

## 2 Timothy 1:1-5 — How Do I Motivate Those I Mentor?

**January 17, 2021**

The last things people say in life reveal what is important to them.

Some of you know my mother passed away of cancer a few years ago.

When we learned my mother had aggressive cancer, my family drove to Pennsylvania to stay with my parents for a few weeks. After a few weeks with my parents, and not wanting to overstay our welcome, we decided to drive back to Iowa. We packed the car first thing in the morning. The kids were already hassling one another and were excited for the trip. We went into my mother's bedroom to say good-bye, tell her we loved her, and pray with her before we left.

Everything went according to plan until we were ready to leave. Laying in bed in my mother's sweet voice she told us she wanted to say something to her grandchildren. The kids came to her bedside and my weak and sick mother completely transformed. Her eyes became big as saucers. She pointed her bony finger at them, and in a voice that was dead serious said to them, "Keep your pants on! Keep your pants on!"

At first, none of this made sense to me. I said, "Mom, I know the kids fight in the back seat during a road trip but we have never had a problem with them taking their pants off!" Then it suddenly dawned on me what was happening. My mother knew this was the last time she would see her grandchildren alive. She was giving them the purity talk in only four words. "Keep your pants on!" Three days later, when we came back to Iowa, my mother's health rapidly declined. Cindy flew back to Pennsylvania to care for her. That was the last time my mother saw her grandchildren until heaven. Her last words left a lasting

impression. To this day, my children quote her. They look at one another, wink, and with a twinkle in their eyes, say to each other, “Keep your pants on.”

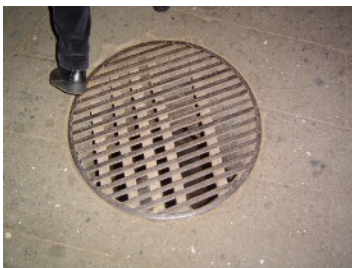
This morning, we begin the book of 2 Timothy. This book is the last letter written by the apostle Paul. It was written just before he died. He knew he didn’t have long to live so he wrote this letter to Timothy, giving him the most important things he needed to know when Paul was gone. In this letter we have Paul’s famous last words.

This morning, I have two purposes in our study. First, I want to introduce you to the background of this book. The background of this book helps snap this book’s message into focus. Second, I want to look at the opening verses which set the stage for the rest of our study.

### What is the background of 2 Timothy?

**Paul wrote this letter from the Mamertine prison.**

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy when Paul was incarcerated in the Mamertine prison in Rome. This prison still exists. Today, there are



two churches built on top of it. It was originally constructed in 640 B.C. It is a subterranean prison. A better name for it would be a dungeon. The

prison is deep underground. It has two levels. The lowest level, where Paul was kept, was a pit that was only accessible by a round hole in the



top that was the size of a man hole. It was deep underground. There was no septic system. It is a stone room. It was filled with the filth and excrement of the prisoners. The room, which was only 30-feet wide, typically held 30-35 prisoners. You can imagine what that placed smelled like without toilet facilities after just a few days. It was not intended as a long-term prison. People were kept in this dungeon for days to months while they awaiting their executions. It was not uncommon for the prisoners to die of starvation or sickness while in this dungeon awaiting the days of their deaths. There is a steel door on one side of this room that could be raised. It is a direct connection to the Roman sewage system so the excrement, filth, and dead bodies in the dungeon could be shoveled into the flowing sewage to prepare for the next group of prisoners. This is where Paul found himself for the final days of his life and where this letter was written.

In case you think I am sensationalizing the hideousness of this dungeon, one ancient writer described this room as a place that was vile and disgusting beyond belief because of the filth, stench, and almost complete darkness. We don't know how many weeks or months Paul lived in that hole. Some scholars believe he was there up to a year. Tradition tells us Paul was taken out and then his head placed on a block and chopped off as instructed by Nero.

Knowing this is where Paul spent his final days, and this is where he wrote this letter, is heartbreaking. Paul had already suffered so much to tell people about Jesus. In 2 Corinthians he tells us he experienced far more imprisonments, beatings without number, and was close to death many times for the gospel. Five times he was given 39 lashes. Three times he was beaten with rods. Once he

was stoned and left for dead. Three times he was shipwrecked. He was often without food. He frequently suffered from cold and exposure. That was all *before* this prison.

