



Gospel Difficulty - Part 2

Summary and Goal

Paul painted an alarming picture of the opposition Timothy would face. However, he reminded Timothy that his primary defenses were Paul's example of faithfulness (3:10-13) and Scripture (3:14-17).

Main Passages

2 Timothy 3:10-17

Session Outline

1. Praise (2 Tim. 3:10-11)
2. Assurance (2 Tim. 3:12-13)
3. Reminder (2 Tim. 3:14-17)

Theological Theme

God has seen fit to preserve and commit His full revelation to writing for the benefit of the church. The surety of God's written Word is a great gift to all Christians and serves to give them light, comfort them, and protect them from the lies of the devil and the world.

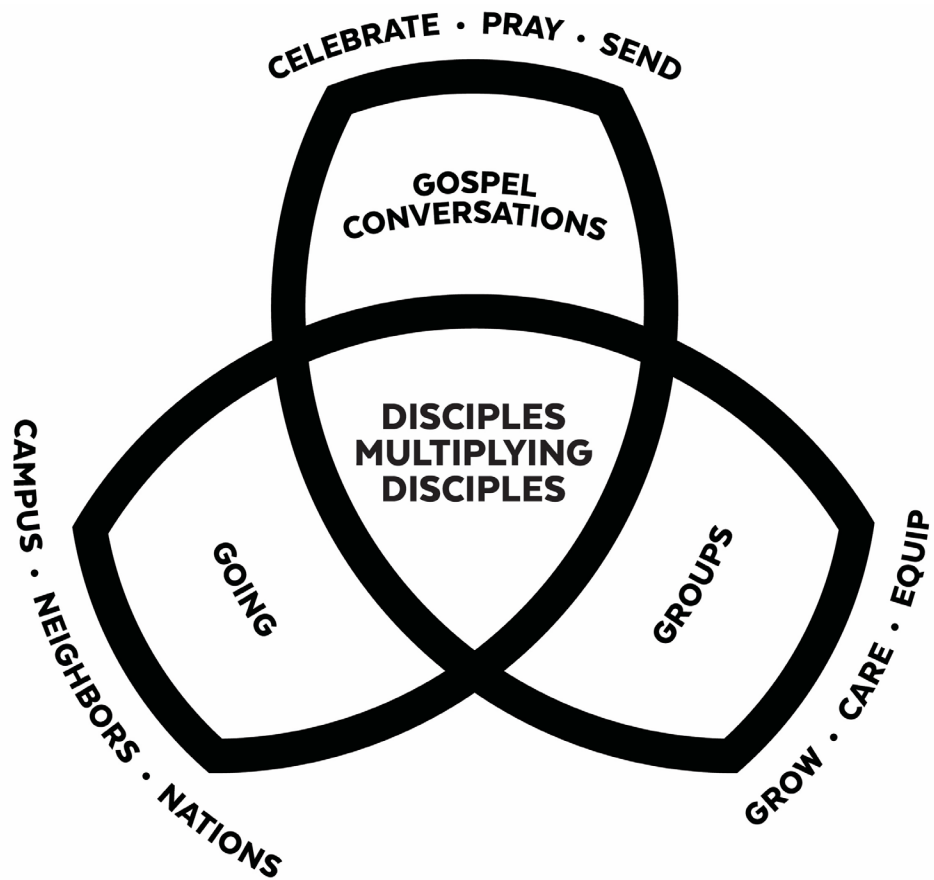
Christ Connection

Christ is the central figure of the sacred Scriptures. The sacred Scriptures are able to make one wise unto salvation. That salvation is accomplished in the life of a sinner through the power of the gospel message, which is the true account of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

Missional Application

The mission of God is the glory of God among the nations. God's glory shines brightly when dead sinners are made alive and walk in grateful, joyful obedience to their Creator. These miracles are accomplished through the preaching and teaching of the sacred Scriptures.

