

2 Timothy Pastor Lou DeVizia

2 Timothy 1:8-18 Fellowship Bible Church; Woodbridge, NJ

www.yourfamilychurch.com

Introduction: Chapter 1 concludes with Paul affirming what Timothy already knew: everyone in Asia (modern-day western Turkey essentially) had deserted him. Paul was in prison, abandoned, essentially alone. We know why: he was a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles concerning the gospel and Christian doctrine (1:11-12a). This no doubt had an effect on Timothy. It is obvious he was discouraged, as previous studies of Chapter 1 have revealed. But Paul is able to present to him here the example of Onesiphorus, an exception to the desertion. While other apparently prominent figures had deserted, Timothy should see that Onesiphorus remained faithful and unashamed. The lesson: *simply because you are in the minority crowd as a follower of Christ is not a reason to get discouraged.* When something is right - which the Gospel and solid doctrinal teaching are - stay with it.

Thus the conclusion Paul draws at the beginning of Chapter 2 is that Timothy should be *strong in grace* (there likely referring to the bestowing of strength that comes through Christ). *Knowing Christ is a great source of strength*; Paul himself affirmed this in 1:12 (I know whom I have believed). Furthermore, he should pass the ministry of teaching along to others who will perpetuate it by their own teaching. Herein we see a mission of the church: *train others to proclaim that very message of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus to others.* Paul famously uses the examples of a soldier, and athlete, and a hardworking farmer to show Timothy how he must labor. The work of the Lord is hard work. It brings hardship and potential discouragement. It even divides people sometimes, very sadly. But Timothy needed to be committed to evangelism, discipleship, and enduring hard times as he worked those things. *Knowing Christ is the great source of strength to endure!* It's more than just getting a ticket to heaven. It is knowing your Creator, walking with Him, serving Him, enjoying fellowship with Him. How well do you know Him? Be strong in His grace!

1. Verses 1:15-18 - The example of Onesiphorus: the loyal Christian.

- v.15 - The Asian church deserted Paul, he who had founded it, for the most part. **Phygellus** and **Hermogenes** were apparently leaders in the church, and perhaps they led the desertion, all rooted in fear and shame.

- vv.16-18 - In contrast to Phygellus and Hermogenes, **Onesiphorus** is presented as an example of one who was not overcome by fear, was **not ashamed**, and remained loyal even when Paul was imprisoned. His loyalty is set forth as an example for Timothy and for us. He is one who sought to share in Paul's sufferings (v.8). *We must be loyal to those who faithfully preach the Gospel and sound doctrine from the Scriptures, even if they are unpopular, mocked, and persecuted.* See here Onesiphorus' steadfast commitment to the servant of Jesus, Paul.

2. Verses 2:1-7 - Soldiers, athletes, and hardworking farmers: the serving Christian.

- v.1 - **be strong...** This is really the culmination of all that Chapter 1 was about. Paul knew Timothy was struggling, but he needed remain strong. Where was he to find that strength? In **Christ Jesus**. It is a gift from God to all those who walk *closely* with Christ.

- v.2 - Furthermore, not only was he to remain strong, but he was to train others for ministry, **faithful men**, i.e., *pastors* who would **teach others**. Inner strength from God would help him carry out his work.

- vv.3-4 - A **good soldier**: he **endures hardship**, and he is not trapped by the **burdens of this life**. That is, in the strength which God gives, Timothy must keep pressing on through hard times (like he was in) and not get distracted by earthly interests.

NOTE: Paul says not to get *entangled*. He is not advocating a monastic life, nor is he licensing Timothy to shirk earthly responsibilities. Do what you must do, but don't get caught up in it. Be organized, proactive, responsible. Stay on top of things. Be diligent. *Don't get entangled*.

- v.5 - The **athlete** must keep **the rules** if he expects to win. Part of the *rules* for Timothy: expect to suffer, use your gift thoroughly, be diligent, courageous, faithful. Above all, *know Christ*.

- v.6 - The **farmer** must be **hardworking** if he will reap a profit from his crops. The first farmer to market would make the most profit. He has to work hard in order to accomplish this. This verse should be read with the emphasis on the word, *hardworking*.
The HARDWORKING farmer must be first... as opposed to the lazy farmer, who will not reap much, if anything.

- v.7 - Herein is a great snapshot of what Paul is encouraging Timothy for: his ministry required endurance, suffering, diligence, keeping the rules (so to speak), and lots of hard work. Now was not the time for discouragement. Be encouraged by the example of Onesiphorus, know Christ intimately, be strong in Christ, and press on.