

Reminder of the Call

Devotional Reading: [John 15:1-14](#)

Background Scripture: [2 Timothy 1:3-14](#)

2 Timothy 1:3-14

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour

Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12 For the which cause 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 that which I have committed unto him against that day.

13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

Key Text

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

—2 Timothy 1:13

From Darkness to Light

Unit 3: God's Call

Lessons 10–13

Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Identify ways that Paul, Lois, and Eunice influenced Timothy's faith.
2. Explain Paul's mentoring technique.
3. Develop a personal plan to guard sound doctrine.

Lesson Outline

Introduction

- A. Call to Action
- B. Lesson Context
- I. **Reminder of Heritage (2 Timothy 1:3–7)**
 - A. Thankfulness, Conscience, Prayer (v. 3)
 - B. Desire, Sorrow, Joy (v. 4)
Leaving Friends Behind
 - C. Lois, Eunice, Paul (vv. 5–6)
A Faithful Grandma
 - D. Power, Love, Soundness (v. 7)
- II. **Reason for Faithfulness (2 Timothy 1:8–12)**
 - A. Power, Not Shame (v. 8)
 - B. Grace, Not Works (v. 9)
 - C. Life, Not Death (vv. 10–12)
- III. **Requirement of Soundness (2 Timothy 1:13–14)**
 - A. What to Do (v. 13)
 - B. How to Do It (v. 14)

Conclusion

- A. Sound Words
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

How to Say It

Domitian Duh-*mish*-un.

Ecclesiasticus Ik-*leez*-ee-as-ti-kuhs.

Eunice U-*nye*-see or U-nis.

Maccabees *Mack*-uh-bees.

Nero *Nee*-row.

Sirach *Sigh*-rak.

Introduction

A. Call to Action

Those who have been believers for any amount of time are probably familiar with the stories of Christian martyrs: men and women cruelly killed by orders of Nero, Domitian, or some other Roman emperor. We may think of being thrown to the lions in the Coliseum at Rome or being burned alive. Turning to modern times, we may be aware of missionaries in various parts of the world who have faced arrest, imprisonment, and even death because of their faith.

For most of us, though, those pressures are not a part of our daily experience. Neither was it part of the daily experience of many first-century Christians. Even so, for every martyr who died at the hands of a Roman soldier or in the mouth of a lion, there were many more who faced much less dramatic forms of persecution. These included social exclusion, financial penalties, and the like (compare [John 9:22](#)). Loss of social status brought with it feelings of shame or embarrassment, particularly when a prominent Christian leader, like Paul in today's lesson,

was imprisoned. Although our circumstances are generally different, most of us have experienced something like this at some point: having others think us odd or strange for our way of life, feeling a sense of embarrassment or shame in certain social situations. Often we will try to avoid these sorts of situations, but today's text shows us the better way.

B. Lesson Context

Two recognized groupings of some of the apostle Paul's writings are the Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon) and the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus). The letter of 2 Timothy could actually fit in either category since Paul wrote it while imprisoned (2 Timothy 1:16; 2:9).

The New Testament presents 2 Timothy in an uncomplicated fashion: as a letter written by the apostle Paul to the younger evangelist Timothy. We are introduced to the person of Timothy in Acts 16:1–3. That introduction occurs in the context of Paul's second missionary journey, which extends from Acts 15:36 to 18:22. Over time, Paul came to think quite highly of Timothy as a protégé, referring to him four times as a “son” in a spiritual sense (1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:19–22; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2).

We know certain things about Timothy in a personal sense: he was relatively young (1 Timothy 4:12), probably had a reserved personality (1 Corinthians 16:10), and was frequently ill (1 Timothy 5:23). His ancestry was that of both Judaism and paganism (Acts 16:1; see further commentary below), and he had a good reputation among the believers of his native region (16:2). Paul's trust in him increased over time (see 19:22), so much so that Timothy is named as the cosender of some of Paul's letters (example: 2 Corinthians 1:1). Timothy's dedication to the gospel resulted

in his having been imprisoned at some point ([Hebrews 13:23](#)). The two dozen occurrences of his name in the New Testament indicate the importance of his role in the spread of the gospel. Following his days as a traveling missionary with Paul, Timothy seems to have settled into a ministry located in Ephesus ([1 Timothy 1:3](#)).