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



DxD This Week

Before You Meet

Pre-enlist a group member to share about a gospel conversation they have had recently.

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Session Plan

Gospel Difficulty - Part 2

For the Leader

Grab group members' attention with a quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point.

For the Leader

Have your pre-enlisted group member share about a gospel conversation they have had recently.

Ask the group how many of them have had gospel conversations in the last week. Ask for a show of hands so we can record and celebrate.

Introduction/Ice Breaker

- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt confused and unable to make a sound decision? What happened?
- Why do you think that sometimes the right decision can seem so clear beforehand and in hindsight, but in the heat of the battle everything seems foggy and convoluted? Describe a time when you have experienced something like this.

We will consider our text today by breaking it into three sections. In the first, Paul praised Timothy's faithfulness even in suffering. Next, Paul assured Timothy persecution was inevitable and opposition to his ministry would worsen. Finally, Paul exhorted Timothy to remain steadfast and unmoved upon the foundation of their shared faith and ministry, namely the sacred Scriptures.

1. Praise (2 Tim. 3:10-11)

In the previous section, Paul warned Timothy to be on the lookout for empty talkers and deceivers that would be arriving on the scene. Paul knew this because they were already making inroads among believers and causing trouble. Furthermore, he saw that the problem was only going to get worse. Paul pivoted his focus from those sorts of "teachers" to Timothy's life, of which he was proud and felt great joy.

- How did Paul describe Timothy's way of life? How are all Christians to imitate these same traits?
- Notice Paul gave extra emphasis to endurance. Why do you think he did that? Why would this be crucial moving forward?
- Application: Paul sought to encourage Timothy as he faced a time of hardship. What are some practical ways you can guide and encourage the person(s) you are discipling?

2. Assurance (2 Tim. 3:12-13)

A primary motif of Paul's second letter to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy, is suffering and its counterpart, endurance. In fact, we might say that 2 Timothy is a practical and theological application of Jesus' words, "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world" (John 16:33).

- ❓ What promise did Paul make Timothy in verse 12? Why is it important for Christians to recognize this today?
- ❓ Application: Have you experienced opposition for your devotion and obedience to Christ and His Word? What happened? How did you respond? Spending time with God daily in His Word is one of the most profound ways to combat opposition to your Christian character and practices. Check out the daily devotionals that relate to this study (<https://brentwoodbaptist.com/category/daily-devotional/>).

3. Reminder (2 Tim. 3:14-17)

Paul told Timothy to "continue in what you have learned and firmly believed." In essence, Paul told Timothy to stay the course. Paul did not give him a new command. Timothy did not need to make any adjustments. Paul did not explain some new ministry program to him. Paul's exhortation to Timothy was to simply stand firm.

- ❓ What is the command that Paul gave Timothy in verse 14? Why is this important for all Christians?
- ❓ Paul encouraged Timothy to continue in what he had learned and believed from infancy. What guidance or encouragement does this give as you disciple others toward life-long faithfulness to Christ?
- ❓ Paul expressed the idea of the "sufficiency of Scripture" in verses 16 and 17. What does it mean to say that the Scriptures are sufficient?

Conclusion

- ❓ Paul saw signs of the grace of God in Timothy's life (vv. 10-11). What signs of grace have people seen in your life? What work has the Spirit wrought in your own thinking, behavior, and faithfulness to the Lord?
- ❓ Paul urged Timothy to stay faithful to God's Word. The Scriptures were to be his port of comfort and strength in the terrible gales of persecution. Where do you find your comfort and strength day by day? Do you cherish the sacred Scriptures? A way to stay active in the scriptures is through daily devotionals (<https://brentwoodbaptist.com/category/daily-devotional/>).



Expanded Session Content

Gospel Difficulty - Part 2

For the Leader

Grab group members' attention with a quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point.

