

APRIL 14, 2025

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ENDORSEMENT 2

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U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

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FOCUSED ON THE WORD

How Are You at Handling Betrayal?



“Apostle Paul,” Jan Lievens (1607–1674), Nationalmuseum, Sweden

The apostle Paul experienced betrayal throughout the course of his ministry—and I am sure you and I will too. Such is normal in the life of the believer according to the Bible. So don’t be surprised when it happens to you. Sage believers will counsel you that God uses wounded followers of His in the mightiest of ways.

How do you handle betrayal? How do you overcome the negative emotions associated with it? Have you learned the secret of turning your enemy’s dislike into a holy motive for not only growing internally from the hurt, but also learning to channel that hurt to advance your calling?

Let us survey Paul’s second letter to Timothy this week with this in mind.

Read on, my friend.

Ralph Drollinger

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

White House Cabinet and Governors: Wednesdays 7am (EST), light breakfast served
Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served
House Members: Thursdays 8am, Natural Resources, Longworth 1334, hot breakfast served



PUBLIC SERVANT
ENDORSEMENT

Brooke Rollins

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture



“Ralph and Danielle are two of the greatest patriots who love God and love this country and who have done more to keep the spirit of God and the Bible and Scripture and Christ in our Washington Capitol.

“I attend the Wednesday 7 a.m. Cabinet Bible study. They led a senior staff Bible study for us when were in office in the West Wing. They also lead Bible studies to the U.S. Senate and the House. They are extraordinary.”

Secretary Rollins said she heartily supports Capitol Ministries’ efforts to expand Bible-study based discipleship ministries to public servants at other levels of government. “I could not give them a higher endorsement for the work that they do, the mission they bring, and the love and joy that moves into the policy making process through the connections that Ralph and Danielle are able to make through Scripture. Thank you for your incredible work.”

How Are You at Handling Betrayal?

I. INTRODUCTION

In his second epistle to Timothy, Paul shares many of the lamentations he experienced in his life as he pursued the course of his calling to make disciples. As we will see from our overview of this epistle, real disciple-making is never accomplished apart from the trials of persecution and one aspect of persecution is betrayal. Another way of looking at this, however, is this: we do not know if we are loyal followers of Christ (legitimate, mature followers of Christ) until we respond faithfully to these kinds of trials and tribulations.

We often fail to recognize that persecution and betrayal are necessary in the life of a Christ-follower.

Persecution, however, is the ultimate test of our mettle. A weak-kneed believer will fail under this test. It is only when there is a cost to our faith—when God allows us to be tested—that we learn our true level of spiritual maturity, our level of faithfulness.

As we will see, Paul had some fair-weather followers; their betraying tendencies were a common occurrence in his life. Early in the life of Peter, too, there was an element in his thinking that Jesus had betrayed him when things didn’t turn out the way he thought they would. Were these feelings what motivated his response to deny Christ? Later on, after growing in his faith, he responded differently to similar trials.

Such pivotal responses to persecution and betrayal remain today. I want you to note this emphasis and make application of this topic as we now survey the epistle of 2 Timothy. Keep this theme in mind as we water ski across the top of this insightful New Testament (NT) epistle.

II. 2 TIMOTHY 1

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy (1:1–4).

This is the last epistle Paul wrote (A.D. 67) before his own martyrdom, and it is filled with intense emotion. The setting is this: Paul is writing to Timothy, his disciple, who is now pastoring the church in Ephesus, a church overrun by false teachers (cf. 1 Timothy). As Paul writes, Timothy’s mettle is being tested through persecution, and so Paul writes with the most appropriate help for the matters that are pressing him:

For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.



Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you (1:5–14).

Timothy was faltering as a pastor in light of the problems manifested by *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander* (cf. 1 Timothy 1:20). From a human perspective, these problems were borne from within the church he was leading, but from a spiritual perspective (cf. Ephesians 6:12), Satan himself was propagating the turmoil. This pattern remains similar today; most believers who are actively attempting to fulfill their calling in Christ will find “church” folk to be their greatest problem. That has certainly been my experience and is likely to be yours too. Paul references having to deal with jealous believers in Philipians 1:15–18. In that you have won political office and are deemed a lead-

er of our great nation, you too will face jealous believers and need to deal with them in ways pleasing to God (which is not easy).

