

2 Timothy Devotionals

Read 2 Timothy 1

“for God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control.” 2 Timothy 1:7

This is not the verse I recite when confronted by a snake, walking through our church’s dark and scary basement, or when confronted by a snake in our church’s dark and scary basement! While there is a general truth in this passage, there’s also a much more specific truth that is easily missed: Do not fear using the gifts you’ve been given. Just as people have misapplied Philippians 4:13 as their prayer to hit a homerun to win the game, this passage is also easily cheapened. Has God given us a spirit of power for every situation? Yes, but specifically here we’re being encouraged to operate in power in the use of our spiritual gifts.

This second letter to the young pastor Timothy was an opportunity to encourage and remind Timothy of his abilities. It’s so easy for doubt to creep in as we encounter difficult situations and people that cause us to take a low view of our abilities. In those moments, we’re reminded that we have been spiritually gifted by God, and that those gifts are powerful! Using a gift of teaching in a bible study can feel daunting and intimidating, but we’re called in that moment not to fear, but to operate in the power, love, and self-control that comes with the gifts. **What spiritual gift do you have? (If you’re unsure, review Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 to see some listed). Are you fearful of using them, or using them poorly? Confess those fears to the Lord and ask Him to make you aware of His power behind the gift. God hasn’t asked you to do anything for Him by yourself. Every opportunity to serve God, is an opportunity to partner with God.**

Read 2 Timothy 2

**But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord know those who are his.”
2 Timothy 2:19**

Did you know that some Olympians are already out of the competition before the opening ceremonies? An increase in events and the desire for TV options starts the games, and the losing, before this big moment. Despite their early exit, these Olympians still march in the opening ceremonies to represent their country because they’re still part of the team! They took on the same commitments as all the other members of their national team and are viewed no differently in terms of status. In that great opening spectacle, the only thing that matters is they are Olympians!

This chapter can be an incredible encouragement for those who fear for their salvation. The gospel is incredibly simple, and maybe that’s why we fear that our salvation can be lost. We feel we haven’t accomplished enough to remain on the team, or that we’re unworthy to even be on the team. Young Timothy had been in the pastorate for years now, and was likely feeling very aware of his personal inadequacies. But there’s a big difference between denial and doubt. For those who deny Christ, He denies us (v.12). For those who are faithless, he remains faithful

(v.13). The different is that a denier rejects faith in Christ. A faithless Christian is described as having struggles in moments of sinful failure, worrying more than praying, etc. They aren't rejecting Jesus, but their issues feel bigger than God, leading them to live in fear. Yet, Jesus remains faithful. He knows we'll have these moments, and it's His power and work that holds onto us, not the other way around. **Do you worry about whether your name is really written in Heaven? Do you fear that God may reject you for your faithless moments? Like a parent at Disneyland, surrounded by kids, He still is very aware of which ones are really his. Once we have given our lives to Christ, we cannot be lost. If you have fears about eternity, speak to God on them. The most common reasons we feel this way are because we either have never truly given our lives to Him, or there is some area of faithlessness we're allowing to remain that causes us worry. Take some time in honest conversation today with God, remembering that He knows who is really His. You don't have to convince Him...ask Him to convince you!**

Read 2 Timothy 3

Having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people 2 Timothy 2:5

As a teenage Christian I thought all churches were pretty much the same. My church in high school had mission trips, special services on Christmas and Easter, and various activities through the year. When I began attending a new church in college, my understanding of church was completely changed. My new church had all the same elements as the previous one, but there was a greater respect and love for the scriptures. Weekly sermons didn't simply reference the Bible, but walked us diligently through the scriptures. We were challenged to live a Christianity in constant light of what God's Word revealed. It completely energized my faith and awoke me to a ministry call.

Timothy is encouraged to avoid people who appear to reveal godliness, but deny it's power. These aren't necessarily hostile people, but apathetic people who aren't allowing God's Word to change them into the appearance of Christ Himself. Paul writes of scripture's power towards the end in verses 16-17, revealing the value of God's Word and the lacking nature of our faith apart from it. This doesn't merely call us to avoid and evaluate others, but our very selves. **Do you speak of godliness, but fail to truly be empowered by God Himself? This occurs when we talk about God, but we don't talk to God or when we talk about the Bible, but don't read the Bible. Pastor Timothy himself is reading between the lines here: avoid powerless talk of God among your acquaintances and yourself. How is the power of God revealed through your faith in God? What steps is He calling you to with His Word to bring more power, victory, and witness in your life?**

Read 2 Timothy 4

As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry 2 Timothy 4:5

One of the great temptations for ministers and churches is to compare themselves against other ministers and churches. While we can be encouraged by other believers, it's easy to also try so hard to do every possible good work that you end up accomplishing very little. Some

churches are better at sports ministry, addiction ministry, etc. Instead of trying to fulfill the effective ministry of another minister or church, we're advised to fulfill our own calling. Paul includes a few names in this chapter who had fallen short of the finish line, but several others who completed the ministry they were personally given which had encouraged even Paul himself.

What is your ministry? It could be something official within the life of your church, or perhaps intentional work you do in your neighborhood or a community organization. As he ministered, Timothy was encouraged to be sober-minded: not losing sight of why he did his ministry. He was encouraged to endure suffering: ministry can be hard (ask anyone in children or youth ministry), but that's no reason to give up. Timothy was called to do the work of an evangelist: any ministry ultimately should be for the sake of the gospel or it's not ministry. Finally, he was called to fulfill his ministry: to fulfill commitments to his people, his church, and his God. **Where are you struggling in the personal ministry you have? Are you ready to quit short of the finish line God has called you to? Find your ministry and fulfill it. Your ministry call may change at times, and God may even invite you to rest or take a break to avoid exhaustion. But God never calls us to quit doing work for the Kingdom of God.**