Introduction/Ice Breaker

- ❓ Have you ever been in a situation where you felt confused and unable to make a sound decision? What happened?
- ❓ Why do you think that sometimes the right decision can seem so clear beforehand and in hindsight, but in the heat of the battle everything seems foggy and convoluted? Describe a time when you have experienced something like this.

In the book *The Silver Chair*, C. S. Lewis puts the protagonists in a situation like the one described above. Before they embark on their quest, however, Aslan gives them signs by which they can find their way, even when things become confusing. This is Aslan's counsel:

“[F]irst, remember, remember, remember the signs. Say them to yourself when you wake in the morning and when you lie down at night, and when you wake in the middle of the night. And whatever strange things may happen to you, let nothing turn your mind from following the signs. And secondly, I give you a warning. Here on the mountain I have spoken to you clearly: I will not often do so down in Narnia. Here on the mountain, the air is clear and your mind is clear; as you drop down into Narnia, the air will thicken. Take great care that it does not confuse your mind. And the signs which you have learned here will not look at all as you expect them to look, when you meet them there. That is why it is so important to know them by heart, and pay no attention to appearances. Remember the signs and believe the signs. Nothing else matters.”¹

Aslan's counsel to Jill and Eustace parallels the very counsel that Christians are given over and over again. Christians are to read, rehearse, remember, and follow the Scriptures. The sacred Word of God plainly lays out “signs” for Christians, but they easily forget to read the signs and cherish them as they should, especially when the going gets tough. In today's passage, Paul's words remind us of Aslan's. Paul told Timothy to continue in the sacred Scriptures that he had received from childhood and to keep his eyes fixed on them. Not only that, but Timothy was also instructed to teach these to others.

For the Leader

Have your pre-enlisted group member share about a gospel conversation they have had recently.

Ask the group how many of them have had gospel conversations in the last week. Ask for a show of hands so we can record and celebrate.

Session Summary

Paul's primary aim in this section of 2 Timothy was to get Timothy to lean heavily upon the foundation of the sacred Scriptures. He knew that this was God's will for him and the means of grace by which Timothy would persevere and others would be saved and also persevere.

The letter itself was written from a prison cell by Paul, who knew that his earthly sojourn was nearing its end. He utilized what little time he had left to encourage Timothy to stay faithful. He told Timothy to imitate his faith in suffering and to build his ministry only upon those things that meet the test of fitness: the gospel of Jesus Christ and the sacred Scriptures that had been entrusted to him.

We will consider our text today by breaking it into three sections. In the first, Paul praised Timothy's faithfulness even in suffering. Next, Paul assured Timothy persecution was inevitable and opposition to his ministry would worsen. Finally, Paul exhorted Timothy to remain steadfast and unmoved upon the foundation of their shared faith and ministry, namely the sacred Scriptures.

1. Praise (2 Tim. 3:10-11)

In the previous section, Paul warned Timothy to be on the lookout for empty talkers and deceivers that would be arriving on the scene. Paul knew this because they were already making inroads among believers and causing trouble. Furthermore, he saw that the problem was only going to get worse. Paul pivoted his focus from those sorts of "teachers" to Timothy's life, of which he was proud and felt great joy.




How did Paul describe Timothy's way of life? How are all Christians to imitate these same traits?

What a resumé! Whatever struggles Timothy may have been going through at that time, Paul gave testimony that the Timothy he knew was a shining beacon of faithful Christian living. Paul said that Timothy had excelled at following his teacher, Paul, who was imitating Christ. Timothy followed Paul's "teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance." This isn't a random list of virtues that Paul threw together hoping to encourage Timothy. Remember, Paul wrote with the specific purpose to encourage Timothy in the work of the ministry. Everything that he wrote to him in this letter directly related to that call. With that in mind, read back over the list. Consider how each one relates to pastoral ministry. Like Paul, Timothy . . .