Notice from the 2 Timothy 1 passage how Paul responded and exhorted his disciple: he instructed Timothy to *kindle afresh* his spiritual gifts (of teaching, preaching, and evangelism) and be like Paul himself. Why this advice? Often, past criticisms serve to paralyze our future progress. Paul here is saying that just the opposite should be true: “Timothy, like me, you should not *be ashamed* (1:12), Keep moving forward to achieve your calling.” In a pragmatic sense, when we continually, industriously fulfill our callings, we silence our critics.

Paul charges us not to be *timid* (1:7) in the midst of trials, persecution and betrayal—and he uses himself as an example. He is acting as a model for Timothy: Paul himself is *not ashamed* of the gospel, even though he *suffers* greatly for proclaiming it. Paul is saying to his understudy, and to you and me:

**Our calling is clear, our
audience is One, our
Gospel is lucid, and our
confidence in God’s
sovereignty is irrefutable.**

Herein is the strong inference of this passage: if Christ had called him, no other man could derail him. This was as true in Paul’s life as it was for Timothy. The application for you as a public servant is obvious—especially as folks take you to task prior to an election.

VERSE OF THE WEEK



Romans 8:37–39

*But in all these things we
overwhelmingly conquer
through Him who loved
us. For I am convinced that
neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor principalities,
nor things present,
nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height,
nor depth, nor any other
created thing, will be able to
separate us from the love
of God, which is in Christ
Jesus our Lord.*

Stay focused on the Lord!
Nothing fazes Him and
nothing can separate us
from His love!



James Iredell



“For my part, I am free and ready enough to declare that I think the Christian religion is a Divine institution; and I pray to God that I may never forget the precepts of His religion or suffer the appearance of an inconsistency in my principles and practice.”

— James Iredell, ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, Attorney General of North Carolina, U.S. Supreme Court Justice appointed by President George Washington.

James Iredell, *The Papers of James Iredell*, Don Higginbotham, editor (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1976), Vol. I, 11 from his 1768 essay on religion.

How Are You at Handling Betrayal?

Hymenaeus and *Alexander*, two heretics, who had taken over the leadership of the Ephesian church as mentioned previously, had largely caused Timothy’s woes. One might say they were in the church, but as unbelievers, not of the church. This is an important distinction to make regarding people who hurt you; it is possible they are unbelievers or immature believers, and their betrayal is motivated by jealousy of the position you have received from God. As will be seen in the remainder of this study, Paul experienced many other relationships with believers where his friends broke in the wrong direction, *deserting* him and/or becoming *ashamed* of the Gospel (cf. Romans 1:16). Note this as 2 Timothy 1 continues:

You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me—the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus (1:15–18).

Paul first mentions *Phygelus* and *Hermogenes* in 2 Timothy (previously mentioned *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander* are found in 1 Timothy). They are the first of at least three additional sets of folks in 2 Timothy who had abandoned and betrayed him in ministry.

Phygelus and *Hermogenes* turned out to be fair-weather friends. Nothing more is known about these two promising Christian leaders, who were ev-

idently close to Paul but jumped ship when there later arose a personal cost of some sort. Because of what he’d learned from what had happened with *Phygelus* and *Hermogenes*, Paul models a contrasting attitude to Timothy’s. In the large context, Paul’s message to Timothy is this: in times of trial, persecution, and betrayal, a strong disciple will not abandon the ship! He will refuse to equivocate, vacillate, or compromise on biblically clear matters, and he will not hesitate to speak the truth when necessary. Implicit in the passage is that Paul did not want Timothy to go the way of *Phygelus* and *Hermogenes* in response to the pressures he was facing in leadership. There was no room in Paul’s mind for weak-kneed believers.

III. 2 TIMOTHY 2

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2:1–2).

Note the cause-and-effect relationship here at the start of this second chapter. How does a betrayed believer remain *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus* (2:1)? How do we stand strong in persecution?

In stark contrast to deserting the cause of Christ as was the case with those mentioned in chapter 1, Paul instructs Timothy to keep entrusting the Gospel to faithful men. By application, every believer has 2 Timothy 2:2 laid to his or her charge. It is the antidote to slipping away, losing the cause.



This passage is another way of expressing the Great Commission found in the four NT Gospels. Notice that every believer needs to be *making disciples: entrusting* the message of the cross we have been given to another who *will be able to teach* yet *others*. This is the primary biblical methodology for the expansion of God's Kingdom. Four generations of *disciple-making* are in view in this one passage. Keep the main thing the main thing is what Paul is saying—even in light of the circumstances.

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2:3).

