Name _____ **Group** _____

2 Timothy

Character in Crisis

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Paul and Timothy faced a crisis! That is, they were in a very important and difficult situation. And whatever happened would have effects that would last a long time.

2 Timothy is the last letter we have from Paul before he was beheaded and freed from his earthly prison to his eternal home. Paul wrote this letter to encourage young Timothy to continue running the very difficult spiritual race that he had started.

In this letter, Paul describes to Timothy an attack on the gospel message. This attack was a *crisis* with four parts.

1. More people hate the gospel every day. (2 Timothy 1:1-18)
2. People mock those who live out the gospel. (2 Timothy 2:1-26)
3. People attack those who share the gospel. (2 Timothy 3:1-17)
4. People ignore the truth of the gospel. (2 Timothy 4:1-22)

But although the gospel was being mocked, attacked, and ignored, Paul seemed to focus on another crisis. Gospel truth has been and always will be hated by people full of self-love.

The real crisis is found in individual hearts. Paul was concerned that the next generation of leaders would not have the character they needed, because facing constant hatred and opposition towards the gospel message is very difficult.

Today we need the same things Paul and Timothy needed:

1. Fearless character that is never ashamed. (2 Timothy 1:1-18)
2. Strong character that depends on God's grace. (2 Timothy 2:1-26)
3. Godly character that is centered on the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:1-17)
4. Lasting character that does not quit. (2 Timothy 4:1-22)

This week we will look at the truths found in 2 Timothy learn about biblical character and how God can grow that kind of character in each of our lives.

Desiring character that pleases God,

Your camp friends

More people hate the gospel every day
Fearless character is needed

Day 1

Read 2 Timothy 1:1–18

We all would love to have a comforting friend like Paul.

Paul was a true friend who understood Timothy's situation. He is encouraging Timothy in several ways.

What three comforting "gifts" did Paul remind Timothy he had from God? (1:2)

What did Paul say he was doing for Timothy constantly? (1:3)

Why did Paul want to see Timothy again? (1:4)

Describe a friend that would make you happy—what would they be like?

What did Paul already know about Timothy's faith? How did Paul describe it? Who did Timothy learn it from? (1:5)

Would you like to be a good friend to your friends, like Paul was to Timothy?
In what ways can you remind them of God's gifts, pray for them, and encourage them?

We all need to have an encouraging friend like Paul.

According to 2 Timothy 1:6-8, it is clear that Paul knew Timothy very well. (Just like you know some of your friends very well.) He knew that Timothy was a little bit quiet and sometimes afraid. Paul wanted to help him with his fear. Paul knew that Timothy should never be ashamed of being a Christian. He needed fearless character. Write out 2 Timothy 1:7 and then read it slowly and silently five times.

For believers, **fear** does not come from God. Explain how God's three powerful gifts of **power, love,** and a **sound mind** help you defeat fear in your heart and life.

Power (power from God):

Love (compassion):

Sound mind (careful, disciplined thinking):

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Read verse 8 again. Why do you think so many teens don't want to tell others that they are Christians? _____

_____

What do these verses teach us about being ashamed of our Lord?

Romans 1:16 _____

_____

1 Peter 4:16 _____

_____

Write out **2 Timothy 1:12** (and if you have time, memorize it).

_____

_____

_____

It takes fearless character to say what Paul just said in verse 12.

How can he say that? Think about what you learned about God's gifts of power, love, and a sound mind. And think about what you just learned from Romans 1:16 and 1 Peter 4:16. Explain how those two ideas relate to what Paul shared about his faith in 2 Timothy 1:12. _____

_____

_____

How can this also be true of your life? _____

_____

We all can have a great Savior and friend in Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 1:8-11 is full of wonderful truths about God, our free salvation, His grace, our life after death, His purpose, and Paul's mission in life. Which verse talks about God saving us and rescuing us from danger? _____

Which verse talks about death being abolished, or taken away, from a believer's life? _____

Which verse lists Paul's three-part calling to the Gentiles? _____

When did you trust Jesus Christ as your own Lord and Savior? In a few words, write out how you came to know Jesus. _____

_____

_____

_____

We all need to be loyal friends to each other like Timothy and Onesiphorus were to Paul.