Suffering as Part of the Work


Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra were the cities that Paul visited on his first missionary journey. Thus, when looking for examples of his sufferings Paul referred to his earliest mission work. Some have questioned why he would refer so far back, especially since this would have been before Timothy joined Paul. But Lystra was Timothy's hometown, so he was probably aware of what had happened to Paul there. In effect Paul is saying: "Timothy, you have known from your earliest awareness of me that suffering is a part of the gospel work."

- taught what was true
- conducted himself in accordance with the standards of an overseer
- pastored with purpose anchored in the sacred Scriptures
- walked by faith, not by sight
- shepherded with godly patience and love
- endured suffering and persecution

 Notice Paul gave extra emphasis to endurance. Why do you think he did that? Why would this be crucial moving forward?


Paul ended his list with endurance along with an elaboration on his and Timothy’s endurance. He actually named specific episodes of suffering (in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra) and then went on to say that “the Lord rescued me from them all.”

The reason Paul emphasized this aspect of Timothy’s faithfulness is that Timothy would need to continue to endure. Paul wasn’t saying that he had endured and now he could rest. Rather, Timothy was to dig in, grit his teeth, cling to Christ, and endure. The next verse tells us why.


 Application: Paul sought to encourage Timothy as he faced a time of hardship. What are some practical ways you can guide and encourage the person(s) you are discipling?

2. Assurance (2 Tim. 3:12-13)

A primary motif of Paul’s second letter to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy, is suffering and its counterpart, endurance. In fact, we might say that 2 Timothy is a practical and theological application of Jesus’ words, “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world” (John 16:33).


 What promise did Paul make Timothy in verse 12? Why is it important for Christians to recognize this today?

We tend to think of promises as positive. This one isn’t. Paul promised Timothy that “all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” But Paul didn’t stop there. He told Timothy that the false teachers and empty talkers who had been troubling him up to this point were only going to get worse, more destructive, and cause more pain. Now it becomes clear to us why Paul wanted to underline Timothy’s endurance.

 Paul wrote to Timothy about Timothy’s specific context and circumstances. How do these words apply to Christians today despite different contexts and circumstances?


No, they can't apply directly to us because Paul wrote those words directly to Timothy. They apply directly to Timothy alone. However, Scripture is applicable to everyone. So, the question we need to ask ourselves is, in what way do Paul's promises apply to us? Let's consider the first promise. There is a clue in verse 12 that is helpful in our consideration. Paul said "all who want to live a godly life." While written to Timothy in a completely different context, Paul's point was that every single person who seeks to follow after Christ will suffer persecution. Do you desire to live a godly life? If so, then you can claim this promise/warning as your own even though Paul didn't have you in mind when he wrote it to Timothy.

If we take these promises that Paul made to Timothy as a whole and try to find the universal principle, then we may distill it into something like this: All those who follow Christ will face opposition. If it is truly a universal principle, then it will be in accordance with the rest of Scripture, and we will be able to see evidence of it throughout the experience and teaching of Christian history. In this instance, the principle passes the test (see John 15:18; 1 Peter 4:12-14; and Luke 6:22, among others).

 Application: Have you experienced opposition for your devotion and obedience to Christ and His Word? What happened? How did you respond? Spending time with God daily in His Word is one of the most profound ways to combat opposition to your Christian character and practices. Check out the daily devotionals that relate to this study (<https://brentwoodbaptist.com/category/daily-devotional/>).

3. Reminder (2 Tim. 3:14-17)

Imagine Timothy reading this letter for the first time and how he must have felt reading verses 12-13. You have probably experienced a moment that was like a punch to the gut when things were already going poorly and more bad news rolled in. What could Paul possibly say to follow up his words of warning/promise? Did Timothy have any solace at all? Was there a port of comfort in the midst of that ever-worsening storm?

 What is the command that Paul gave Timothy in verse 14? Why is this important for all Christians?

Paul told Timothy to "continue in what you have learned and firmly believed." In essence, Paul told Timothy to stay the course. Paul did not give him a new command. Timothy did not need to make any adjustments. Paul did not explain some new ministry program to him. Paul's exhortation to Timothy was to simply stand firm.