This was elder abuse. We feel heartbroken when the elderly are poorly treated. At this time, Paul was 65 years old and was in one of the worst of dungeons in Rome.

While it breaks our hearts to learn how Paul suffered, it should not surprise us. We are in a unique time and place in world history because we don't suffer to follow Jesus. Over the span of history, that has not been the norm. The Bible tells us to expect to suffer for our relationships with Jesus.

...encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22 (ESV)

While we are talking about Paul in prison, to keep Paul's life straight, let's remember this was not the first time Paul was in prison. Paul was imprisoned in Philippi. Paul was also imprisoned in Rome five years before this time.

We studied Paul's first Roman imprisonment this summer when we studied Philippians. That was mild. Paul was more of a political prisoner than an actual prisoner. That time, he was kept under house arrest. He was chained to a Roman guard and allowed to stay in a rented house. His friends were allowed to come and go as they wanted. Paul even wrote four letters in our Bible while in that first imprisonment. He wrote Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians and a letter to Philemon. During that imprisonment, many of the guards chained to Paul became Christians. They were the Praetorian Guards. Those were the elite

private soldiers of Caesar's household. The soldiers chained to Paul started becoming Christians, then returning to Caesar's household and evangelizing Caesar's family. That first Roman imprisonment was easy. It wasn't long until Paul was released.

What did Paul do after he was released? He went to Ephesus to meet Timothy and encourage him. After that, Paul went on a fourth missionary journey. That trip is not recorded in the book of Acts. During that trip, Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy, called 1 Timothy in our Bible. In that letter, Paul gave Timothy instructions on how to bring order to the disordered church of Ephesus. We can piece together other places he visited on that fourth mission trip. He probably visited Macedonia, Crete, Miletus and took the gospel to Spain. What changed? What landed him in prison?

**Nero's persecution of the church landed Paul in prison.**

In A.D. 64, Nero — who was the insane leader of Rome — burned down a large portion of the city. Many claimed Nero started the fire. If Nero didn't start the fire, what is clear is that he did nothing to stop it. A large part of Rome was in ashes. Homes and businesses were destroyed. This was before fire insurance! The reason Nero let the city burn is because he wanted to rebuild the city the way he wanted it. The citizens of Rome knew the burning of the city was his fault. Like the dishonest politician he was, to deflect the anger of the people away from himself, he blamed the great fire of Rome on Christians.

That led to an avalanche of hatred falling on the church as the enraged citizens needed someplace to take out their rage. The government crackdown on

Christians began in Rome but radiated to the rest of the empire. It eventually caught up to Paul, most likely when he was in the city of Nicopolis. That is likely the place where Paul was arrested when he was hauled off to Rome. When Paul wrote this letter, he had already been to trial and been found guilty. He was thrown into the Mamertine Prison and awaited his final end.

### **Paul's life in prison was difficult.**

Let me tell you a little more about Paul's circumstances. In 2 Timothy 1:16, we learn Paul was in chains in this dungeon. He may have had chains on his wrists and feet or he may have been chained to the wall. We don't know. Most likely Paul was not alone. He spoke of being treated as a criminal and being with criminals. In 2 Timothy 4:6, he told us he didn't expect to live long. He was confident his end was near. Some scholars believe he was in this dungeon pit more than a year awaiting execution. In 2 Timothy 4:11, we learn he only had one friend with him. That was Luke. Luke is probably the one who wrote this letter. Paul dictated it to him, calling up from this pit through the small hole, and Luke wrote it down. In 2 Timothy 1:15, we learn that most people stopped associating themselves with Paul. All the believers in Asia turned their backs on him.

What would it be like to sacrifice your life to help people know Jesus and being tortured to plant churches around the world, then having almost every person in the churches you planted turn their backs on you at the end of your life? They don't want to be associated with you so they didn't suffer like you. That is heartbreaking. In 2 Timothy 4:13, Paul told Timothy to come quickly, not just because he didn't have long to live but because winter was coming. Paul needed

his cloak for warmth. Paul was already freezing cold in that pit. Winter would have been bone-chilling cold. My heart breaks for Paul when I read this.

### **Timothy's life in Ephesus was difficult.**

Paul's life wasn't the only one that was hard. Timothy's was also tough. This letter was written around the year 67 A.D. Paul's goal was to encourage Timothy to carry on the work of the church and be faithful to the end, just as Paul was faithful to his end. In this letter, Paul was passing the torch.

