CONFIDENCE

Believers can have confidence in Christ in all circumstances.

2 TIMOTHY 1:3-14

MEMORY VERSE: 2 TIMOTHY 1:12

READ 2 Timothy 1:1-18, First Thoughts (p. 74), and Understand the Context (pp. 74–75). As you read, make notes of the ways culture fosters or impedes trusting in God as opposed to ourselves.

STUDY 2 Timothy 1:3-14. Focus on how Paul affirmed his personal confidence in Christ.

PLAN the group time using ideas under Lead Group Bible Study (pp. 80–81). Prepare to lead your group by praying for your own confidence in the faith. Tailor the plans for your group using More Ideas (p. 82). Also refer to QuickSource and Blog.LifeWay.com/ExploretheBible for other ideas. Plan to play the song “The Great Awakening,” by Leeland, as the group arrives.

GROW from the weekly podcast on Ministry Grid (MinistryGrid.com/ExploreTheBible).

GATHER the following items: □ Personal Study Guides. Prepare to display the following Pack Items:
□ PACK ITEM 1 (Map: The World of Paul, Timothy, and Titus). Make copies for group members of:
□ PACK ITEM 7 (Handout: 1, 2 Timothy; Titus Time Line); □ PACK ITEM 10 (Handout: Timothy: A Snapshot); and □ PACK ITEM 12 (Handout: Paul’s Letters).
**FIRST THOUGHTS**

Whether subtly or overtly by media outlets, billboards, magazines, or corporate seminars, we are motivated toward a self-confident life. Yet God’s Word compels us toward a life of Christ-confidence. When we are most dependent on Him, He is most pleased with us. Confidence in Christ enables us to face challenges by His power rather than by our self-sufficiency. By relying on His strength we can make a difference in our world.

(In PSG, p. 64) Does our culture over emphasize self-reliance? Explain. How does our culture foster or impede trusting in God as opposed to ourselves?

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**UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT**

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-18

Second Timothy represents a remarkable change of tone from Paul’s first letter to his protégé. In his previous epistle, Paul urged Timothy to take a strong stand against false teachers who threatened the church at Ephesus. Between the two letters, Timothy apparently followed Paul’s advice but could have suffered such an adverse response that he may have toned down his preaching. Paul encouraged Timothy not to be afraid but to rekindle his gift of prophetic preaching.

Beginning his letter, Paul followed a typical formula in the salutation. However, he did not need to identify himself as an apostle to prove his authority to Timothy. Instead, he reminded Timothy that he served to fulfill God’s will and to proclaim Christ’s promise of eternal life. He also affirmed his love for Timothy as his spiritual son.

In a major difference from his first epistle, Paul wrote this letter from prison. While he often had been jailed in various places, Paul found himself bound in a Roman prison for the final time. Unlike other occasions in which he anticipated ultimate release, he believed his life was approaching its end. Timothy must have understood the serious finality of the situation and wept over what might happen. Paul responded with a pledge of constant prayer.

Paul also reminded Timothy of his spiritual heritage. Paul was confident that Timothy shared the solid faith of his mother and grandmother. Paul recalled his own ancestors as he rested in the confidence that he had served faithfully.

Just as Paul compared himself with Timothy in their battle for the gospel and their heritage of faith, he also affirmed their mutual suffering. He had determined not to allow his opponents to shame him into silence. Similarly, he encouraged Timothy not to be ashamed of Christ’s testimony. Paul reminded him that not only had God called them, but He would be faithful to them.
While many people had abandoned Paul in his distress, others made special efforts to help him. Similarly, Timothy might have to endure many opponents, but God would always be with him as he faithfully proclaimed the sound doctrine entrusted to him. Neither Timothy nor Paul had to rely on themselves but could trust the Holy Spirit who worked in them.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

HERITAGE (2 TIM. 1:3-5)

VERSES 3-4
Paul pointed to Timothy's religious heritage to encourage him to remain faithful. He began by expressing gratitude for Timothy while, at the same time, mentioning his own ancestors. Paul affirmed that he served God with a clear conscience even as his forefathers had done. This reference is interesting since Paul had not grown up in a Christian family but was raised under the strong influence of the Pharisees. Likely the statement meant that his ancestors served God sincerely, even though they predated Christ's ministry. The term ancestors could refer to Paul's immediate parentage in the same way that he appealed to Timothy's mother and grandmother. Another approach views the ancestors as the patriarchal forefathers, such as Abraham. Paul used his personal history to bring up Timothy's spiritual background.