Paul told Timothy to "continue in" something specific. The reason that Paul didn't need to correct Timothy was that Timothy was already

Inspired

Inspired means “breathed out by God.” Because Scripture comes from God himself, it is profitable in many ways, ultimately leading us to righteousness, maturity, and service.

walking along the ancient paths. He was doing right. This letter wasn't one of correction (like Paul's Letter to the Galatians), but a letter of encouragement to help Timothy keep going. Timothy was on the right path because his ministry was based upon and centered on the sacred Scriptures.

- ❓ Paul encouraged Timothy to continue in what he had learned and believed from infancy. What guidance or encouragement does this give as you disciple others toward life-long faithfulness to Christ?

Paul wrote that “from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ.” We shouldn't rush past this. Timothy was taught the Scriptures from when he was an infant. There is no doubt that this happened because those who were taking care of him took responsibility not only for his physical and intellectual well-being, but also his spiritual well-being (see 2 Tim. 1:5). What would be the impact on our children and grandchildren if we were as attentive to their souls as we were their bodies and minds?

- ❓ Paul expressed the idea of the “sufficiency of Scripture” in verses 16 and 17. What does it mean to say that the Scriptures are sufficient?

We have much to be thankful for knowing that God's Word has been preserved for us in written form. We have a trustworthy record of redemptive revelation, meaning that the good news of the gospel is safeguarded for the church now and until Christ returns. But what about other Christian books and devotionals? What about our favorite Christian conference speakers? Aren't those God's word too? Can't God use things besides the Bible to teach us and grow us?

This is an important question for Christians across the world today. We have access to more Christian books, music, conferences, websites, preachers, and other sorts of messages than ever in the history of the church. With so many voices competing for our attention, it's more critical than ever to have a proper view on the place of Scripture in the Christian life.

The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture is sufficient to meet every need for the human soul. Scripture contains everything necessary for one's spiritual life. Scripture is comprehensive in that it fully addresses all our spiritual needs. This means that if we had no other Christian book, if we never attended a Christian conference, if we were cut off from all Christian music, and if we had no access to our favorite online Christian content but we had access to the Scripture, then we would have all that we needed to live a fully obedient, joyful, and vibrant Christian life.

Sufficiency of Scripture doesn't imply that all other messages are to be eschewed. Rather it means that they shouldn't be given the same place of authority in our spiritual lives. They are not in the same category as Scripture. It also means that all other messages must be held to the standard of Scripture.

- ❓ Application: What evidence does your life give or not for the amount that you hold to the sufficiency of Scripture? What needs to change?

Conclusion

Paul's second letter to Timothy wasn't corrective. Rather, it was a firm exhortation to Timothy to continue on the ancient paths of the Scripture and be faithful to the task to which he had been called. This exhortation was good and necessary because Timothy faced serious opposition, and things were only going to get worse for him. Paul praised Timothy for his faithfulness, warned him of harder times to come, and reminded him of the firm foundation upon which he should stay anchored, namely the Scriptures.

- ❓ Paul saw signs of the grace of God in Timothy's life (vv. 10-11). What signs of grace have people seen in your life? What work has the Spirit wrought in your own thinking, behavior, and faithfulness to the Lord?
- ❓ Paul urged Timothy to stay faithful to God's Word. The Scriptures were to be his port of comfort and strength in the terrible gales of persecution. Where do you find your comfort and strength day by day? Do you cherish the sacred Scriptures? A way to stay active in the scriptures is through daily devotionals (<https://brentwoodbaptist.com/category/daily-devotional/>).

Prayer of Response

Close in prayer thanking God for the sufficiency of Scripture. Thank Him for the gift of the Bible, and ask that our church would endure any amount of hardship in faithfulness to the gospel.