When Paul wrote this letter, he was about 65 years old. Timothy was around 36 years old. Timothy began traveling with Paul approximately 15 years before this when Paul met Timothy in the city of Lystra. Timothy was around 18 years old when he started as Paul's traveling assistant.

After traveling with Paul for 15 years, Timothy and Paul became extremely close. In Timothy, Paul found the son he never had. In Paul, Timothy found the godly father he always wanted. There was a deep bond between these men. In Philippians 2:20, Paul said "I have no one else like Timothy." This was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of relationship.

Paul left Timothy in charge of the church in Ephesus. That was a big job. It was a tough job. As we learned when we studied the book of Ephesians, after Rome, Ephesus was the largest and most strategic city in the Roman Empire. It was the capital of Asia Minor. Most ships coming from Rome docked in the city. All major trade routes going east went through the city.



Ephesus was also the home of a mega church. Paul spent three years planting the church. It was the longest time he stayed in any one place. While the church in Ephesus was a mega church, when Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, false teachers with strong personalities had infiltrated the church. The church was a mess. That is why Paul wrote 1 Timothy to Timothy just a few years prior. Paul was instructing Timothy on how to bring order to the church. In Paul's second letter to Timothy, Paul was encouraging Timothy to keep working on straightening out this wayward church.

### **Timothy didn't look like a leader.**

Let me tell you a bit about Timothy. He was young. He was shouldering a huge responsibility leading a large church. We find that in 1 Timothy 4:2 when Paul told Timothy to not let people look down on him because he was young. In the leadership position he held, he was overmatched for his age and experience. Not only was he young, but he was often sick and weak. 1 Timothy 5:23 Paul told him to stop drinking only water and drink a little wine for his stomach. Timothy had a lot of embarrassing Immodium A-D moments and couldn't eat much. I am sure that didn't make that impressive of a public figure. He was probably thin as a rail. In 2 Timothy 1:7 we see Timothy was an introverted, quiet person. He was not an extroverted, charismatic person. He didn't like to be the center of attention. He didn't like conflict. Leading the church of Ephesus demanded he be everything he wasn't by nature. Instead of being a quiet personality, he needed to lead in public. Instead of shying away from controversy, he needed to stand up.



There was so much conflict in the church of Ephesus, some people think Twitter deleted Timothy's account.

**Paul cared about passing on the gospel more than he cared about himself.**

What I really like about this letter is Paul's attitude and sense for what was important. Paul had plenty of reasons to whine and complain. He could have talked about the hideous smell and darkness of the dungeon cell. He could have talked about the unfair way he was treated. He could have talked about the hunger and the cold. He didn't talk about any of that. He cared about something bigger than himself and his circumstances. That is why he talked about something bigger than himself and his circumstances. He talked about what is important, which is being faithful to the gospel and passing it on to the next generation. That is what is important in this world — not the comfort of our circumstances. What a great reminder to us about what is important in life.

With that as background to this letter, let me tell you about the opening verses of the letter. In the first seven verses, Paul worked on motivating Timothy before he got deeper into the letter and started coaching Timothy on how to be faithful to the end in his walk with Christ.

In these opening verses, while Paul was motivating Timothy, he was also showing us how to motivate someone that we are trying to mentor for Christ. If you are a youth group leader mentoring teenagers, these verses will be very helpful. If you are a CrossWinds Kids teacher mentoring children, the opening verses in this book will be helpful. If you are a Life Group leader mentoring another Christian toward maturity to pass the gospel to the next generation,

these verses will be helpful. Let's read them and study them in the remainder of our time together.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:1–7 (ESV)

As we go through these opening verses, we will see how Paul motivated Timothy to be faithful to Christ.

### **How do I motivate those I mentor?**

#### **1. I motivate people when I can speak to them from a position of authority.**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus... 2 Timothy 1:1 (ESV)

I was a high school and college wrestler. Both of my sons were wrestlers. When they were growing up, I went with them to wrestling camps. I helped at some of those camps. At the beginning of wrestling camps, all the adults are in the same room with the kids standing on the mat. Everyone looks the same. The men are talking about the weather and masculine things like hunting, fishing, and pickup trucks. The camp begins and the leaders start introducing the men in the room that will coach the children and list the men's accomplishments. Some of the guys I was talking to about the weather were Olympic medalists in wrestling. Others were NCAA place winners in wrestling. After the introductions, my conversation with them completely changed. We went from talking about the weather to asking them to sign my T-shirt.