Read verses 13-14 once again. Paul gave his life to guard the truth of the gospel. And now he was asking Timothy to do the same. Paul reminded Timothy that God would make him able to do this, even though many of his other friends would leave him. Through His grace God helps us by giving us the power and the desire to please Him.

Explain how Philippians 2:13 and 2 Corinthians 9:8 give us the hope that we can fearlessly guard the wonderful gospel just like Paul did. _____

_____

Three men are listed in 2 Timothy 1:15-18. What are **Phygellus** and **Hermogenes** remembered for?

_____

_____

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What is **Onesiphorus** remembered for? _____

Who do you know that has quit following God (kind of like Phygellus and Hermogenes)? How has their choice to reject God, church, or other Christians affected their parents and close friends who still love the Lord? _____

Who is someone your age, who is a lot like Onesiphorus (always there to help with a smile and an encouraging word)? _____

If your pastor, your parents, or some of your best friends write about you someday, what will they remember you for? _____

Never let a lack of fearless character be a crisis in your life.

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Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

When we are strong in grace, we have strong character. And when we are weak in grace, we have weak character. God's grace gives us both the power and the desire to please Him. Remember, Paul cared about the future leaders. He wanted to be sure that they would have the character they needed to remain strong when other people hated the gospel. We don't have enough time to study all the character traits listed in 2 Timothy 2, so let's look at just a few of them today.

FAITHFULNESS (2:2)

A faithful person is someone you can trust. A faithful person finds time to serve. A faithful person is respectful of other people. Use the descriptions and Bible references below to explain how each idea can help others.

Find time to serve: I think of others and work to help them, even if it means that I don't always get to do the things I wanted to do with my time. (Philippians 2:20.) _____

_____

_____

Respect other people: I think about the needs of others, not just your own. I don't exist to be served, but I look for ways to help and serve them. (Matthew 7:12; Matthew 20:28) _____

_____

_____

Someone you can trust: When you agree to do something, do you actually do it? _____
Do you do it the best you can? _____
Are you willing to work hard, even if it's not always fun? _____
Do you make excuses for not getting things done? _____
Do you make excuses when you don't do a job well? _____
Do people around you agree that you're trustworthy—that they can trust you? _____
Would God say you are trustworthy? _____

ENDURANCE (2:3-4)

To endure something is to continue on with patience during a hard time. Endurance is strength that keeps going in suffering. To endure properly, we need God's strength. Galatians 6:9 teaches us to keep going—don't get tired of doing right—because there is joy to come. Those who understand how to **endure**, also know that it's important to stay as far from sin and distractions as possible. Some people go down a path of sin, thinking it doesn't matter. But sin traps people. It makes them slaves. They become addicted to their sin and can never break free in their own strength. Sin and selfishness work together to completely capture a person's mind in wickedness (2 Peter 2:19-22). Endure!

Don't give up to trials. Don't give in to temptations. Endure as a good soldier.

What sort of things make you quit or give up? _____

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How well do you endure pain? _____

Do you have any selfish habits that could keep you from having a close relationship with God?

What keeps you from quitting when you feel like quitting? _____

DILIGENCE (2:5-6)

A diligent person is a hard worker. 2 Timothy 2:5 describes a person who competes in an important game (and wins). Verse 6 describes a hard-working farmer. For someone to succeed in farming or sports, they have to work really hard. They will be tired, maybe even exhausted sometimes. But the diligent person will do everything he needs to do, as if it is an assignment from the Lord. And he will use all his energy to accomplish it. He lives out Romans 12:11, which teaches us to not be lazy, but to serve the Lord with energy. And Colossians 3:23 reminds you to do your work with all your heart, because you are serving the Lord.

Would your friends or parents call you lazy? _____
Do you sleep too much (or not enough) so that you can't serve others well? _____
Do you use as much energy to serve the Lord as you do in a soccer game? _____
Think of something you do that is really important to you. What is it? _____
Are you diligent in your devotions? Your prayer life? Your thought life? Your school? _____
Would God say you are diligent in all areas of your life? _____

DISCERNMENT (2:14-15)

Discernment is the ability to make good choices. Don't spend your time fighting and arguing about anything! Instead, spend your time studying. That way, either you will know that you are right (and you won't need to argue), or you'll see that you are wrong (and you will not want to argue). When you have discernment, you will be able to avoid words, actions, and attitudes which have bad results. Proverbs 21:23 teaches that people who use their words carefully, avoid many problems. Proverbs 22:3 teaches that people with discernment plan ahead to avoid evil. They see it, and hide from it. But foolish people walk right into sin's trap, and they suffer the consequences.