Additional Resources

- *1 & 2 Timothy, & Titus* by Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr.
- *Reading the Bible Supernaturally* by John Piper
- *The Pastoral Epistles* by Donald Guthrie

For Next Week

Session Title

- Gospel Ministry

Main Passages

- 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Session Outline

1. The Charge (2 Timothy 4:1-2)
2. Trouble on the Way (2 Timothy 4:3-4)
3. Some Helps (2 Timothy 4:5)

Memorize

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Daily Readings

- Monday - 2 Timothy 3:10-17
- Tuesday - James 1:12
- Wednesday - Hebrews 12:1-3
- Thursday - John 16:33
- Friday - 1 Peter 4:12
- Saturday - Matthew 5:10

Historical Context of 2 Timothy

Purpose

In 1 Timothy Paul directed Timothy to actively oppose false teaching. He also gave instruction on the type of behavior that should characterize those in the church. The letter to Titus shows a similar purpose, albeit briefer in scope. As Paul addressed the character of church members, he presented it in light of the work of Christ. The message in 2 Timothy, Paul's final letter, is quite different. It is much more personal, a letter from one friend to another. Paul was preparing Timothy to carry on the work of ministry after he was gone.

Author

As stated in the opening of each letter, these letters were written by Paul (1Tm 1:1; 2Tm 1:1; Ti 1:1). However, many scholars today assume that Paul did not write them. This opinion is based on the differences from his other letters in vocabulary and style, alleged differences in theology, and uncertainties about where these letters fit chronologically in the life of the apostle. But the differences in style and vocabulary are not troublesome when one considers that authors often use different vocabulary when addressing different groups and situations. Rather than addressing churches in these letters, Paul was writing to coworkers who were in unique ministry settings. Hence we would expect different vocabulary. Also, the traditional view of the historical situation in which Paul wrote these letters is reasonable and defensible. Therefore, in spite of significant opposition by some scholars, there is a solid basis for accepting the Pastoral Epistles as Pauline.

Setting

Paul most likely wrote these letters after the time covered in the book of Acts. Acts closes with Paul in prison. Traditionally it has been believed that Paul was released from this imprisonment, then continued his work around the Mediterranean, perhaps even reaching Spain (Rm 15:22-29). During this time, he visited Crete and other places. First Timothy and Titus were written during this period of further mission work. Timothy had been left in Ephesus to handle some problems with false teaching there (1Tm 1:3-4). Titus had been left in Crete after the initial work to set up the church there (Ti 1:5). Eventually Paul was imprisoned again, and this led to his execution. During this final imprisonment, Paul wrote 2 Timothy to request another visit from Timothy and to give final exhortations as he anticipated his martyrdom.

Special Features

First Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus have been referred to as the "Pastoral Epistles" since the eighteenth century. It is reasonable to consider these letters together since they have striking similarities in style, vocabulary, and setting. These letters stand apart from the other Pauline letters because they were the only ones written to Paul's gospel coworkers. The Pastoral Epistles deal with church structure issues and, unlike Paul's other letters, were addressed to men serving in pastoral roles rather than to churches. But we must also recognize these are separate letters with their own distinctives. They were not written primarily to describe church structure or pastoral ministry (contrary to popular opinion), but to teach Christian living in response to the gospel.

Extended Commentary

2 Timothy 3:10-17

3:10-11. Our lives exhibit the reality of our inner character. The manner in which we live, the decisions we make, the circumstances with which we must contend—all these reveal the beliefs we hold and the priorities we maintain. Paul concluded the last paragraph by assuring Timothy that the false teachers and their ideas would come to ruin. Their folly would be revealed through the disparity of their lives against the truth. Now Paul boldly offered himself as a counter argument to these false teachers.

The evidence against the false teachers resided in their theology and behavior. Paul asked Timothy to evaluate him on these issues: You . . . know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose. He was certain that upon examination he would be found blameless—his teaching founded in truth, his life expressed in purity, and his purpose driven by God’s glory.