Paul's prayer of thanksgiving for Timothy is reminiscent of his salutations in other epistles. (See Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2.) He prayed for the young preacher consistently—night and day. As he did so, he thanked God for him. Timothy had been Paul's companion, co-laborer, and son in the ministry. Their relationship was a continuous source of encouragement for both men.

Some time had passed between Paul's first and second letter to Timothy. They probably had ministered together before Paul was arrested and sent to Rome for his final imprisonment. We do not know whether Timothy said goodbye prior to Paul's arrest or later. In either case, Paul witnessed Timothy's tears as they bid farewell. Remembering the way Timothy had wept over the situation, Paul yearned to see him again.

The phrase I long to see you likely referred to Paul's anticipation of a visit by Timothy to Rome (2 Tim. 4:9,13). He knew he would be filled with joy by seeing his son in ministry again.

VERSE 5
Having introduced his personal spiritual heritage, Paul transitioned to Timothy's faith. Timothy's belief was sincere. Timothy's commitment to the Lord had been evident from the day he left his family to accompany Paul on his missionary journey.

Having met Timothy during his visit to Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium, Paul had heard many good commendations of the young believer. The son of a Jewish mother and a Greek father, Timothy became a Christian before encountering Paul. (See Acts 16:1-2.) His grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice were believers and had obviously influenced Timothy

VERSE 5
5 I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced, is in you also.
toward faith in Christ. Nothing is said about Timothy's father being a believer, but he did not hinder Timothy from leaving to accompany Paul.

Paul mentioned Timothy's heritage at this point to encourage him. Perhaps Timothy had encountered some level of self-doubt, possibly due to the opposition he had experienced at Ephesus. If he had fallen short of personal expectations, Timothy would be encouraged by Paul's confidence that his faith was as firm as that of his mother and grandmother.

**We can find strength from people who invest in us spiritually.**

We can find strength from people who invest in us spiritually. If the way we meet challenges produces a sense of failure or doubt, we can find renewed vigor by being reminded that others believe in us.

(In PSG, p. 66) How is a person's spiritual growth impacted by the lives of others?

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**VERSE 6-7**

6 Therefore, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.

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**GIFTED (2 TIM. 1:6-7)**

VERSES 6-7

Dealing with adversity in church can be daunting for a mature pastor. Timothy was a younger man and may have responded to opposition in Ephesus with some level of fear. Paul reminded the young pastor to **rekindle the gift of God.** Referring to Timothy's giftedness by the Holy Spirit, Paul challenged him to remain bold.

The word *rekindle* means to bring to flame again. It does not suggest that Timothy had lost the gift but that he needed to fan the embers and keep the fire of faithfulness blazing. Conflict has a dampening effect on a church and its leaders. It can lead to withdrawal and hesitancy. Paul urged Timothy to respond with renewed fervor not in the flesh but with the spiritual gift God had given him. The text does not specify what the gift of God involved. Some scholars suggest it refers to God's gift of the Holy Spirit. All believers receive the Holy Spirit at conversion and are gifted for service. The gift could refer to Timothy's gift of preaching, which would be consistent with Paul's previous letter (1 Tim. 4:14).

In any case, we can know several facts: (1) The gift was a spiritual empowerment; (2) it was not a natural ability but had been conferred by God; (3) the gift resided within Timothy; and (4) it had been confirmed by the symbol of Paul's laying on of his hands.

The *laying on of...hands* was a typical expression found in appointment for service. (See Acts 6:6.) This description should not infer that any spiritual gifts passed from one person to another but rather implied recognition and consent for service.
The opening of verse 7 introduces the reason Timothy needed to rekindle his gift. Rather than responding to critics with timidity, he should be bold. Paul contrasted the spiritual gift of God in verse 6 with the spirit of fear that Timothy may have been experiencing. The word fear can also be translated as “cowardice.” This emotion does not come from God.

Instead, God gifts His servants with the spirit of power, love, and sound judgment. The term power does not necessarily mean mere strength but endowment with ability to perform God-ordained tasks. Joining this word with love suggests the Holy Spirit does not give supernatural power to overwhelm others but to minister to them effectively and compassionately. Alongside this giftedness, God grants believers sound judgment to know how they should respond to whatever situation confronts them.

