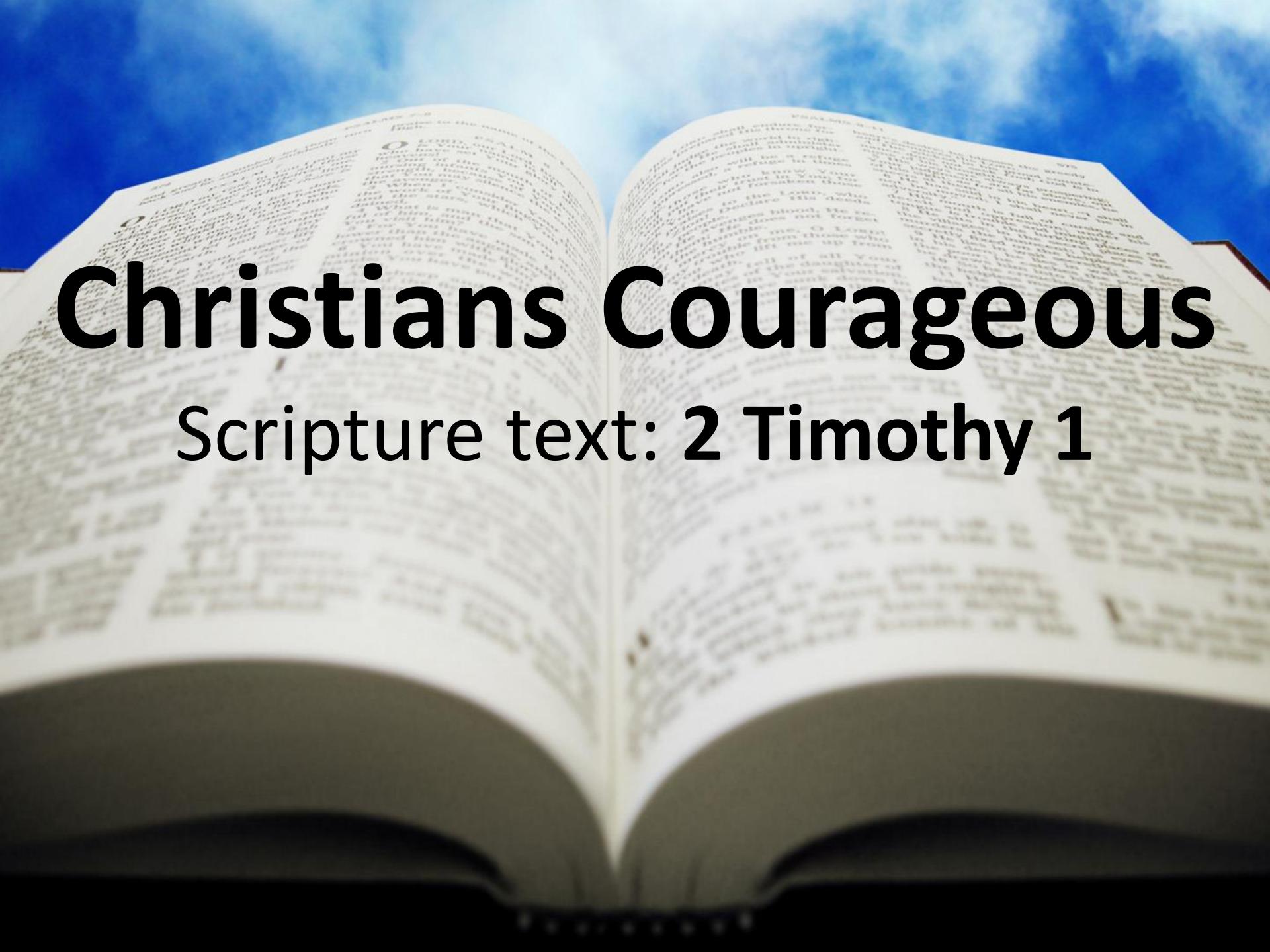


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# **Christians Courageous**

## **Scripture text: 2 Timothy 1**

A photograph of an open Bible against a blue sky with white clouds. The pages of the Bible are visible, showing text from the Psalms and 2 Timothy. The title 'Christians Courageous' and the scripture reference '2 Timothy 1' are overlaid in large, bold, black font.

