

How To Be A Track Star

1 Timothy 1:1—2:6

How would you describe the Christian life?

Some describe it as a marathon race.

However, a better comparison is a relay race.

What Does The Bible Say?

This letter is from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, appointed by the command of God our Savior and Christ Jesus, who gives us hope. 2 I am writing to Timothy, my true son in the faith. (1 Timothy 1:1–2 NLT)

Paul mentored Timothy.

Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, where there was a young disciple named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek. 2 Timothy was well thought of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium, 3 so Paul wanted him

to join them on their journey. In deference to the Jews of the area, he arranged for Timothy to be circumcised before they left, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek. 4 Then they went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day. (Acts 16:1–5 NLT)

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18–20 NLT)

We are commanded to make disciples. Timothy was a believer before Paul; however, Paul took him much deeper in the faith.

Who are you taking deeper into the faith?

How Can You Obey?

Who do you know that you have influence?

Ask them if it is okay that together you look at a chapter of the Bible weekly.

Pick a Bible book; I recommend one of the gospels.

Then discuss it together.

What does it say, and is there anything that you should obey?

What Does The Bible Say?

5 The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. (1 Timothy 1:5 NLT)

Paul wants to be a conduit for people to become closer to Christ.

12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him, 13 even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. (1 Timothy 1:12–13 NLT)

You might think you are not qualified, but God wants to use you.

However, some of us think we are better than others.

15 This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—and I am the worst of them all. (1 Timothy 1:15 NLT)

Are you a Pharisee?

When you read the Gospels, it seems that Christ is always driving away good people (Mark 10:17-31).

How Can You Obey?

21 “You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’

22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell. (Matthew 5:21-22 NLT)

Do not make the dangerous mistake of comparing your behavior with those around you rather than measuring your life against God's standards.

What Does The Bible Say?

16 But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:16 NLT)

Paul constantly used himself as an example of how Christ changes us for His glory.

We call that a testimony.

How Can You Obey?

How are you using your testimony to share Christ?

Write your testimony down on paper.

What has Christ helped you overcome?

What were you like before you became a Christian?

What has changed in your life since you are now a follower of Christ?

Paul passed the baton to Timothy; to whom are you passing the baton?

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Additional Notes:

In the Insights To The Biblical World segment, ideas came from Michael S. Heiser, I Dare You Not to Bore Me with the Bible,

ed. John D. Barry and Rebecca Van Noord (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; Bible Study Magazine, 2014), 108.

Explore:

How to write your testimony:

Similar to Paul's testimony, follow a three-point approach when writing and communicating your testimony.

First, create an outline of your life before your conversion to Christianity. Then move on to how you discovered God and succumbed to Him. Lastly, focus on the changes in your life since you converted.

Before

Paint a picture of your life before you surrendered to Christ.

Follow the details that relate to your theme and show your need for Christ. Make sure not to sidetrack by dwelling on

unnecessary details. Before outlining ask these relevant questions:

What were you looking for before finding Christ?

What part of your life before converting will relate most to the non-Christians? What were your actions and attitude towards Christianity before?

What were your underlying problems, conflicts, and emotions and how did you try to resolve them? How do they let you down?

What were my insecurities, source of happiness, and what does your life revolve around?

When you are announcing your testimony, communicate in a way that the people hearing you can comprehend how to become a Christian. Your testimony should help them find the way to light.

After detailing about past, give the details of how you found salvation with Jesus. Take the time and jot down the steps and events that led you to trust Christ in the first place.

Where were you, and what was happening when you heard about Christ?

What was your initial reaction?

What were the circumstances that led you to consider Him as your Savior?

When did you accept Him as your Lord? And why?

After

Don't suggest unrealistic expectations when emphasizing the changes after you accept Christianity. Show them you still struggle and converting to Christianity does not miraculously eliminate the stresses of life. Instead, focus on the changes in your attitude, character, perspective towards your life and others. Give real-life examples of how Jesus has fulfilled your physical

and emotional needs. Consider these points when writing these parts down:

How is your life different from before?

What is the purpose of your life now?

How has conversion impacted you?