Ask yourself, "Why do I do what I do?" _____

Ask yourself, "Why do I believe the way I believe?" _____

Do you work hard to know what you believe? Or is it easier just to argue? _____

PURITY (2:21-22)

Purity is character that is free from sin. A pure person is someone that fights sin and wins. They battle and win against the desires of the flesh and mind. What do you do in your life to stay pure in mind and body? _____

Youthful passions (lusts) are more powerful than most people want to admit. The things we love, we love to think about. And the more we think about the things we love, the more we love them. Breaking free from a sin you love (or are tempted to love) is very difficult. Paul shares this two-part plan for serious change with Timothy.

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1. **Set specific goals**—pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace
2. **Get some help**—pursue friends passionate about purity and prayer

Does your entertainment (movies, sports, internet use) make you think sin isn't a big deal? Does it make you think that God might not really know best? _____

What do your godly friends think about your attitude toward sin? What do they think about your attitude toward spending time in God's Word? _____

List two friends who are as eager to pray and remain pure as you are. Then set up a time to pray with them. _____

Strong in Grace = Strength in Character. Be Strong!

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Day 3

Read 2 Timothy 3:1-17

Note: Life is often difficult in these days before the Lord's return. Most of the problems in our lives, our country, and even our world are caused by people. People have a major problem with love for self. And sadly, many, many people do not know Christ, and so they don't have the power or ability to live in a way that pleases God. These are the same people who "creep into houses" according to verse 6. Paul said stay away from people who love themselves and hate your God. Many wicked people have a huge influence on many lives. Sometimes they are actors in our favorite movies and TV shows. Sometimes they are amazing athletes on our favorite teams. Sometimes they are the most popular in the music world. God has warned us to stay away! If we follow these people, we will begin thinking and living just like them. Under each bad character trait, explain how you fight those attitudes from entering your life.

Covetous—Desiring what God never intended you to have. People with an eternal focus don't have intense desires for things of this world. Covetous people love money and things. In Exodus 20:11 God tells us, Don't covet!

Boasters—Boasters are people who pretend to be better than they are. They are proud. They always seem to be the heroes in their own stories. They love to talk about how great they are. Proverbs 27:2 teaches us that we should wait for others to say good things about us—we shouldn't praise ourselves!

Proud—The proud person secretly thinks no one else is as great as him. Everyone around him is not as strong, not as smart, not as good-looking, and so on. He admires himself more than anyone or anything else. James 4:6 teaches us that God resists the proud person, but He gives grace to the humble.

Blasphemers—A blasphemer is foolish and proud. The blasphemer thinks he can attack God's infinite power and holy name. It makes no sense for humans to attack their Creator. 1 Timothy 1:20 tells us about two guys who were facing severe discipline so that they would be taught not to blaspheme.

Disobedient to parents—The disobedient won't listen to even those who brought them into the world and provide housing and food. It is really hard for them to love themselves and their parents at the same time. They ignore Ephesians 6:1, which says *Children, obey your parents.*

Unthankful—An unthankful heart never has enough. These people think they deserve what they have and even more. Sadly, they are like pigs eating nuts underneath giant trees without ever looking up to see where the food came from. These people are disobeying 1 Thessalonians 5:18, which says *In everything give thanks*.

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Unholy—The unholy person just wants to live for himself. He doesn't think about what is right and wrong—he only thinks about what he wants. Because he is wicked, the self-lover has no love for godly living, godly people, or God. But God's Word teaches us to pay attention to right and wrong. Choose what is holy and reject what is unholy (see Leviticus 10:10).

Without natural affection—These people love themselves, and we are surprised how they don't love others. We expect parents to love their children. When they don't, it is unnatural. It is unnatural for a mother to not love her baby, yet abortion is common. It is unnatural for parents to not love their child, but abuse is common. It is unnatural for a children to hate their parents, but many children rebel. It is impossible for these unbelievers to follow Jesus's command to *love one another as I have loved you* (John 15:12).

