

TIMOTHY

Making the Bible Come Alive

The apprentice

WHO WAS THIS PERSON?

- Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother (Acts 16:1).
- His mother's name was Eunice and his grandmother's name was Lois (2 Timothy 1:5).
- The name "Timothy" comes from the ancient Greek for "one who honours God".
- Paul said that Timothy had a "sincere faith," the same as his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5).
- From a very young age, Timothy put his faith in the Lord (Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:5)
- Timothy was Paul's traveling companion (2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thesalonians, and Philemon).
- Paul addressed Timothy as "my true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2).
- Timothy represented Paul in several churches (1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:19).
- Timothy was a pastor in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3).
- It seems that Timothy suffered from an illness that required some attention (1 Timothy 5:23).



WHAT IS THIS PERSON KNOWN FOR?

- From an early age, Timothy put his faith in the Lord (Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:5). Timothy noticed very early the trust that his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice, had in God. They passed it on to Timothy and strongly influenced him in his faith.
- Timothy may have heard about Jesus on Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 14:6). If so, the Lord used Paul's preaching to bring salvation to Timothy. In this case, the young man's mother and grandmother also became followers of Jesus through Paul's ministry.
- Despite his Greek and Jewish background, Timothy became a disciple of Jesus (Acts 16:1). Timothy had a good testimony in his hometown of Lystra and the larger city of Iconium, located to the north (Acts 16:2).
- Timothy grew up in an environment that formed his character in a distinct way. Paul was impressed with several qualities of Timothy. He had a knowledge of Judaism and the Hebrew Scriptures. In



addition, he was familiar with pagan customs because of his Greek father. Because of his good reputation as a follower of Jesus, he was an ideal candidate to accompany Paul.

- Paul decided to have Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3). When Paul went to Derbe and Lystra, the controversy about circumcision was still going on. Many Jews were there and they all knew that Timothy's father was a Greek, so Paul had him undergo the religious rite. Such an act could appease those for whom circumcision was important. Paul did not want Timothy to be an obstacle to bringing Jesus to the people.
- Timothy was part of Paul's missionary team. Timothy joined Paul and Silas in going to different cities and telling Jesus' followers what the apostles and other leaders in Jerusalem had decided at their most recent conference (Acts 15:19-20; 16:4). The missionaries encouraged the brothers to follow these instructions. Through the testimonies of Paul, Silas and Timothy, the churches were strengthened in their faith. Every day the number of believers increased (Acts 16:5).
- Paul considered Timothy a "son" in the faith. This demonstrated Paul's personal affection for Timothy (2 Timothy 1:2). Indeed, the apostle cared for Timothy like a father who loves his own children.
- Paul entrusted Timothy with the task of preserving the gospel and instructed him not to teach other doctrines (1 Timothy 1:3). This pastoral mandate corresponded to "prophecies" (1 Timothy 1:18) made earlier about Timothy. The Spirit spoke through the believers to encourage Timothy in his ministry.
- Paul encouraged Timothy not to be ashamed to speak about Jesus. Also, he was not to be ashamed of Paul, who was imprisoned a second time for the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:8).
- For the rest of his life, Timothy never hesitated to become a disciple of Jesus. Even when Timothy was imprisoned for a time, he remained faithful (Hebrews 13:23).

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **God wants parents to teach their children in faith.** In the book of 2 Timothy, Paul says that Timothy had a "sincere faith," the same faith that had first dwelt in his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:1-5). When Paul

came to preach Christ, all three became followers of Jesus. Parents, too, need to prepare their children to become followers of Jesus because children need to know how to recognize the Holy Spirit when He convicts them to make Jesus their Savior. One way to do this is to follow the example of Eunice and Lois and teach the children the Word of God. We can prepare children to distinguish truth from error. We can encourage them to stand firm in the truth, without being surprised or influenced by people who say the opposite of God's Word (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

- **God wants to use people regardless of their age.** In 1 Timothy, Paul encouraged Timothy not to be despised by those around him because of his youth, but to remain an "example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity." (1 Timothy 4:12). Even though Timothy was young, God saw his potential. So we must see the potential in the children God entrusts to us. We need to encourage them to value their age and to be role models for their friends, not only by telling them about Jesus, but by doing the right thing and responding appropriately in more difficult situations (2 Timothy 3:17).
- **God gives us instructions.** Paul wrote to Timothy to apply himself to reading, exhorting, teaching and not neglecting the gift he had received (1 Timothy 4:13-14). We too must do the same. We must encourage children to know the teachings of Jesus by reading the Bible. We must also encourage the gifts that children have so that they develop them for the glory of God.
- **God wants us to be examples.** Paul wrote to Timothy: "Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15). We need to remind children that we are living examples. People around us see Jesus through our words and actions. We need to encourage children to read God's Word to know how a disciple of Jesus should behave. Paul wrote, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Paul encouraged Timothy to stand firm in his own faith and to lead the other disciples well. Timothy seems to have been faithful and we should follow his example.





- **God works with us no matter what our family background is.** God can use us for His glory no matter our family life, age or doubts. Despite his mixed ethnic background, his father was Greek and his mother Jewish, Timothy identified himself as a disciple of Jesus (Acts 16:1). Indeed, between Paul's first and second missionary journeys, Timothy had gained the confidence of Jesus' followers in his hometown of Lystra and in the larger northern city of Iconium (Acts 16:2). We can encourage children, who have parents from different backgrounds, to see how God doesn't look at that. He sees us all the same way. The Bible shows us, once again, that what we are experiencing today is not new. We have different families, but all can serve God in their community.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?
- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.

MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Challenge yourself to find five minutes each day for a week, to quiet your spirit, finding a spot where you are not distracted, and practice just listening to God and being in tune with Him. Take your Bible to that quiet place. Use some of that time to pray, and some time to just meditate on His Word. Keep your ears and your heart open to what God is wanting to say to you. It's not a matter of IF He wants to talk to you. He does want to speak. But, He also wants you to be ready and positioned for listening, so you can actually hear in your heart what He is saying. Then, respond in obedience with a heart that is open to what God would have you to do. God called Samuel three times. How many times is He calling you? The more you spend time in His presence, the less He will have to try calling you over and over again. Maybe you will hear His voice the very first time He calls!