Believers can act boldly with the power of the Spirit working through them. We are enabled to minister confidently because of the inner working of God’s Spirit. God gifts us with whatever we need to carry out His mandate. (In PSG, p. 68)

What are the dangers of relying on our own strength and abilities to complete a God-given task? How can one tell the difference?

VERSE 8
8 So don’t be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me his prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God.

VERSES 9-10
9 He 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. 10 This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

UNASHAMED (2 TIM. 1:8-12)

VERSE 8
Paul declared his assurance despite being persecuted for his faith in Christ. He was Christ’s prisoner, meaning he was in prison because of his faithfulness to Jesus. His confidence was not based on his own abilities but on his belief in Christ and the power of the resurrection. Accordingly, he urged Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord. Paul’s admonition may suggest Timothy had responded poorly to the opposition at Ephesus.

Given Timothy’s affection for Paul, it is difficult to imagine why Paul had to encourage Timothy not to be ashamed of him because of his imprisonment. His follow up statement offers some context. If Timothy remained faithful to the testimony of the Lord, he might share in suffering for the gospel. Instead of shying away from that possibility, Timothy should embrace it. He could do so only by relying on the power of God.

VERSE 9-10
Timothy and Paul could trust God even during adversity because God had proven His faithfulness. He had saved them and called them. Notice Paul’s use of the word us to bring together their common experiences. Throughout this section, Paul constantly used the plural pronoun to identify himself with Timothy. They had received a holy calling, indicating both the nature of the call and its source.

In the economy of God, His purpose and grace were theirs before time began. The point of this eternal aspect of God’s work was not to focus on them but on Christ Jesus. In eternity past, God had established His plan of
salvation in Christ. That plan resulted not only in their salvation but also in their calling to proclaim the good news of Jesus to the nations.

What had been a mystery has been made evident through the appearing of Jesus. (See 1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 4:3.) Many people did not understand or accept Jesus as Messiah, but He was Savior for Paul and Timothy and anyone else who would receive Him by faith. The reference to Christ’s appearing included His divine birth, earthly ministry, and death and resurrection.

Through His victory over the tomb, Christ abolished death. Death is the last enemy to be abolished (1 Cor. 15:26), yet in Jesus’ resurrection it is an accomplished fact. This does not mean that people would not die physically prior to Christ’s second coming. Rather, it refers to spiritual death, contrasted to the life and immortality that Jesus brought to light. The gospel is the vehicle through which the life of Christ is revealed.

VERS 11-12

Paul drew a direct connection between the good news of Jesus and his purpose in life. He did not choose the life that wound through several missionary journeys to his cell in Rome. Instead, he was appointed by God.

Paul's calling encompassed many roles. As a herald, he proclaimed the Christ. He did not claim a message of his own but spoke as the Holy Spirit directed. As an apostle, Paul was sent out with a mission to bring the gospel to the nations. As a teacher, Paul used not only his missionary opportunities but also his epistles to educate believers in sound doctrine.

Anyone with Paul's accomplishments should have been acclaimed. Instead, his ministry in the gospel was the reason why he would suffer these things, a reference to his imprisonment and pending execution. As Paul served the Lord, he experienced numerous imprisonments, beatings, shipwreck, and other perils. (See 2 Cor. 11:23-27.) Through it all, Paul maintained his bold faithfulness to Christ.

Paul's faith was not merely in a set of principles but in the person of Christ.

Paul had no cause to be ashamed of his service to the Lord. His confidence rested not in himself but in the Lord. He knew intimately the One whom he had believed. Paul’s faith was not merely in a set of principles but in the person of Christ. By personal experience, he knew Jesus to be faithful.

As a result, Paul was persuaded of a singular truth: Christ was fully able. He was sufficient for all things. In this specific instance, He was able to guard what had been entrusted to him. The term translated entrusted to me can mean either a deposit that Christ gave him or that he had given to Christ. Both understandings are true, and in both the One who preserves the deposit is Christ. The phrase until that day looks forward to a future revealing of Christ at His return.

We can live with confidence knowing that Jesus demonstrated His power through the resurrection. His power works in believers who embrace their roles in God’s eternal purpose and calling.
What gives you the confidence to serve or suffer for Christ without fear of being ashamed?