Trucebreakers and false accusers—Trucebreakers are people who go back on their promises. You can't trust them, and you can't make peace with them. Their self-love is so extreme that no one else matters to them. False accusers follow the example of the devil: they spread gossip to hurt others, and they enjoy hurting others with lies.

Incontinent—These are weak people. They have no self-control. They don't have the strength to resist temptation. They don't understand the strength that Christ promises in Philippians 4:13.

Fierce—The fierce are violent. Instead of enjoying kindness, they enjoy being mean. They like to show their power and harm others. They are the opposite of 2 Timothy 2:24, which teaches godly leaders not to fight, but to be gentle.

Despisers of those that are good—They love themselves and they hate the good. They hate good things, which they should love. And they love evil things, which they should hate. They are the ones who call evil good, and good evil (Isaiah 5:20).

Traitors—Traitors cannot be trusted. They live a lie. They work hard to deceive people. They don't understand that no one can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).

Heady, Highminded—These are selfish people who care only about themselves. They are careless and full of pride. Because they love themselves, they are rejecting God's grace. James teaches that God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God—These people love themselves so much, they have no love left for God or others. They do not serve Jesus. They only serve their own desires (Romans 16:18).

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Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof—These people are fakes. They are careful to do certain good things and act a certain way. But they are not following God with their hearts. Their pretend life will be revealed when they kneel before God someday. One day, every knee will bow to Jesus, and every mouth will confess that He is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11) .

These are the types of people God tells us to turn away from. Perhaps you know of some famous people who live with these bad characteristics. What about your friends? What about you? Even though you have God's grace available, do you struggle with any of these things in your own life? How do you turn away from people like this? The answer is found in 2 Timothy 3:10-17 . . .

Become **a man or woman of godly character**, committed to the **Word of God.**

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

List three of your favorite Bible stories you learned when you were a child.

List three people who taught you Bible stories when you were young.

List three Bible truths you learned from your parents, a pastor, or your own study in the last two weeks.

If you could easily fill out those lists above, you are a very privileged teen—you have received wonderful opportunities to know God. When you get home, you should thank those who taught you. Remember, with every privilege comes responsibility. It is your God-given responsibility to keep following and obeying what you have learned. Keep believing that God's Word is true and obey what it says.

The word **perfect** in verse 17 has the idea of being complete or mature. I've never met a teen who liked being called immature. Teens do not need to stay immature if they are willing to study the Word of God and watch it change their lives. How can you become more mature in Christ? What needs to change? What do you need to work on this year?

How has God's Word already helped you through ***doctrine*** (teaching you what is right), through ***reproof*** (teaching you what is wrong), through ***correction*** (teaching you how to make the wrong right), and through ***instruction in righteousness*** (teaching you how to keep it right)?

Godly character is careful to choose godly friends.

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Day 4

Read 2 Timothy 4:1–22

PAUL'S LAST ADVICE

If you knew you were going to die in just a few days, what kind of message would you want to send to your family and closest friends? What would you say? Just a short time before he was killed, Paul shared his heart, his loneliness, and his burden with Timothy.

What did Paul tell Timothy to do in 2 Timothy 4:1-2? _____

To **preach** means to proclaim or speak publically. The Word in verse 2 is God's inspired Word (our Bible). This obviously includes the gospel—the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In what ways can you personally **preach the Word** or proclaim Bible truth each week? _____

We should not try to please men, but to please Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ will judge the living and the dead when he returns. It is His "well done" that we should want to hear. We shouldn't worry about what other people think. It is our Lord the Judge we are to please. How does the fear of what your friends will say keep you from sharing the gospel with them? _____

Paul reminded Timothy to be ready at all times. And he told him to include three elements in his preaching: reprove, rebuke, and exhort. To *reprove* is to convince someone of their error. To *rebuke* is to give a bold warning to people who are disobeying God. And to *exhort* is to help, comfort, and encourage. All three of these take great confidence in God's Word. You have to be willing to have others reject you. With these three words in mind, how would you confront a friend who is living in sin? _____

This kind of preaching and counseling is to be done with great patience and truth. Be as patient with others as God has been with you. And as you teach them how wonderful God is, they will be more ready to listen to hard things you may have to say. According to verses 3-4, why is it important today in our culture to make sure we reprove, rebuke, and exhort with patience and truth? _____

PAUL'S LAST TESTIMONY

You will finish your life as you have lived it. You can expect to finish well only if you live well. If you make bad choices, you can expect to finish badly. To join Paul in saying, "I have fought, finished, and kept," you must "fight, finish, and keep" today. Our challenges are often much smaller than Paul's, but the same character is necessary.