We date the letter of 2 Timothy to about AD 67, as Paul's final New Testament writing before his execution in Rome (see [2 Timothy 4:6–8](#)). Persecution under Emperor Nero (reigned AD 54–68) was underway. But internal problems of the church at Ephesus and Timothy's leadership in that regard there were Paul's main concerns.

I. Reminder of Heritage ([2 Timothy 1:3–7](#))

A. Thankfulness, Conscience, Prayer (v. 3)

3. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.

Following the standard address found in almost all of Paul's letters, we see the importance with which he views *prayers* of thankfulness and intercession (also [Romans 1:8–10](#)). The phrases *without ceasing* and *night and day* indicate relentlessness in this regard (compare [Luke 2:37](#); [1 Thesalonians 1:2](#); [3:10](#); [1 Timothy 5:5](#)). This is not mere formulaic language; rather, it speaks to a primary practice of Paul.

A second touchstone for Paul is his *conscience*, a word occurring more than 20 times in his letters and in addresses attributed to him. Conscience deals with moral sensitivity, an inner awareness of the quality of one's actions (see [1 Corinthians 10:25, 27](#)). The New Testament presents

conscience in both positive and negative senses (examples: [Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:15](#)).

What Do You Think?

What words would you use to describe your prayer life as it is now? As you would like it to be?

Digging Deeper

How might your daily habits need to change in order for your prayer life to be described as “relentless”?

B. Desire, Sorrow, Joy (v. 4)

4. Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy.

This verse continues the theme of the close bond seen in the previous verse. What is added is a clue about Timothy’s sensitive nature, as Paul noted *being mindful of Timothy’s tears*. To have served alongside Paul was to subject oneself to strong emotions (compare [Acts 20:36–38; 2 Corinthians 7:13](#)). Paul himself experienced such emotions (examples: [Acts 20:19, 31; 2 Corinthians 2:4; 7:4; Philemon 7](#)).

We might naturally ask here about the specific reason for Timothy’s distress. It probably refers to the earlier urgent need for Timothy to remain in Ephesus ([1 Timothy 1:3](#)), which resulted in a tearful farewell when Paul left for Macedonia. Given that Paul would request a personal visit in [2 Timothy 4:9](#), he hoped that the two would yet be reunited and that tears would be replaced *with joy*.

Leaving Friends Behind

When I lived in Ukraine as a missionary, I would return to the United States every summer to visit friends and family. And every fall, I headed back to Ukraine. I had deep friendships in both locations, and each time I left one place, I felt sad leaving the people I loved there.

After having moved back to the United States permanently, I still remember my friends in Ukraine. When the weather changes, I feel a certain type of chill in the air and wonder what my Ukrainian friends are doing. I look at photos my friends post and remember the good times we had.

As we consider Paul’s remembrance of Timothy’s tears, perhaps we should ask ourselves, *When was the last time I had a shared-ministry friendship so deep that separation resulted in weeping?* If the answer is “never,” what does that imply?

—L. M. W.

C. Lois, Eunice, Paul (vv. 5–6)

5. When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

This verse reveals that Timothy was not an absolute newcomer to godliness when Paul had recruited him some dozen years earlier. Although Timothy’s father was “a Greek” ([Acts 16:1](#)), the two devout women mentioned here had instructed Timothy in *unfeigned faith*. Such faith is characterized by a complete lack of hypocrisy (contrast [Matthew 23:23](#)). *Lois* and *Eunice* are both Greek names, suggesting the women were ethnically Greeks. But their faith was rooted in the Old Testament before learning about and accepting Jesus as the promised Messiah.

What Do You Think?

Who are the faithful women in your life who helped shape your faith?

Digging Deeper

How can you glorify God while celebrating these women or their memories?

A Faithful Grandma

My grandma grew up in Appalachia. The oldest of many children, she helped raise her younger siblings and held quite a bit of adult responsibility. On a trip back to that area one time, she and I stood on a hillside overlooking the valley where she had lived as a child. She pointed out where landmarks used to be and told me about the people who had lived there.

“Down that way was an old church, and on the other end of the holler was another church, and over the hill was another one. When I was a teenager, my friends and I used to spend the whole day every Sunday going to each one,” she explained. “We’d go to one in the morning, another in the afternoon service, and the third in the evening.” They made a day of worshipping God together, building relationships in the process. My grandma’s dedication to God did not end when she reached adulthood; she brought up her children and grandchildren to follow Jesus as well.