What your relationship with Christ means to you

Avoid Using These Words

Avoid using words and terminologies that the non-Christian might not understand. when you spend more time in Church, you forget that people are not familiar with your new vocabulary.

Especially if some people in your audience are not comfortable with Christianity or Church.

Instead of using dogmatic religious statements, use more common and layman words in your testimony. Your message will become clearer.

Be Honest

Include the important details only. There is no need to exaggerate or sensationalize your story. You don't need to share the details of your sins and personal misgivings. Relate to your audience with specific examples and real-life events, no matter how boring they sound.

If you have the time, you can give more information about your life experiences relating to conversion. If you are honest and communicate credible testimony, God will use your words to reach others.

Final Thoughts

When you are ready to give testimony, it is important to write it down. Not only for memorizing it, but also to put your relationship with God in perspective. Your individual stories of journey to light might sound evangelistic and unique to you.

However, with the choice of right words to develop the flow of

the story is as essential as sharing your story. If the God has saved you, then it's a miracle of faith that deserves to be celebrated.

Explore:

First Timothy, along with 2 Timothy and Titus, is found in a section of Scripture known as the Pastoral Epistles. Each of these letters was written by the apostle Paul to young pastors and addressed various responsibilities of leading and ministering to God's people. Timothy was considered Paul's son in the faith, and he had assisted the aged apostle in various ministry contexts, as is seen in 1 Thessalonians 3, 1 Corinthians 4, and Philippians 2. Here, Timothy was serving in Ephesus, combating the false teaching that was invading the church there.

At the time of this writing (first century, early to mid-sixties), Ephesus was a large, diverse city with a flourishing economy.

Along with this, however, was a complex religious setting. There were various cults and sects, including witchcraft, sorcery, and the cult of Artemis. Timothy's ministry in such a city was a daunting task with many challenges, much like the challenges of ministering in today's world.

Believers Reject False Teachers and False Doctrine and Grow in Godly Love (1 Timothy 1:1-11)

Paul opened the letter as was customary in that day, with both the names of the sender and the recipient included in the initial paragraph. He wrote with divine authority. God had appointed him an apostle, an authoritative representative of the risen Christ. He was an apostle by command of God.

According to verses 3 and 4, Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to deal with false doctrine and false teachers in the church. While the apostle was leaving to travel to Macedonia, he desired for Timothy to make sure that only authentic apostolic doctrine be

taught in the church. The problem had arisen as some were attempting to teach different doctrines than those given by Christ through His apostles.

Two specific sources of false teaching were mentioned in verse 4. There were myths or fables, likely meant to include legends regarding angels or false gods. Then, there were genealogies that were being propagated. While scholars are uncertain as to the exact nature of these genealogies, they did not help the believers grow in their knowledge of Christ and

love for one another. They only led to speculation and argument. They did not provide spiritual substance and did not further God's plan. Timothy was to ensure that these false messages were not being taught to the young believers in the faith.

In contrast to the false teachings, the intended result of Paul's admonitions to Timothy was love. The pure heart, good

conscience, and sincere faith that resulted from teaching sound doctrine led to a deep love for God and for others (verse 5). On the other hand, false teaching and the speculation it breeds were leading people away from sincere faith (verses 6-7). Some had wandered away into vain or empty discussions. These same false teachers deemed themselves the ultimate authority of any content or message being taught.

One such false teaching was a misuse of the Old Testament Law, attempting to make it a means of salvation rather than a means of conviction as it was intended (verses 8-11). While Paul was not disparaging the Law, he did want it to be used in an appropriate way, as a means of showing people their sinfulness as compared to the holiness of God. In verses 9 and 10, the apostle provided specific examples of mankind's disobedience, possibly reflecting the Ten Commandments as given in Exodus 20.

Like Timothy, we must be equipped with a true understanding of the Scriptures so we can recognize and avoid false teaching.

When we stay true to the Scriptures and renounce false doctrine, we will grow in our love for God and for others. Believers must evaluate what we are taught by comparing it with God's Word.