"I have fought!" How long do you fight the flesh and temptation? Ten hours? Ten minutes? Ten seconds? Describe your success or your defeat in your recent spiritual fights.

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"I have finished!" Many people start well but few finish well. It is easy to start a job, but it is hard to finish it. It is easy to start a new Bible study, but it is hard to finish it. It is easy to start learning the piano or guitar, but it is harder to keep going until it's useful in church. What spiritual projects have you started? Do you think you will finish them by God's grace? _____

"I have kept!" Paul's faith in the gospel never faltered. Other people did try to change or ignore the gospel message. But Paul never changed the simple gospel message in order to become more popular. He simply told the gospel truth to all who would listen. Whether on Facebook, in conversations with friends, or handing out gospel information, how often do you share the gospel message with the people around you? How do you share the gospel?_____

PAUL'S LAST EARTHLY REQUEST

You can see in these last few paragraphs of this letter that Paul cared about the people around him. He loved people, especially the young guys he trained for the ministry. In verse 9, you can almost hear him saying, "Timothy, I am lonely. Please hurry up and get here." Who do you encourage in the Lord? _____

Paul was deeply disappointed over those who rejected him and God—like Demas. Someone who loves this present world will reject godly friends. Just look at the life of Demas. Demas probably had no better friend than Paul in Thessalonica. We know Demas rejected Paul and God because he **loved this present world.** There are several "maybes" when you think on this.

- Maybe Demas loved comfort more than Christ.
- Maybe Demas loved the easy way of fitting in with others, rather than being different by living for God.
- Maybe Demas loved the world's riches rather than an average or poor life.
- Maybe Demas loved his sin more than the Savior, and his fleshly desires controlled him.
- Maybe Demas once loved God as much as you and I do right now.

What should we do to keep from becoming a modern-day Demas? _____

Paul explained where his faithful friends were serving the Lord (2 Timothy 4:9-13). Crescens, Titus, and Tychicus had to go back to their own responsibilities. Only Dr. Luke was near him. He wanted to see young Mark again. After mentioning his comforting friends, he mentions a couple more items of comfort—his cloak (a heavy, wool coat for the cold winter nights in prison), the books and the parchments. In other words, he needed his favorite warm jacket, his Bible, and some Bible study tools.

I agree with Paul's Bible study plan—all I would add is a hot cup of coffee! Describe the place you meet God each day and what Bible helps you use. _____

You can almost hear the sadness in Paul's pen as he wrote of his first time before a judge. ***At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.***

But suddenly, Paul was reminded that he was not alone. The Lord was with him! God was his strength and deliverer! What verses or Bible phrases can you remember that remind you of God's promise to always be with you? _____

_____

_____

One camper—just like you—summarized Paul's message to Timothy this way:

> Timothy,
>
> I still would love to see you one more time . . . hurry. I do pray that God's grace will produce in your life the character that pleases Him and that you will never face a crisis of character. But if we do not connect before I die, God be with you, Timothy—just like He has been with me.
>
> See you in heaven.
>
> Paul

Never allow a lack of enduring character be a crisis in your life.

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Scripture Memory Passages

FEAR: 2 Timothy 1:7-8 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

ASSURANCE: 2 Timothy 1:12-13 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. 13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

FAITHFULNESS: 2 Timothy 2:1-2 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

ENDURANCE: 2 Timothy 2:3-4 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

DILIGENCE: 2 Timothy 2:15-16 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

PURITY: 2 Timothy 2:22-23 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

GODLINESS: 2 Timothy 3:10-12 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

CONSISTENCY: 2 Timothy 3:14-15 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

GOD'S WORD: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

PREACHING: 2 Timothy 4:2-4 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

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