What will be your legacy in terms of discipling someone younger?

—L. M. W.

6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

Having set the tone by describing the nature of their relationship, Paul turned to a purpose in writing this letter: Timothy needed to exert leadership in the face of the challenges before him. That leadership would become manifest as Timothy stirred *up the gift of God, which* was already internal to him.

Perhaps Timothy was wavering (or in danger of wavering) in the face of the challenges before him, which Paul went on to specify as the letter continued. No matter if Paul's imprisonments were a source of embarrassment to his younger colleague, Paul had been the conduit through which that gift was bestowed. But what exactly was that gift?

Elsewhere Paul used similar phrasing in connection with grace ([Romans 5:15](#); [Ephesians 3:7](#)), eternal life ([Romans 6:23](#)), salvation ([Ephesians 2:8](#)), and spiritual gifts ([1 Corinthians 7:7](#); [12:28](#)). The first three of those four all deal with salvation from different angles, so the choices would seem to boil down to just two: Paul, by *the putting on of his hands*, conferred on Timothy either salvation or a spiritual gift.

But two other possibilities should be mentioned. Grammatically, the sentence could mean that God himself was the gift, but this seems unlikely. Also, [1 Timothy 4:14](#) should be taken into account: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." A laying on of hands is also noteworthy (1) as part of commissioning ceremonies in [Acts 6:6](#) and [13:3](#); (2) as accompanying receptions of the Holy Spirit in [8:17](#); [9:17](#); and [19:6](#); (3) in a cautionary sense in [1 Timothy 5:22](#); and (4) as one of the "principles of the doctrine of Christ" in [Hebrews 6:1–3](#).

It's tempting to see a commissioning ceremony as being solely in view, but we would not speak of an ordination as being "in" someone. Ultimately, it seems that the best understanding is a combination of

Timothy's having received some spiritual gift (the inward) during an ordination ceremony (the outward). We should understand Paul's ministry as being Spirit-driven (see also [1 Timothy 1:18](#)).

D. Power, Love, Soundness (v. 7)

7. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Although the gift of God that Paul had in mind may be unclear to us today, what Paul does *not* refer to is certain: the gift is not *the spirit of fear* (see also [Romans 8:15](#)). A challenge for us modern readers of the Bible is that the Greek word translated *spirit* is capitalized as *Spirit* in places where the Holy Spirit is being discussed. But the ancient Greek manuscripts are no help in this regard because capitalized and uncapitalized texts do not occur together. Context usually makes clear whether “Spirit” or “spirit” is meant, but not always. Some verses where this uncertainty presents itself are [Romans 1:4](#); [Ephesians 1:17](#); [1 Peter 4:14](#); and [Revelation 19:10](#). Regarding the text at hand, does *the spirit* refer to a human disposition that is characterized by *power, and ... love, and ... a sound mind*, or does it refer to the Holy Spirit proper? Other passages have this kind of language both ways (consider [Luke 4:14](#); [Romans 8:15](#); [15:19, 30](#); [Colossians 1:8](#)).

Whatever conclusion is reached, one thing is clear: the assets on which Timothy can depend are supernatural in origin—from God. Fear cripples strength and love, and it makes sound judgment very difficult. Fear draws us to focus on our inadequacy; but realization of divinely provided power, love, and a sound mind draws us to focus on God's strength and character.

What Do You Think?

How do your actions differ when you are unafraid versus when you feel great fear?

Digging Deeper

How do the spiritual gifts listed in [2 Timothy 1:7](#) help prevent being overcome in the first place?

II. Reason for Faithfulness

([2 Timothy 1:8–12](#))

A. Power, Not Shame (v. 8)

8. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.

Shame and power are also contrasted in [Romans 1:16](#). *The afflictions of the gospel* refer to—or at least include—Paul’s imprisonment. Consider Timothy’s dilemma: he had pledged allegiance to the message of a leader who is awaiting execution! So how could that message have any credibility?

Paul offered the surprising way out of the dilemma: *be thou partaker of the afflictions*. To be a faithful witness of the gospel, Timothy would have to come to terms with this imperative. He would have to accept the fact that his teacher and mentor had been imprisoned because of the message Timothy was tasked to preach. He would have to understand that Paul’s imprisonment did not invalidate or otherwise discredit the truth of the gospel. Indeed, the opposite was true (compare [Philippians 3:10](#)). So Paul told Timothy much the same thing that he had told the

church in Corinth: the power and wisdom of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, will always look shameful and weak to the world (1 Corinthians 1:25–31).