LOYAL (2 TIM. 1:13-14)

VERSES 13-14

Paul charged Timothy to follow his example, loyally carrying the gospel to others and standing for the truth. He acknowledged that Timothy already had experienced a pattern of sound teaching from watching Paul. The Greek term translated pattern refers to a form or example.

Timothy had ample opportunity to observe Paul, absorb his doctrine, and learn from his model. Timothy was well equipped with theological truth and practical experience.

Some people express their faith with firm conviction but do so in a way that lacks compassion. As Timothy resisted the false teachers, he should do so in faith and love found in Christ Jesus. Jesus was both Timothy’s source and object of faith. Christ’s love had transformed Saul into Paul and brought Timothy into the forefront of missional ministry.

Paul repeated the term he used in verse 12 regarding the deposit entrusted to them. He charged Timothy to guard what had been consigned by the Lord. This verse is reminiscent of Paul’s closing charge to Timothy in his previous letter (1 Tim. 6:20).

Timothy did not have to carry out this commission in his fleshly strength but could depend on the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God lives in us. Repeating his inclusive approach, Paul returned to the plural reference us to remind Timothy that they shared the Lord’s commission and empowerment. The indwelling Spirit serves as our sentinel, guarding that which God has trusted to us.

How do the presence and work of the Holy Spirit encourage loyal ministry in the gospel?

We are charged with delivering the gospel not only to our generation but also to the next.

Many scholars believe what had been deposited was the gospel. As such, it is a good deposit. It also is a godly deposit, entrusted by the Lord and kept by His Spirit. Like Timothy, we are charged with delivering the gospel not only to our generation but also to the next.
LEAD GROUP BIBLE STUDY

FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS)

INTRODUCE: Welcome everyone to the group time. Direct everyone’s attention toward reading the paragraph on page 64 of the PSG. Ask: Does our culture over emphasize self-reliance? Explain. How does our culture foster or impede trusting in God as opposed to ourselves? Allow for discussion and feedback.

EXPLAIN: Review Understand the Context (PSG, p. 65). Distribute copies of Pack Item 12 (Handout: Paul’s Letters) and read the purpose of 2 Timothy. Say: Today’s study moves us to 2 Timothy and focuses on how believers can have confidence in Christ.

GUIDE: Use Pack Item 1 (Map: The World of Paul, Timothy, and Titus) and Pack Item 7 (Handout: 1,2 Timothy; Titus Time Line) to identify the time and events surrounding Paul’s writing of the letter.

TRANSITION: As we approach the letter of 2 Timothy and understand its context, we can begin to recognize how Paul sought to demonstrate the work of the gospel in believers, and it begins with how we learn to have confidence in Christ.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

READ: Invite a volunteer to read 2 Timothy 1:3-5, as the group circles words that describe Paul’s thanksgiving.

EXPLAIN: A common characteristic of Paul’s letters were his introduction of himself followed by a prayer for the audience. In this case, Timothy, was the audience and Paul encouraged Timothy to leave a godly heritage for his ministry to the church. Give out copies of Pack Item 10 (Handout: Timothy: A Snapshot) and review Timothy’s background.

ASK: What impact does experiencing and leaving a godly heritage make within a family structure? From the PSG (p. 66): How is a person’s spiritual growth impacted by the lives of others?

HIGHLIGHT: Review the affection that Paul demonstrated for Timothy through his prayers for Timothy (v. 3). Ask: Paul demonstrated the value of investment in the body of Christ. How does the investment by others in our lives help us to model sincere faith? Call for volunteers to provide examples of specific people who have impacted their lives.

TRANSITION: Just as Timothy demonstrated sincere faith that came through the investment of prior generations, Paul encouraged Timothy to use his gifts to follow the Lord and keep the fire of ministry burning brighter.

READ: Emphasize that Paul wanted Timothy’s ministry at Ephesus to be stirred into a blazing furnace of godly leadership. Then call for someone to read 2 Timothy 1:6-7.

ASK: What are the dangers of relying on our own strength and abilities to complete a God-given task? How can one tell the difference? (PSG, p. 68)

EMPHASIZE: Review the Major Themes in 2 Timothy on page 68 of the PSG, focusing on the source of gifts and their administration in the church.
**REVIEW:** Discuss how the giftedness of believers begins at the moment of conversion (v. 7) and how all believers are responsible for the discovery and use of their gifts to benefit the body of Christ.