Explore:

God Saves Undeserving Sinners and Calls Them to Stand for the True Faith (1 Timothy 1:12-20)

After referring to the gospel entrusted to him, Paul reflected on the grace and mercy he had personally experienced. He gave thanks for his own salvation and ministry (verse 12), a thanksgiving heightened by remembering the circumstances under which he was saved and called. Paul recounted his past, acknowledging that he had previously opposed Christ and His followers, persecuting them (verse 13a). God, however, had

shown him mercy and grace in Christ (verses 13b-14).

Considering his background, Paul was overwhelmed that Christ had appointed him to His service as an apostle.

This thankfulness led Paul to state the first of the trustworthy sayings in the Pastoral Epistles: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Paul, humbled by God's grace and mercy, considered himself the worst of sinners (verse 15). We must never forget that God has forgiven us. But we must also never forget the sins we are capable of apart from constant dependence on the power and grace of God. Paul considered himself an example of how God will redeem anyone who believes in Christ (verse 16).

Paul concluded chapter 1 by reminding Timothy again of the importance of maintaining sound doctrine and the need to

discipline those who do not maintain it (verses 18-20). In this reminder are the names of two individuals (Hymenaeus and Alexander) who had not heeded Paul's warnings and had rejected and made shipwreck of their faith and were handed over to Satan by Paul so that they would learn not to blaspheme. This likely meant excommunication from the church.

Hymenaeus was a believer who had turned from the faith and had opposed Paul. He is mentioned again in 2 Timothy 2:17 as one who had also damaged the faith of others. Another believer who deviated from the faith was Alexander. He is possibly the Alexander mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:14-15, the one who had done much harm to Paul. It is for reasons and individuals such as these that Timothy was admonished to wage the good warfare.

Explore:

Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother and a Greek father; Paul met Timothy in Lystra, where Timothy is originally from.

Both Timothy's mother and grandmother were believers in Jesus (2 Tim 1:5). Timothy wasn't brought up as a Law-abiding Jew and wasn't circumcised, which made his ministry among Jewish people difficult (Acts 16:3; 2 Tim 3:15). Paul looks to Timothy to finish the work they had begun in Ephesus, telling Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5).

John D. Barry et al., eds., *DIY Bible Study* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

Explore:

Believers Pray for All People, Including Those in Positions of Authority (1 Timothy 2:1-7)

In 2:1-7, Paul turned from dealing with false doctrine and false teachers and talked about praying for all people. This is important and is the right thing to do, considering there is only one God who is over all people. This truth stands in contrast to

the exclusivist attitudes and mentalities of many of the false teachers referred to by the apostle in chapter 1.

In verse 1, Paul mentioned various types of prayers that should be prayed for all men. First, Paul used the word supplications or petitions, a term that indicated urgency or need. It was a focused request. The second term is prayers, a more general word for praying. The third term is intercessions, a term for offering petitions on behalf of others. Finally, Paul used the term thanksgivings, an aspect of prayer that should always accompany requests made by the believer. (See also Philippians 4:6.)

To show that he really meant all men, even enemies, Paul stressed the need to pray for various kinds of political rulers (verse 2). The plural form of kings would include the likes of Nero, a leader who inflicted much pain and torture on the early believers, as did many of the local authorities. How could the

church best respond to this hatred, antagonism, and persecution? By praying for them. While he did not say specifically, he was most likely encouraging them to pray for the salvation of these leaders. It is noteworthy that the apostle made no distinction between the leaders who were just and those who were not. These prayers are to be offered so that believers can lead peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

In the following verses, Paul gave other reasons why Christians should pray for everyone, including high political officials. First, the apostle said that such praying was good and pleasing to God (verse 3). The Greek wording has the idea that this kind of praying is acceptable to God. The second reason was because it is God's desire that everyone be saved (verse 4). Scripture is clear that God's desire is that no one perish (2 Peter 3:9). This fact makes praying for them good and right.

Thirdly, the apostle encouraged such praying because there is only one mediator between God and man. That mediator is Christ Jesus (verse 5). By definition, a mediator is one who negotiates between two parties in conflict. The fact that there is a need for a mediator reveals both the sinfulness of humanity and the holiness of God. The provision of the mediator, however, reveals the kindness of God toward lost humanity. Finally, Paul encouraged such praying because Christ died as a ransom for everyone (verse 6), a statement Jesus made about Himself (Mark 10:45).