What made the change? Once I knew the position of authority they held in the sport, I was motivated to listen to them when they spoke.

That is what Paul did with Timothy in the opening lines of this letter. He identified his position of authority. This helped motivate Timothy to listen to him.

Paul was an apostle of Christ Jesus. The original apostles were the 12 men chosen by Jesus to take the gospel to the world and begin the church in the world. When it comes to the church, the apostles held the highest position of authority after Jesus. They were the Olympic gold medalists of the church. Everybody wanted their autograph. As most of you know, Paul was not an original apostle that walked with Jesus but was a late addition to that group. In Acts 9, Paul was on the road to Damascus when the resurrected Jesus appeared to him, knocked him to his back side and blinded him. Just like the other apostles, Paul was chosen and commissioned by Jesus to take the good news of Jesus to the world. This is what Paul said about himself.

[For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 1 Corinthians 15:9 \(ESV\)](#)

Even though Paul considered himself the least of the apostles, he was still an apostle, which is an impressive position to hold. That was the source of his authority to speak to Timothy, to coach Timothy on what is important.

So when Paul spoke to Timothy in this letter, he was not making suggestions. He was not giving advice. He was speaking with God-given authority as one of the apostles, the foundation of the church. Timothy needed to recognize that, but he also needed to be encouraged by that.

When it comes to discipling or mentoring people in Christ, it is important for those you mentor in Christ to see you as having some spiritual authority they should listen to and learn from. Obviously, it is not infallible apostolic authority, but they need to see you as someone they should listen to and learn a thing or two from when it comes to Christ.

This is not just true in the church, but it is true of every area of life. If a sports team doesn't respect the authority of the coach, the players will not be motivated to learn. If children do not respect the authority of their parents, they will not be willing to hear what their parents have to say.

## **2. I motivate people by letting them know my love for them.**

To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 2 Timothy 1:2 (ESV)

I love what Paul said about Timothy — he called Timothy "my beloved son." Paul may have had authority over Timothy but Timothy also needed to know how much love Paul had for him. "Timothy, you are my beloved son. I love you like you are my own child." If you are coaching someone or mentoring people, they need to recognize you as an authority they should listen to and learn from, but they also need to know that you love them and care about them. The more we love people we are coaching in Christ, the more motivated they are to learn about Christ.

Picture this at home. Children must respect their parents. Parents have authority over their children. Parents must love their children. If children just feel authority and not love from their parents, the result is rebellion not obedience. A parent's authority over his or her children must be coupled with a deep love for

his or her children. Both need to be felt. If either of these is out of balance, the home will be a disaster.

The second thing Paul did after expressing his love for Timothy is he told Timothy what he wished for him and hopes for him. Paul wished grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ. We have heard grace, mercy, and peace around the church, but what do these words mean?

**Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve.** God doesn't just forgive us for things we have done wrong, but he treats us with goodness we do not deserve. For example, God doesn't just forgive us of our sin through Jesus, but he adopts us into his family, making us the most blessed beings in the universe. God will not just raise our bodies from the dead and give our bodies back to us but God will transform our bodies into resurrection bodies making them far better than they are now. That is grace in action. Grace is not just God forgiving us but God giving us far more than we deserve.

**Mercy is when God doesn't give us what we do deserve.** Instead of an eternity in hell, our sin is paid for by Jesus. We are forgiven of our sin. That is mercy we don't deserve. Instead of us getting what we deserve for our sin in life, many times God protects us from the consequences of our sin.

Have you ever been pulled over by a police officer for speeding? If the police officer let you off the hook and didn't give you a ticket, that is mercy. It is not getting what you deserve. If after speeding, the police officer didn't just let you go, but instead gave you a gift certificate to a five-star restaurant, that would be moving from mercy to grace. The police officer gives you what you don't

deserve. That is what Paul wished for Timothy, a life filled with the mercy and grace of God. What better things could Paul wish upon Timothy? What better things could Paul want for Timothy?