**ASK:** Why do we often fear doing what the Lord calls us to do? Allow for group feedback. Based upon these verses, with what does the Lord promise to replace our fears?

**TRANSITION:** Paul’s final word of encouragement to Timothy in this letter was for him to remained unashamed of the call to share the gospel.

**READ:** Direct someone to read 2 Timothy 1:8-12, as others note words or phrases that relate to the commitment Paul was willing to demonstrate in his life for Christ.

**EXPLAIN:** In Paul’s perspective, his suffering was part of his call to share the gospel. And the thing that made the suffering bearable was his reliance upon the power of God. Furthermore, Paul provided an interlude describing how we rely on God for salvation.

**ASK:** How is God’s plan for redeeming His creation tied to a person’s purpose?

**STATE:** Paul exhorted Timothy in verse 8 not to be ashamed. Paul wasn’t just giving Timothy a pep talk; instead, Paul was able to share his own personal experiences and knowledge that the Lord would protect him in pursuing Christ in his life.

**ASK:** What is the relationship between confidence in the gospel and one’s willingness to share the gospel? How does the truth of the gospel instill confidence in the believer? (PSG, p. 71)

**TRANSITION:** After we reflect upon our call to share the gospel, we also realize there is the need to take the gospel to the next generation of believers.

**READ:** Guide a volunteer to read 2 Timothy 1:13-14, while the group identifies the two commands in these verses.

**STATE:** Paul encouraged Timothy and the church not to get caught in things that can distract the church from sharing the gospel. Instead, he encouraged them to be loyal to Scripture and to the gospel.

**ASK:** Why is it so important for believers to remain faithful in sharing the gospel? What things get in the way of believers freely sharing the gospel with others? (PSG, p. 71)

**SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT)**

**REVIEW:** The main point of our session was how we’re called to be confident in the gospel in all circumstances. The confidence we have comes from the godly heritage that has been provided by other believers, the gifts that are used to share the gospel going forward, knowing that suffering builds our confidence in the Lord, and then pursuing the call to hold and guard the gospel in its truth. Ask: Based on what you have heard today, what does confidence in the gospel look like in your life?

**REFLECT:** Lead the group to discuss the second question set from In My Context on page 72 of the PSG: Discuss as a group ways of encouraging each other to exercise their giftedness by the Holy Spirit. What actions need to be taken?

**PRAY:** Close by praying as a group for each other to be bold in sharing the gospel.
PRACTICE

• The focus of the study this week is about confidence. Email your group members and invite them to reflect on what may be their greatest fears in life and what it took for them to overcome them.

• In your personal preparation, consider how you came to know Christ and reflect upon the generations of believers who came before you. If possible, create a spiritual generational tree of believers before you. Be sure to affirm that believers can be influenced by family, but faith is still a personal encounter and not incumbent upon your family tradition.

MORE IDEAS

FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS)
For the Focus Attention section, enlist a group member to talk about something for one minute that they are passionate about regarding their work, hobbies, or family. Transition that Paul was passionate about helping Timothy grow in his confidence in Christ.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

• To supplement discussion of 2 Timothy 1:3-5, invite group members to share testimonies of who was critical in the formation of their faith. Allow this to be a time to demonstrate that more than family heritage is our faith heritage. Share your own story as appropriate.

• To further enhance the discussion of Timothy’s godly heritage, note that the three generations Paul described helped shape Timothy into being someone who demonstrated sincere faith. Lead the group through the Bible Skill activity (PSG, p. 67) to see how the investment of Eunice and Lois compares with others who invested in their families.

• To emphasize the theme of 2 Timothy 1:13-14, encourage group members to read Paul’s writings in Galatians 1 that call for the leaders to discern about the gospel being shared among the people.

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT)
Call for volunteers to silently reflect on their answers to the third question set under In My Context (PSG, p. 72): Focus on 2 Timothy 1:12. What actions do you need to take so that you can personally declare this verse as well?

SUGGESTED MUSIC IDEA
Listen to the song “The Great Awakening,” by Leeland. This song discusses what happens when believers are confident in sharing the truth of God’s Word with others.