Paul was committed to this message of salvation with all the authority God had given him in his call to ministry (verse 7). He emphasized that he was teaching the truth, as opposed to the false teachers of the day. His calling was to be a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. This struck at the intent of the exclusivists who taught that the gospel was for Jews only.

Explore:

Since Ephesians gives no hint of his release from prison, as do Philippians (1:19–26) and Philemon (v. 22), it is reasonable to think that he wrote it in the early part of his stay, or about AD 60. This would have been when Paul was kept under guard in rental quarters (Acts 28:30). Following his release he traveled, wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was arrested again, wrote 2 Timothy, and was martyred in Rome.

Harold W. Hoehner, “Ephesians,” in *The Bible Knowledge*

Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F.

Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985),

614.

Explore:

What is meant by shipwreck of faith? According to commentator W. Stanley Outlaw, “Paul’s warning is not merely hypothetical or theoretical. Such abandonment of faith and good conscience does happen. Calvin insisted that those who make such shipwreck have not ‘sincerely and honestly embraced the faith,’ but the Scripture itself does not seem concerned about questioning the genuineness of the faith once possessed by apostates. In such passages as this the New Testament simply points out, without qualification, that there are those who once subscribed to Christianity who do totally abandon it. This fact should be a warning to all of us concerning the need to be faithful and steadfast. Whether the faith of such was ever genuine or not, only God can tell.” (W. Stanley Outlaw, Randall House Bible Commentary: 1 Thessalonians-Philemon, 1990, p. 197.)

Explore:

Paul used the word trustworthy, or the phrase, trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, in four other places in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:8). Typically, these statements had been repeated in the early church until the saying became commonplace. In short, the phrase served to emphasize the truth of what was being said. Key doctrines such as Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners would often be recited in this way so as to pass these doctrines and truths along to others. Further, when Paul said the saying is faithful, or trustworthy, he suggested it had been tried and proven as true and reliable and, thus, well worth remembering. While all of the Bible's statements are true and thus trustworthy, these that specifically bear the title warrant special attention.

Explore:

The historical arguments stem from the fact that chronological references in the Pastoral Epistles do not fit comfortably within the historical framework of the Book of Acts. This is in some ways a strange argument since liberal scholars also commonly attack the chronological and historical reliability of Acts. How then can Acts be used as history to undermine the authenticity of the Pastorals? Yet despite this inconsistency in the liberal position, for those who take seriously both the historicity of Acts and the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals, this is a real problem.

Some have attempted to force the Pastorals into the Acts chronology, but the historical obstacles to doing so seem insurmountable. Many liberal scholars have therefore solved the seeming problems by assuming that the letters were written much later with fictitious references designed to make the

epistles appear Pauline. A variation of this is the theory that the Pastorals represent fragments of truly Pauline material interspersed with material written by a later editor. In either case, the chronological distance from the events mentioned is assumed to account for the lack of historical “fit” with Acts.

A more satisfactory solution is to assume that the Pastorals do not fit within the Book of Acts at all, but rather describe a period after the end of Acts. The Book of Acts ends with Paul in jail in Rome (a.d. 61–62). Surely if Paul was executed at the end of his imprisonment, V 2, p 728 Luke would have mentioned it. On the other hand, it is entirely credible that Paul could have been released (a.d. 62), perhaps for lack of evidence, and left free for another period of ministry. According to this supposition (which is all it can ever be), Paul traveled widely from a.d. 62 to 67 and was eventually recaptured, tried, and executed in Rome in 67. During this period of travel he would have written 1 Timothy and Titus, and during his final imprisonment, 2 Timothy. If this

scenario is correct then one ought not expect the Pastorals to fit into the chronology of Acts, which ends with his first Roman imprisonment, and the historical arguments against the Pastorals' authenticity lose their force.