**Peace means the absence of hostility between people.** It means a restored relationship between people instead of a broken relationship between people. Right now in our country, a little peace between people would be a nice thing. It would be refreshing, especially in our government. We wish our leaders would just be at peace and stop fighting with one another. Wouldn't it be refreshing if the Democrats and Republicans were at peace for a change?

If you were Timothy and you were reading this letter and someone with the authority of Paul loved you like you were his own son, and all of his hopes, prayers and desires for you were that your life would be one of grace, mercy and peace, how would this make you feel? Wouldn't you be encouraged? Wouldn't you be motivated for follow Jesus and be faithful to the end?

This is so applicable to us. If we want to motivate someone we are mentoring in Christ, that person doesn't just need to recognize the authority we have to coach him or her but he or she needs to know the amount of love we have for him or her and the good desires we have for him or her. If you are a CW Kids teacher or a youth group leader, don't just let the kids know you are an authority over them, but let them know how much you love them and desire God's best for them. That will motivate them to follow hard after Jesus and be faithful to the end.

### 3. I motivate people by letting them know I pray for them.

I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 2 Timothy 1:3 (ESV)

Paul told Timothy that he didn't just love him. He didn't just have great hopes and wishes for him, but he was also constantly praying for him. Night and day he was praying for him. When Paul was in that stinking pit of human filth, rather than having his thoughts fixed on his circumstances, he turned his thoughts to Timothy. He was constantly praying for Timothy while in that hole instead of praying for himself. Paul was in chains for the gospel. Timothy was free to share the gospel. Paul prayed for his success.

Do you know how encouraging it was for Timothy to know the world-famous apostle Paul was constantly praying for him? This is like Billy Graham telling one of us that he was constantly praying for us night and day. If Billy Graham had told you he was constantly praying for you, wouldn't that be encouraging? Wouldn't that be motivating?

As a pastor, people occasionally tell me they are praying for me. I find that extremely encouraging because I know I need all the prayer I can get. One retired CrossWinds member that attends in the summer tells me every spring that he and his wife pray for me at breakfast. He means it. I am incredibly encouraged by his kind words and prayers.

Imagine what it would be like to know someone famous that you admired was committed to praying for you? When I was working on my doctorate, I would occasionally get a postcard signed by the professors in my doctoral program that said, "We were praying for you today." At first, I didn't know what to do with the

card. I didn't know if I should frame it or just keep it. I am sure it would be worth something on eBay with the signatures of all those famous people. It was an encouragement to know they were praying for me by name.

I try to do that for other people. I don't do it perfectly but I try my best. Sometimes when I am praying for people, I text them to let them know they are thought of and important. Prayer is not just a kind gesture. It makes a difference.

...The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. James 5:16 (ESV)

If we are going to motivate people when we mentor them, we don't just need to love them but we need to pray for them and let them know they are important enough to be prayed for by name.

#### **4. I motivate people by letting them know they bring me joy.**

As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.  
2 Timothy 1:4 (ESV)

As we learned, Paul and Timothy spent 15 years traveling together. When they parted ways, it was tough. Timothy loved Paul like a father. He was in tears. The feelings were mutual. Paul loved Timothy. As Paul wasted away in that pit, he knew the one thing that would bring him happiness before he died would be seeing Timothy's smiling face looking at him down through the hole in the ceiling.

When Paul said, "I long to see you," that is an intense word. It is a strong word. It means to have a hurting heart. Today, we might call this the feeling of homesickness when someone's heart longs to see a person they love. That is what Paul felt in his heart when he thought about Timothy.

Getting a little older, with two children out of the house, I am beginning to understand some of the joy Paul knew he would feel by seeing the face of



someone he loved. Cindy and I love the holidays when we get to have all the kids in the house. The home is full again. The people we love are around us. It feels so good to be together and be a complete family with the people we love. That is what Paul would have felt by seeing Timothy's face.

What can we learn from this? If we want to mature people in their faith and encourage them in their faith, we don't just tell them how much we love them, we don't just tell them how much we pray for them, we tell them being around them brings us joy. When people know we actually love being with them, that is motivating to people. It is encouraging to people to know it makes someone happy to be around them.

How do we apply this? Imagine you are a youth group leader. Don't just tell the kids you love and pray for them but also that you look forward to seeing them and being with them. You don't just love them because you have to love them, but you enjoy them! When people know they make someone else happy, that is incredibly encouraging.