When Paul wrote the letter we know as 2 Timothy, his situation had changed drastically. **He was now a prisoner in Rome and was facing certain death** (2 Tim. 4:6). For one reason or another, **almost all of Paul's associates in the ministry were gone and only Luke was at the apostle's side to assist him** (2 Tim. 4:11). It was a dark hour indeed.

But Paul's great concern was not for himself; **it was for Timothy and the success of the Gospel ministry.** As in his First Letter to Timothy, Paul **encouraged his beloved colleague to be faithful.**

As we have learned, Timothy was timid, suffered from physical ailments, and was tempted to let other people take advantage of him and not assert his authority as a pastor.

Paul sent Tychicus to replace Timothy at Ephesus so that Timothy might join Paul at Rome (2 Tim. 4:9, 12). God would soon move Paul off the scene, and **Timothy would take his place and continue to give spiritual leadership to the churches.** It would not be an easy task, but Timothy could succeed with the Lord's help. In his first chapter, Paul gave Timothy **three essentials** that he **must possess** to have success.

## **1.) Courageous Enthusiasm (2 Tim. 1:1–7)**

The ministry of the Gospel **is no place for a “timid soul”** who lacks enthusiasm. In fact, **courageous enthusiasm is essential for success in any kind of work.** Paul compared **this attitude to stirring up a fire into full flame** (2 Tim. 1:6). We must not conclude that Timothy was backslidden or lacked spiritual fire. Rather, Paul **was encouraging his associate to keep the fire burning brightly** so that it might generate spiritual power in his life. Paul gave Timothy four encouragements.

## A.) Paul's love (vv. 1–2).

“**Timothy, my dearly beloved son**” is much stronger than “Timothy, my own son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2). It is not that Paul loved Timothy less when he wrote that first letter, but that Paul was now expressing it more. As Paul’s life drew to a close, he realized in a deeper way how dear Timothy was to him.

Paul’s own circumstances were difficult, and **yet he was greatly encouraged**. For one thing, **he was Christ’s ambassador (“apostle”)**; and he knew that **his Master would care for him**. Whatever happened to him **was in the hands of God, so there was no need to fear**.

Furthermore, Paul had “**the promise of life**” in Jesus Christ, and Christ had defeated death (2 Tim. 1:10).

No wonder Paul was able to extend to Timothy “grace, mercy, and peace.” (It is worth noting that Paul added “**mercy**” to his greetings when he wrote to the pastors—1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4. **Paul knew that pastors need mercy!**)

**Titus 1:4 To Titus, my true child in a common faith:**  
Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

## B.) Paul's prayers (vv. 3–4).

What an encouragement to know that the great apostle **was praying for him!** Paul, who knew Timothy's weaknesses and problems, was able to pray definitely and with a real burden on his heart. His praying was not routine; **it was done with compassion and concern.** Knowing that he would soon die, Paul was anxious that Timothy join him at Rome for those last days of fellowship and ministry. This would bring joy to Paul's heart.

We must not assume that Paul tried to defend his evil actions before his conversion by claiming he did it all with "**a pure conscience.**"

After all, he was guilty of causing terror among Christians, **forcing people to blaspheme by denying Christ, and agreeing to the murder of Stephen!** It is true that Paul thought he was serving God (see John 16:2), and that **he was in spiritual ignorance** (1 Tim. 1:13), but **these facts cannot guarantee a pure conscience.**

Paul had known God from his earliest years because he was “an Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Phil. 3:5). **His ancestors had given him the orthodox Jewish faith.**

**John 16:1-3** "I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. **Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.** And **they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me.**

**Philippians 3:4-6** though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a **Hebrew of Hebrews**; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

But when he met Jesus Christ, Paul realized that his Jewish **faith was but preparation for the fulfillment Christ gave him in Christianity**. He did not serve God with a pure conscience “from his forefathers,” as the King James Version says.

Rather, **he heard about the true God from his forefathers; and now he was serving that God with a pure conscience**.

The fact that he had a pure conscience **helped give power to his prayers**.