B. Grace, Not Works (v. 9)

9a. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.

This half verse touches on two vital doctrines of the church: those of justification (what happens for a person’s salvation to occur) and sanctification (what happens—or should happen—after salvation occurs).

9b. Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Paul stressed anew what he had made clear in Ephesians 2:8–9: we are saved by God’s *grace*, not by *our works* (see also Titus 3:5). The power of God, manifested in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, existed *before the world began* (John 1:1). Such power never retreats in the face of false teachers, no matter how eloquent or socially acceptable they are.

What Do You Think?

Given that we are not called or saved based on our works, what reasons can you suggest for holy living?

Digging Deeper

What Scriptures do your answers draw on?

C. Life, Not Death (vv. 10–12)

10. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and

immortality to light through the gospel.

Perhaps the best antidote to Timothy's fear was a robust restatement of the sheer, awe-inspiring glory of *the gospel*. That gospel presented itself in the flesh and blood *appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ*; His appearance was not some kind of unseen abstraction (1 John 1:1–3). The verse before us might be seen as a summary of Paul's extensive thoughts in 1 Corinthians 15.

11. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

Paul had absolutely no shame in acknowledging the three roles mentioned here, and they are interesting to compare and contrast. The Greek noun translated *preacher* is relatively rare in the New Testament, occurring only here, in 1 Timothy 2:7, and in 2 Peter 2:5. This noun is also rare in the Greek version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), occurring only in Genesis 41:43 and Daniel 3:4. The noun is also found in the nonbiblical Jewish texts of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 20:15 and 4 Maccabees 6:4. In all cases, the idea is that of loud public proclamation. By numeric contrast, the verbal forms of this noun occur 19 times in Paul's letters (plus 45 times elsewhere in the New Testament). This may indicate that the *act* of preaching is to be stressed over the *position* of preacher.

By further contrast, the nouns translated *apostle* and *teacher*, occurring dozens of times each in the New Testament, are much more common than the noun translated *preacher*. The three roles overlap in meaning since an apostle was called to preach and teach (Mark 3:14; 6:30; Acts 4:2, 33; 8:25; etc.). When we see the word *apostle*, we may naturally think of the original 12 (Luke 6:13–16), plus the replacement for Judas (Acts 1:15–26), plus Paul (formerly known as Saul). We may be surprised to see

that designation also applied to several others as well (see [Acts 14:14](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:1](#); [2:6](#); possibly [Romans 16:7](#)).

12. For the which cause 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 that which I have committed unto him against that day.

For the which cause refers back to Paul's overlapping roles as a preacher, apostle, and teacher of the gospel; he suffers what he suffers because of exercising those roles (compare [2 Corinthians 6:2–10](#); [11:23–33](#)). He had every reason to feel ashamed from a cultural perspective. But he was *not ashamed*. Shame has its place in the Christian life (see [Romans 6:21](#); [2 Corinthians 9:4](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:14](#); [Titus 2:8](#)). But the task of gospel presentation is not in that category (also [Romans 1:16](#); [2 Corinthians 10:8](#); [Philippians 1:20](#); [2 Timothy 1:16](#); [2:15](#)).

What Do You Think?

How can you encourage new Christians to be bold and unashamed in living out their faith?

Digging Deeper

How will you apply this encouragement to your own life?

III. Requirement of Soundness

([2 Timothy 1:13–14](#))