#### **5. I motivate people by reminding them of their heritage.**

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.  
2 Timothy 1:5 (ESV)

Paul encouraged Timothy by reminding him of the rich heritage he was fortunate to possess. The Christian faith was first in his grandmother Lois and it also was in his mother, Eunice. Now it dwelled in him. Lois and Eunice most likely came to Christ under the preaching of Paul during his first missionary journey. By the time Paul was on his second missionary journey in Acts 16, young Timothy was led to Christ and being trained in Christ by both his mother

and grandmother. Timothy had a great mother who poured into him Bible teaching. His mother constantly taught him the good news of Jesus and his grandmother reinforced it. Eunice probably took Timothy to AWANA, CW kids, and youth group. She prayed with him before school and at breakfast. She read him Bible stories at night. As he became older, she talked to him at the dinner table about how a Christian lived in a confusing world. His mother gave him an extensive Bible education and he never left home!

Where was Timothy's dad? We don't know. We know his father was a Greek. Apparently he didn't help get Timothy to church. It is possible that Timothy was in a home without a father. Single moms, you can identify with Eunice and Timothy. Eunice was a mom raising young Timothy on her own. This is great encouragement. Here is a single mother that raised her son to become one of the premier leaders in the church in the generation after the apostles. This single mother made a difference.

Paul motivated Timothy by reminding him to look at his heritage and to value his home. He came from a great family with a mom that taught him well and prepared him for the tough role of pastoring the church in Ephesus. If you grew up in a good Christian family or if you are growing up in a good Christian family, where your parents love Jesus and love you, that is an incredible asset. It is an amazing gift. You are blessed.

Never underestimate the power of parents to shape the spiritual lives of their children. The legacy of a mom and dad is extremely motivating for the next generation.

One example I find encouraging is Billy Graham. He talked about the influence his parents had on him, in particular, his mother.

Of all the people I have ever known, she had the greatest influence on me... She and my father didn't have much education... but my mother was a woman of God — Billy Graham speaking about his mother and father.

So as Paul tried to motivate timid Timothy to persevere in a tough leadership position, Paul reminded Timothy of his heritage. God prepared him for this challenge by giving him the privilege of growing up in a great home that taught him well.

When we are trying to motivate people to follow Christ, if they come from a great home that taught them the gospel when they were a child, we need to remind them of that valuable asset in their lives and that God gave them that great background for a reason. He was preparing them to handle a challenge.

#### **6. I motivate people by reminding them the Holy Spirit has gifted them for their task.**

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands... 2 Timothy 1:6–7 (ESV)

At this point, I am sure Timothy didn't just feel motivated but he felt a heavy weight on his shoulders. He came from a great background that prepared him to be a man of Christ, but would he fumble it? What if he wasn't up to the task of leading the difficult church of Ephesus and he let his mother and grandmother down? Paul loved him. Paul prayed for him and was filled with joy for him, but what if he couldn't handle the tough church of Ephesus and it fell apart? What would happen if he let Paul down? Timothy had a weak stomach and an introverted personality. He wasn't a powerful outspoken leader like Paul.

How could he faithfully lead a problem church like Ephesus? On paper, Timothy looked like the wrong guy for such a tough task.

At this point, Paul continued to motivate Timothy but he didn't do it by telling Timothy the people who loved him were cheering him on from the sidelines. He motivated Timothy by telling him he was not facing the tough challenges in his life alone. He had the Holy Spirit in him, and the Holy Spirit would give him the gifts he needed to accomplish the work God had given him to do.

This gift was given to Timothy by the laying on of Paul's hands. Most likely this is referring to the time when Paul prayed for Timothy in front of the church and set him apart for leading the church. Paul was confident the Holy Spirit would supernaturally gift Timothy for the task of leading that large church, a task Timothy felt inadequate to accomplish. What Timothy needed to do was fan that gift into flame. Paul encouraged Timothy by reminding him the Holy Spirit gave him the gifts he needed to accomplish the work he had to do, but he needed to develop those gifts and make them stronger.

The Bible tells us that God gave each of us at least one spiritual gift that enables us to serve him. When God gifts us, that doesn't mean we will be instantly good at something. Like Timothy, we need to work on developing our gifts and improving our gifts.

