he slows down, double checks, rethinks, then he stabilizes the board.

The cut is made only after painstaking precision.

The slightest slip or miscalculation can produce a disaster. If he's just a fraction off he can ruin the work.

Verse 16, **“But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.”** Why is it foolish, empty speculation spreads like wildfire, while sound doctrine flows through the church like molasses.

Paul says, **“And their message will spread like cancer.”** False doctrine - or superstition - or misguided conjecture tends to metastasize in the Body of Christ, like a cancer does in a human body. This is why it has to be cut out as soon as possible. You can't put it off.

And Paul points to two examples. **“Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth...”** Recall in 1 Timothy 1:20 Hymenaeus was the person who's faith had been shipwrecked. Paul had to deliver him to Satan to learn not to blaspheme. And here was his error, **“saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.”**

Hymenaeus may've taught a Gnostic heresy. Some false teachers denied a literal resurrection. God had no plans for our physical bodies. Thus, believers were free to abuse their flesh in an immoral or indulgent manner.

Paul counters him in verse 19, **“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”**

Verse 20, “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.” If you attended a state dinner at the White House you’ll probably dine on expensive china. The oldest presidential china was purchased by James Monroe in 1817. The plates are decorated with a presidential eagle. They’re priceless.

But if you toured the kitchen you’d also find regular dishes – maybe even paper plates and plastic cups – dishes that get soiled and tossed out regularly.

*Vessels of honor... and vessels of dishonor...*

And you’ll find the same in the house of God. There’s the pure teaching of God’s Word, served up on plates beautifully embossed with the seal of the Holy Spirit.

These *vessels of honor* rightly divide God’s Word.

But you’ll also encounter impure doctrine, from unreliable vessels. Teachers who contaminate the pure Word of God with their own speculative opinions.

Paul says in verse 21, “Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” The Greek name “*Timothy*” meant “*God-honoring*.” Paul wants his young protégé to live up to his name in how he cares for and handles God’s Word.

Let’s all be vessels of honor fit for every good work.

Verse 22, “Flee also youthful lusts...” Ronald Reagan once said, “Middle age is when you have two temptations - and you choose the one that will get you home by

9:00 PM.” In contrast, Timothy was a young man, and therefore vulnerable to all the temptations of youth – sex, power, greed, vanity, popularity, pride...

Timothy needs to flee anything that might draw him *from Christ* or ruin his effectiveness *for Christ*.

Recall how Joseph reacted to Mrs. Potiphar’s sexual advances? He didn’t try to be polite, or let her down easy... *He raced from her embrace!* That’s how young men should handle temptation - sprout wings and flee!

But there’s another old saying, “Most people who flee temptation usually leave a forwarding address.”

That’s why Timothy should not only flee *temptation*, but in its place pursue *noble preoccupations*. Paul tells him, “but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

Verse 23, “But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.” What difference does it make *how many angels fit on the head of a pin?*

Some issues make good argument, but nothing else!

“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition...” Notice, he corrects others while watching his step lest he slip...

Nobody has perfect doctrine. We all have blind spots, areas where we can learn. We need humility...

“If God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.” Notice, when a person comes to his senses it’s ultimately the result of God granting repentance, not our clever persuasion.

God uses us, but only His Spirit can change a man’s heart, and spring a person from the snare of the devil...