A. Duane Litfin, "1 Timothy," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 726–728.

Explore:

Timothy was the son of a Greek father and Jewish mother (Acts 16:1). No mention is made of his father being a Christian, but his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were both known for their sincere faith (2 Tim. 1:5). Timothy was no doubt living at Lystra when Paul visited that city on his first

missionary journey (cf. Acts 14:6; 16:1). Whether or not Paul led Timothy to Christ cannot be known with certainty. At any rate Timothy already knew and believed the Old Testament Scriptures, thanks to his mother and grandmother (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15), and Paul took him on as a promising protégé. Paul thus became like a spiritual father to the young man, referring to him as “my true son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2) and “my dear son” (2 Tim. 1:2; cf. Phil. 2:22).

Timothy’s promise for the ministry was recognized early (1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:5). Thus Paul took him on as a companion and he became one of the apostle’s most trustworthy fellow-laborers (cf. Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 16:10; Phil. 2:19–22; 1 Thes. 3:2). He also became Paul’s faithful representative and messenger (Acts 19:22; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 1:19; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thes. 3:2, 6). Six of Paul’s epistles include Timothy in the salutations (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thes. 1:1; 2 Thes. 1:1; Phile. 1; see the chart, “Paul’s Introduction to His Epistles”

at Rom. 1:1). Timothy had become so dear to Paul that in the apostle's last message was a touching appeal for Timothy to join him in his final days of imprisonment (2 Tim. 1:4; 4:9, 21).

After being released from his first Roman imprisonment Paul, with Timothy by his side, evidently revisited some of the churches in Asia, including Ephesus. On his departure from Ephesus, Paul left Timothy behind to provide leadership to the congregation. Then after an interval Paul wrote Timothy a letter, 1 Timothy, urging him on in that ministry.

Timothy may have been by nature somewhat passive, timid, retiring, and easily intimidated (cf. 2 Tim. 1:7). Thus Paul repeatedly spurred him into action (1 Tim. 1:3; 4:11; 5:7; 6:2; 2 Tim. 3:14; 4:2, 5). He was to let nothing, including his relative youth (1 Tim. 4:12) stand in the way of his performance of duty (2 Tim. 2:1–7; 4:5). Like a good soldier he was to “fight the good fight” (1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12), aggressively protecting and

propagating the gospel, using the full range of his gifts (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

A. Duane Litfin, "1 Timothy," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 729–730.

Explore:

Praying for those in authority

As Paul writes, the Roman emperor is the cruel Nero. Paul encourages prayer for him and for all those in authority in national and local government (2:1–2).

There are times when the state authority is an evil tyranny. In the book of Revelation, evil powers and empires are shown to be

fighting God. But in Paul's experience and writing, the state is a positive influence—defending the good, protecting the weak and suppressing lawlessness. Even a pagan ruler can be used by God in his ordering of the world.

Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 648.

Explore:

Timothy to confront the false teachers

(1 Timothy 1:3–11)

Paul warns Timothy about false teachers in the church. These false teachers are Jews who enmesh their hearers in complex discussions of fables, myths and genealogies. They have taken Old Testament characters and stories, elaborated them out of all recognition and built their own fantasy religion.

Paul admits that these people really want to be teachers of the law—but they’re talking rubbish. The law is very good when understood and applied properly. It exposes lawbreakers. It draws the line against serious sin. Ideally, it promotes love. But it was never meant to provide memory games and competitions for righteous people! Paul says the most loving thing to do is to command the false teachers to stop. It will take someone with a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith to do it—because everyone else is handicapped by guilt, fear or superstition.

Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 647.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

1. Believers Reject False Teachers and False Doctrine and Grow in Godly Love.
2. God Saves Undeserving Sinners and Calls Them to Stand for the True Faith.
3. Believers Pray for All People, Including Those in Positions of Authority.

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the

Bible: Likely written around AD 62-64, the apostle Paul wrote to the young leader Timothy to instruct him on how to lead the church at Ephesus. This section of the letter gave instruction on how to deal with false teachers and what to pray for.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School

teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6). Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ- followers. When they do,

Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 5

What does it mean that the Bible was not written to us but for us?

Question 2 of 5

Why is false teaching dangerous?

Question 3 of 5

Why is it essential that all of us are discipling someone else?

Question 4 of 5

Some people see themselves as the prodigal son; others behave more like the prodigal son's older brother (Luke 15:11-32). How can we know that we are sinners who need God's forgiveness?

Question 5 of 5

Share your most significant change since you became a follower of Christ.