Maybe you are teaching children. That is where God has called you to serve. You are not amazing at teaching kids but that is the hole that needs filling at church and you trust God has given you some gifting in this area. Now develop

it. Work on it. Get on the web or talk to others about how you can improve the way you teach the kids. God will help us to develop our gifts so we can accomplish the work God has given us to do.

What an encouragement to Timothy and to each one of us that we are not facing the tough tasks of life alone. The Holy Spirit is within us, supernaturally enabling us to accomplish the work God gives us. When we feel inadequate, just do your best to develop the gifts God gives.

## **7. I motivate people by reminding them the Holy Spirit gave them a new nature.**

...for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:6–7 (ESV)

Not only was Timothy gifted by God for the task of leading that church, but Paul also reminded Timothy that the Holy Spirit gave Timothy a different spirit, a new temperament.

Timothy was by nature a timid person. Timothy was an introvert that wanted to stay away from people. He was fearful by nature. That temperament wouldn't work in this situation. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit gave him a new temperament, a different spirit.

Paul reminded Timothy, and he reminds us, when we come to Christ, God gives us a different spirit. The Holy Spirit develops in us not a fearful and timid spirit but hearts of power, love, and self-discipline.

**Power** is the Greek word *dunamis*, where we get our English word for dynamite. It means the power to handle difficulties, stress, and hard times. It is the opposite of being a coward and melting under pressure, the Holy Spirit enables us to stand and lead under pressure. "Timothy, you may naturally be a

person who folds and freaks when life gets tough but the new nature you have from the Holy Spirit will enable you to lead in the difficult Ephesian church and to withstand the pressure." That is also true for us. If God has given us a task to do or a place to serve, the Holy Spirit will not just give us the gifts we need but he will give us the strength of temperament to handle the challenges we face.

This verse is one I memorized as a teenager and I have said to myself thousands of times over the years when under stress and pressure. I may want to fold. I may want to freak out, but that is not the new nature the Holy Spirit has given me. The Holy Spirit will enable us to be men and women of courage and stand strong under pressure.

**Love** is the Greek word *agape*. That means love of choice. "Timothy, there are some really hard people at the church in Ephesus. They are difficult people. They are always critical of you. They are always gossiping to their friends about you. When you are out of the room, they talk about you behind your back. Those are people that are hard to love. Your nature may want to write them off but that is not the new nature the Holy Spirit has put in you. The Holy Spirit enables you to supernaturally choose to love them."

That isn't just true of Timothy. It is also true of us. The Holy Spirit gives us the supernatural ability to choose to love people that are hard for us to love. That applies in the church and in other relationships.

**Self-control** is the ability to discipline yourself and correct yourself so you make wise decisions. I am sure Timothy wished Paul was with him to guide him and counsel him in the tough church of Ephesus when Timothy had many hard

decisions to make. Where was Timothy's wisdom and counsel to make wise instead of foolish choices from? The Holy Spirit within him would give him the ability to discipline himself and correct himself.

Folks, the same Holy Spirit that helped Timothy discipline himself and guide him into wise choices is alive and well, and he is in you and me. That doesn't mean we shouldn't seek counsel from other people, but we have the Holy Spirit, who is the counselor, that lives within us and guides us into truth. We are not alone.

### **Conclusion**

So this morning we learned the background of this letter. Paul was literally writing from a pit. He was passing the baton of church leadership to Timothy before he died. The goal of the letter was encouraging Timothy to be faithful to the gospel all the way to the end, no matter how difficult life became.

How did Paul motivate Timothy to stay faithful? What can we learn about motivating others we are coaching in Christ?

1. I can motivate people when I speak from a position of authority over them.
2. I motivate people by letting them know my love for them.
3. I motivate people by letting them know I pray for them.
4. I motivate people by letting them know they bring me joy.
5. I motivate people by reminding them of their heritage.
6. I motivate people by reminding them the Holy Spirit has gifted them for their tasks.
7. I motivate people by reminding them the Holy Spirit has given them a new nature.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at [www.Christ2RCulture.com](http://www.Christ2RCulture.com) ([www.c2rc.com](http://www.c2rc.com))

© You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided (1) you credit the author, (2) modifications are clearly marked, (3) you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, (4) you include the web address ([www.Christ2RCulture.com](http://www.Christ2RCulture.com)) on the copied resource.