### C.) Paul's confidence in Timothy (v. 5).

Paul did not think that Timothy's tears were evidence of failure or insincerity. Paul was sure that Timothy's **faith was genuine**, and that **this faith would see him through in spite of the troubles he was facing**.

Apparently Lois, Timothy's grandmother, was the first one in the family won to Christ; then his mother, Eunice, was converted. Timothy's father was a Greek (Acts 16:1), so Eunice had not practiced the orthodox Jewish faith. However, **Timothy's mother and grandmother had seen to it that he was taught the Scriptures** (2 Tim. 3:15); and **this was great preparation for the hearing of the Gospel**.

**Act 16:1-5** Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

When Paul came to Lystra on his first missionary journey, **that was probably the occasion for Timothy's conversion.** When Paul returned on his second journey, he **enlisted Timothy into Christian service.**

Paul had watched Timothy's life and service during those years they were together. **He was certain that Timothy's faith was genuine.** In fact, Timothy's heritage was a great one; for **he was reared in a godly home, trained by a wonderful apostle, and given marvelous opportunities for serving the Lord.**

## D.) God's gift to Timothy (vv. 6–7).

Paul reminded Timothy of the time God called him into service and the local church ordained him. Paul had laid his hands on Timothy (1 Tim. 4:14). Through Paul, God had imparted to Timothy the spiritual gift he needed for his ministry. The laying on of hands was a common practice in apostolic days (Acts 6:6; 13:3), but no believer today has the same authority and privileges that the Apostles did. Today, when we lay hands on people for the ministry, **it is a symbolic act** and does not necessarily impart any special spiritual gifts to them.

**Act 13:1-5** Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, **being sent out by the Holy Spirit**, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them.

**It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to serve God, and through Him we can overcome fear and weakness.**

The word fear in 2 Timothy 1:7 means “**timidity, cowardice.**” The **Holy Spirit gives us power for witness and for service** (Acts 1:8). It is futile for us to try to serve God without the power of the Holy Spirit. **Talent, training, and experience cannot take the place of the power of the Spirit.**

**The Holy Spirit also gives us love.** If we have love for lost souls and for the people of God, we will be able to endure suffering and accomplish the work of God.

**Selfishness leads to fear** because, if we are selfish, we are **interested only in what we will get out of serving God**, and we will be afraid of losing prestige, power, or money. **True Christian love, energized by the Spirit** (Rom. 5:5), **enables us to sacrifice for others and not be afraid**. The Spirit gives love (Gal. 5:22).

**He is also the One who gives self-control** (“a sound mind”). This word is related to the words sober and sobriety that we often meet in the pastoral letters (1 Tim. 2:9, 15; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 4, 6, 12). **“Self-discipline”** is a better translation of “sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7). It describes a person who is sensibly minded and balanced, who has his life under control.

**Romans 5:1-5** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

**Galatians 5:17-21** For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**Galatians 5:22-26** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And **those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** If we live by the Spirit, **let us also walk by the Spirit.** Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Timothy did not need any new spiritual ingredients in his life; all he had to do was “stir up” what he already had. Paul had written in his first letter, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee” (1 Tim. 4:14). Now he added, “Stir up—stir into flame—the gift of God.”

The Holy Spirit does not leave us when we fail (John 14:16); but He cannot fill us, empower us, and use us if we neglect our spiritual lives. It is possible to grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30) and quench the Spirit (1 Thes. 5:19).

**John 14:16-17** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

**Ephesians 4:29-30** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-21** Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good.

Timothy had every reason to be encouraged and to have spiritual enthusiasm in his ministry. Paul loved him and prayed for him. His experiences in life had been preparation for his ministry, and Paul was confident of the genuineness of Timothy's faith. The Spirit within him would give all the power needed for ministry. What more could he want?

## 2.) Shameless Suffering (2 Tim. 1:8–12)

**“Not ashamed”** is a key idea in this chapter: Paul was not ashamed (2 Tim. 1:12); he admonished Timothy not to be ashamed (2 Tim. 1:8); and he reported that Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul’s chain (2 Tim. 1:16).

**Be not ashamed of the Lord’s testimony** (vv. 8–10). Timothy’s natural timidity might make it easy for him to avoid circumstances that demanded witness and involved suffering. Once again, Paul gave his associate needed encouragement.