A. What to Do (v. 13)

13. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

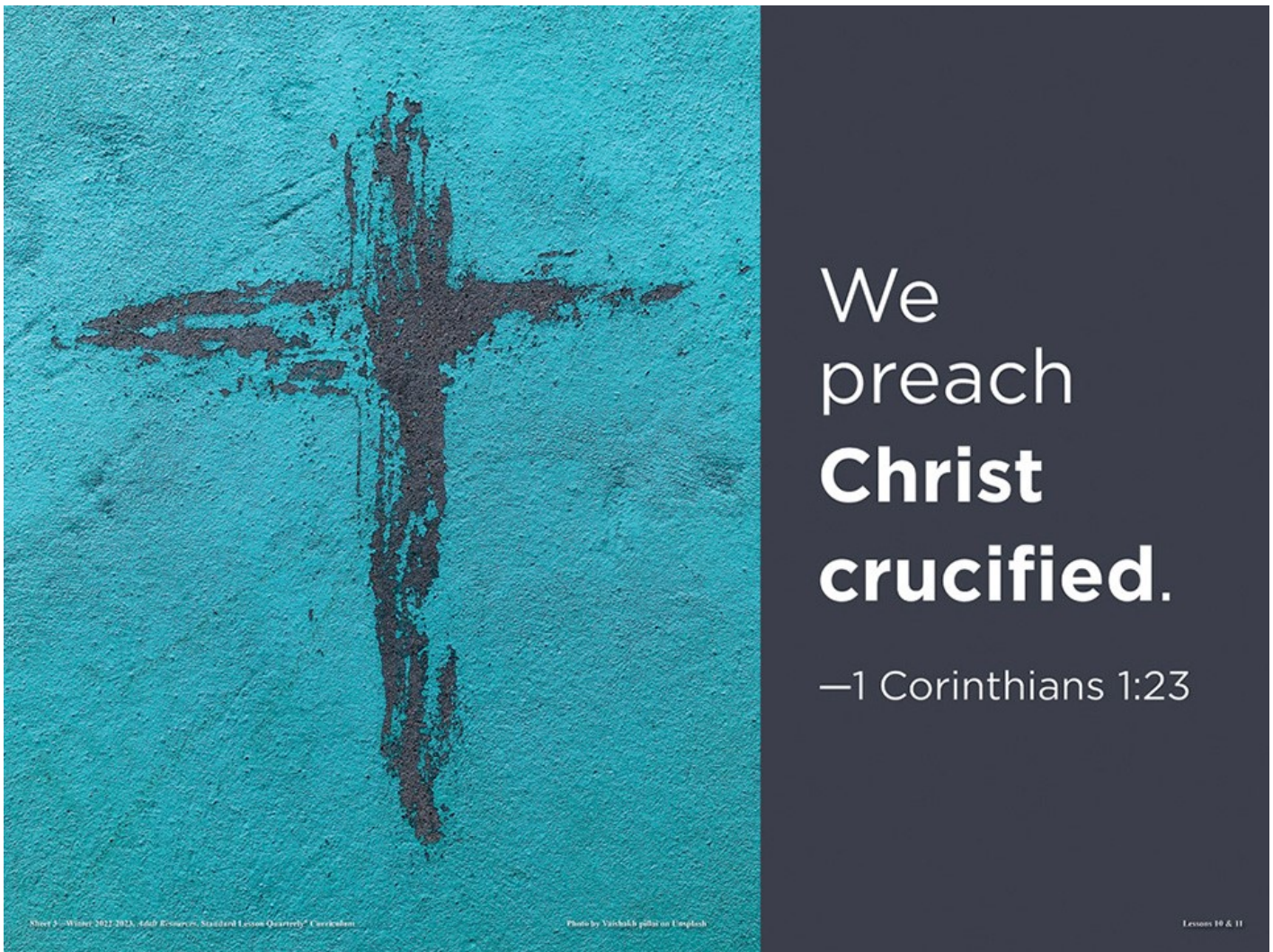
Having reflected on his own life and ministry, Paul returned to

addressing Timothy directly. The phrase *the form of sound words* undoubtedly strikes our ears as odd. The only other place in the New Testament where the Greek word behind the word *form* occurs is [1 Timothy 1:16](#), there translated “pattern.” Regarding the translation *sound*, the three Pastoral Epistles have 8 of the 12 occurrences of New Testament usages of the underlying Greek word (here and [1 Timothy 1:10](#); [6:3](#); [2 Timothy 4:3](#); [Titus 1:9, 13](#); [2:1, 2](#)). Elsewhere in the *King James Version*, the translation of the Greek behind *words* is “utterance” ([2 Corinthians 8:7](#)), “speech” ([10:10](#)), and “communication” ([Ephesians 4:29](#)). The same sense is present here; compare the “sound words” in the text at hand with “sound doctrine” in [1 Timothy 1:10](#) (translating a different word that overlaps in meaning). In sum, Paul required Timothy to maintain his *faith and love* in the gospel of *Christ Jesus*.