In addition, he wanted Timothy to reminisce a little and recount Paul’s faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings. These stand as hallmarks of the Christian life. Faith defines our trust, patience acknowledges God’s sovereignty, love expresses to others the sacrificial grace which we receive, endurance keeps our focus on God’s kingdom, while persecutions and sufferings represent our fellowship with Christ. Timothy had shared some of Paul’s difficulties as they traveled together through Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. He had witnessed the way Paul lived and the constancy with which he taught. He had also witnessed how the Lord rescued Paul.

3:12. But persecutions are not reserved for super saints and apostles. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Timothy had experienced it before, was suffering under it now, and would undoubtedly continue in the sufferings of Christ after Paul’s execution. Distress belongs to the believer who commits himself to loyal obedience and growth in godliness. But it remains in the hands of each believer whether he will choose the life of godly obedience or shy away into the shadows of compromise.

3:13. Paul typically discussed issues by placing arguments in opposition, creating a clarifying tension. The fate of godly men and women is persecution; the fate of evil men and impostors was ongoing corruption as they go from bad to worse. But the deceptions to which these people were prey, and the deceiving teachings which they promoted, explain why followers of Christ face continual persecution. Godliness elicits a strong reaction from unbelievers. The reaction becomes all the more intense and violent when Christians live out their godliness because it convicts others of their sin.

Those who neglect the truth of God become enmeshed in a confusing web of deception. Their consciences and reasoning capabilities suffer damage through sin, and they become incapable of extricating themselves from Satan’s delusions. Only God’s truth possesses the power to free such persons.

3:14-15. Each of us is susceptible to this dangerous trap of deception unless we obey Scripture vigilantly. Following Christ is more than a one-time decision or an occasional church service or kind act. True Christianity involves continual dependence and obedience to Christ the king. Paul told Timothy to continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of. Our faith is proved by its endurance.

Two elements are necessary for faithful living. First, we must possess knowledge of the truth. Truth enlightens a person about what is right and wrong, what constitutes purpose and happiness. We cannot trust or love what we do not know. The second element is conviction or belief. We express our belief system in the daily decisions we make and the behaviors in which we engage. No one acts contrary to belief (though we may act contrary to our professions of belief).

Paul also wanted Timothy to consider those from whom you learned [truth], and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures. Once again he had Timothy's mother and grandmother in mind (see 2 Tim. 1:5). Timothy was schooled in the Old Testament writings and had learned the need for forgiveness, the provision of God, and the necessity of faith. He had also been discipled by Paul, learning Christ and the church. In each case, Timothy had not only been given knowledge; he had been witness to godly lives.

These people served as examples to Timothy about the truth of God, the need for endurance, and the reward of faithfulness. Each person had staked his or her life on the revelation of the Scriptures which, according to Paul, are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

3:16. The power of the Bible to affect change and demand obedience resides in the fact that all Scripture is God-breathed. The Bible originates with God. Claims of origins carry great significance because authority lives in the Creator. This is why people invest such Herculean efforts in trying to disprove God as the earth's Creator and in questioning the authenticity of the Bible. Admitting to God's authorship is an acceptance of his authority over every aspect of life. By stating that Scriptures are God-breathed, Paul established the Bible's claim as God's authoritative Word over all people.

The Scriptures were written by men "as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). The picture is that of a sailboat being moved along by the wind. Indeed, men wrote the Bible, but the words and substance of what they wrote came from God. This makes the Bible useful. Paul listed four main uses of Scripture, all of which intertwine with one another.

Teaching involves instruction. Since Timothy was feeling the attacks of false teachers, Paul encouraged the young pastor to continue in teaching correct doctrine and correct living. The Scriptures must be known so people will grasp their need of salvation and so the confessing community will adhere to its instructions on proper Christian conduct.

Rebuking and correcting are the disciplinary authority of Scripture. Because the Bible is God’s Word and because it reveals truth, it exercises authority over those who deviate from its standard. “Rebuking” points out sin and confronts disobedience. “Correcting” recognizes that a person has strayed from the truth. Graciously, lovingly, yet firmly, we should try to guide the errant individual back into obedience.

Many times the Old Testament relates Israel’s disobedience to God, how the people suffered God’s chastisement for their rebellion, and how God corrected their sinful habits. The New Testament continues with stories and instructions, warnings regarding disobedience, disciplinary actions for those who fail to heed God’s revelation, and teachings on proper conduct.

Training in righteousness is the counterpoint to correction. The Scriptures give us positive guidance for maturing in faith and acceptable conduct.

3:17. The goal of all this instruction, discipline, and training is not to keep us busy. God intends that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We study the Bible, we rely upon God’s Spirit, his revelation, and the community of the faithful to keep us on track—obedient and maturing in faith. Continuing in this commitment will enable us to do whatever God calls us to do. Timothy could withstand the attacks of false teachers, the abandonment of professing believers, and the persecution that surrounded him because God had equipped him for the task. God never calls us to do something without first enabling us through his Spirit and the power of his truth to accomplish the task.

We neglect the Scriptures at our own peril. Through them we gain the ability to serve God and others. The Scriptures not only point the way; through the mysterious union of God’s Word and faith, they give us the ability to serve.²

References

1. Lewis, C. S., and Pauline Baynes. *The Silver Chair*. London: HarperCollins Children’s Books, 2014.
2. Larson, Knute, and Max E. Anders. *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2000.

Author Bio

C. S. Lewis (The Silver Chair)

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) was one of the intellectual giants of the twentieth century and arguably one of the most influential writers of his day. He was a Fellow and Tutor in English Literature at Oxford University until 1954, when he was unanimously elected to the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University, a position he held until his retirement. He wrote more than thirty books, allowing him to reach a vast audience, and his works continue to attract thousands of new readers every year. His most distinguished and popular accomplishments include *Out of the Silent Planet*, *The Great Divorce*, *The Screwtape Letters*, and the universally acknowledged classics *The Chronicles of Narnia*. To date, the Narnia books have sold over 100 million copies and have been transformed into three major motion pictures.

Pauline Baynes (The Silver Chair)

Pauline Baynes has produced hundreds of wonderful illustrations for the seven books in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In 1968 she was awarded the prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal for her outstanding contribution to children's literature.

Knute Larson (I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon)

Knute Larson coaches pastors and churches, majoring on leadership, pulpit, making changes, and daily grace — drawing on 43 years as a pastor and eight as a pastoral coach.

Max Anders (I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon)

Dr. Max Anders is the author of over 25 books, including the bestselling *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*, and is the creator and general editor of the 32-volume *Holman Bible Commentary* series. He has taught on the college and seminary level and is a veteran pastor. Max provides resources and discipleship strategies at www.maxanders.com to help people grow spiritually.

Thomas D. Lea (1 & 2 Timothy, & Titus)

The late Thomas D. Lea was dean of the School of Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Hayne P. Griffin Jr. (1 & 2 Timothy, & Titus)

Hayne P. Griffin, Jr. is a graduate of Furman University (B.A.), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.Div.), and the University of Aberdeen (Ph.D.).

John Piper (Reading the Bible Supernaturally)

John Piper is founder and teacher of desiringGod.org and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. For 33 years, he served as pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is the author of more than 50 books, and more than 30 years of his preaching and teaching is available free of charge at desiringGod.org.

Donald Guthrie (The Pastoral Epistles)

Donald Guthrie (1915-1992) was a graduate of the University of London (B.D., Th.M., Ph.D.). From 1949 until his retirement in 1982 Guthrie was lecturer in New Testament studies at London Bible College, and from 1978 until 1982 he also served as vice principal of the college. His books include *New Testament Introduction*, *New Testament Theology*, and the Tyndale *New Testament Commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles and Hebrews*.