B. How to Do It (v. 14)

14. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

The same gospel (*that good thing*) that had been entrusted to Paul to proclaim ([2 Timothy 1:11](#), above) had been *committed* to Timothy as well. The charge here is quite similar to that in [1 Timothy 6:20](#), but here with the added mention of the strength available through the power of *the Holy Ghost*. Some argue that the word *us* refers specifically to Paul and Timothy in their capacities as ministers of the gospel, carriers of the ministerial gift received through ordination (see commentary on [2 Timothy 1:6](#), above). But there is nothing apparent in the text that requires this.



Visual for [Lessons 10 & 11](#). *Have learners discuss how preaching Christ crucified encourages the boldness called for in verse 12.*

Conclusion

A. Sound Words

In our media-saturated environment, it can be hard to find the space for sound, healthy teaching. Even in Christian circles, it is easy to get carried away with worries over the state of the world and of society. May today's text remind us to center our focus on the life-altering power of the gospel. Let us resolve to make Paul's charge to Timothy his charge to

us as well!

B. Prayer

Heavenly Father, guard our hearts and our minds from despair and shame. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us, show us how to live courageously and proclaim the gospel fearlessly. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

God has called us out of fear and into His love and power.

Involvement Learning

Enhance your lesson with KJV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at www.standardlesson.com or in the back of the KJV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).

Into the Lesson

Before class, write the following questions on the board: 1—*Who from your early life had the greatest effect on the person you have become?* 2—*What did that person do or say that affected you the most?* Invite students to pair off (preferably not with a spouse) and answer the questions. After a few minutes of discussion, ask volunteers to share their answers with the class.

Alternative. Divide the class into pairs. Distribute paper and pen to

each person. Give the pairs a few minutes to write down advice on ways to be confident. Allow pairs to share their answers with the whole group.

After either activity, lead into the Bible lesson by saying, “The people who influence us as children and youth have a profound effect on our character and spiritual life. Let’s see how two of Timothy’s family members and the apostle Paul influenced and encouraged Timothy.”

Into the Word

Divide the class in half, designating one half as the **Family Group** and the other half as the **Family Friend Group**. Distribute handouts of the questions below (you prepare) for in-group discussions.

Family Group. Read [2 Timothy 1:5–7](#) and [Acts 16:1–3](#). 1—Who were Lois and Eunice? (*Timothy’s grandmother and mother.*) 2—What do we know about them? (*They were Jewish believers.*) 3—What influence did they have on Timothy? (*By their teaching and example, they helped bring him to a strong faith in Jesus Christ.*) 4—What do we know about Timothy’s father? (*He was a Greek, so Timothy had never been circumcised.*) 5—How did Paul encourage Timothy, using the faith taught by his mother and grandmother? (*Have the confidence to grow in his gift of God’s grace that he learned from his mother and grandmother.*) 6—Read [2 Timothy 1:13–14](#). How do these verses tie back to verse 5? (*Paul encourages Timothy to keep the faith and love of God that he was taught by his mother and grandmother.*)

Family Friend Group. Read [2 Timothy 1:3, 8–12](#) and [Acts 16:1–4](#). 1—Who became Timothy’s friend and mentor? (*The apostle Paul.*) 2—How well did Paul know Timothy’s family? (*He met them in Lystra and was aware of their strong faith.*) 3—What action did Paul take to make Timothy more acceptable to other Jewish believers? (*He circumcised him.*)

4—What indication is there that Paul really cared about Timothy’s welfare? (*He prayed for him day and night and longed to see him.*) 5—What are phrases Paul used to encourage Timothy in his ministry? (*stir up the gift of God [v. 6]; God gives us power, love, and a sound mind [v. 7]; do not be ashamed [v. 8]; He has saved us and called us to a holy calling [v. 9].*)

Alternative. Distribute copies of the “A Marvelous Mentor” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have learners work in small groups to complete as indicated. *Option.* Write the three categories on the board and have each verse read aloud. Then work together as a class to suggest an answer from each verse.

After calling time under either alternative, have groups present their findings in wholeclass discussion. Use the commentary to correct misconceptions.

Into Life

Write on the board: *Hold fast the form of sound words.* Conduct a whole-class brainstorm about how to hold fast to sound doctrine. Jot ideas on the board.

Alternative. Distribute copies of the “Hold Fast” activity from the activity page. Have learners work in pairs to complete as indicated.

After either alternative, hand out index cards and pens. Invite learners to write out how they can be encouraged throughout the next week to hold fast to the faith and love that is in Christ Jesus.