Keep in mind the context of this passage: those who are not being disciplined and subsequently do not disciple others are in a weaker position when it comes to enduring, i.e., *suffering hardship* that is a necessary by-product of faithfulness to the Word of God. Paul now adds other counter measures in order to combat Timothy's temptation to abandon the cause:

No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned (2:4–9).

Why have I chosen to amplify this theme of “How to Handle Betrayal” when conducting a general survey of this epistle? Notice the bookend statements in the above portion of the passage (verses 3 and 9): there exists a common theme from start to finish pertaining to how one endures *suffering hardship* of this sort. My point again, such is normative for the follower of Christ, not optional, in a biblically steeped understanding of Christianity.

The increasing problem in American Evangelicalism is a self-centered religiosity sold from the vast majority of its pulpits that does not preach this aspect of our faith.

Incorrect emphases—the prosperity gospel, an exclusive diet of self-help sermons, and a hyper-charismatic focus on miracles that lead believers toward a self-centered way of thinking—lead to greater abandonment of the faith rather than the mindset of *suffering hardship*. Herein Paul is training Timothy to think right in and about times of trials. (By the way, Paul consistently talks more about slaying self [cf. Romans 6:2–6; Galatians 2:20] than gratifying self.)

Paul repeatedly states that *suffering hardship*, which includes trials, persecution, and betrayal, is typical of authentic Christianity. This is important for Christians to understand so we know how to respond to trials and, per-

John Adams



“The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.”

— John Adams, second President of the United States, signer of the Declaration of Independence, judge, diplomat, one of two signers of the Bill of Rights.

Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington D. C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), Vol. XIII, 292–294. In a letter from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson on June 28, 1813.



Thomas Jefferson



“The practice of morality being necessary for the well-being of society, He [God] has taken care to impress its precepts so indelibly on our hearts that they shall not be effaced by the subtleties of our brain. We all agree in the obligation of the moral principles of Jesus and nowhere will they be found delivered in greater purity than in His discourses.”

— Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, signer of the Declaration of Independence, diplomat, Governor of Virginia, Secretary of State.

Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Albert Ellery Bergh, editor (Washington, D.C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), Vol. XII, 315, to James Fishback, September 27, 1809.

How Are You at Handling Betrayal?

haps more importantly, know to expect them. This is necessary for maturing in the faith. Because, as with a spiritually immature Peter, many—if not most—Christians do not understand this vital concept and balk at persecution. They protest, “This is not what I signed up for! I thought Christianity was supposed to prosper me, give me my best life now, and make me feel ‘spiritual’—not cost me! *Suffer hardship*? What is that? I’m outta here!”

Now note the three metaphors Paul uses in 2 Timothy 2 to describe and characterize solid, mature-thinking believers: the *soldier*, the *athlete* and the *farmer*. In context, Paul is illustrating that strong believers need to be *undistracted* as is characteristic of *soldiers* (in this case by worldly, selfish pursuits); to be obedient as is characteristic of *athletes* (in this case to God’s Word and man’s civil laws); and to be hardworking as is characteristic of *farmers* (in this case to the end goal of making disciples). Being undistracted, obedient, and hardworking are all requisite, fundamental disciplines for anyone who wants to make a difference that is pleasing to God over the course of his lifetime. All three are set in contrast to the qualities of individuals who are not interested in *suffering hardship*.

Paul now segues into revealing his motives for ministry as is evidenced in and by the following passage. What motivates Paul to persevere when *suffering hardship*? He does so for the sake of the *chosen* and their *salvation*:

For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salva-

tion which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself (2:10–13).

As *ambassadors for Christ* (2 Corinthians 5:20), you and I have a deep-seated reason for persevering when suffering for doing what is right, even when the environment is so hostile as to suggest we should bow out. It is the *salvation* and maturation of the saints—making disciples—that compels Paul to live with an eternally based, internal strength.

There is no greater motivation, cause, or purpose than to clearly understand our marching orders in Christ coupled with our biblical identity.

These internal, theological truths should lead to personal endurance while in office. Sound orthodoxy leads to sound orthopraxy.

Trials, persecution, and betrayal are sometimes meant by God to identify and separate the tares that are present amongst the wheat of the body of Christ (cf. 1 John 2:19). What summarily follows from 2 Timothy is along these lines: Paul distinguishes between genuine versus disingenuous “followers of Christ.”



Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.”

Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will (2:14–26).

Much could be commented on from this portion of the epistle. Suffice to mention here, in regard to our theme of betrayal is this: *Philetus* (v. 17) was yet another person who betrayed Paul in ministry. The list grows.

IV. 2 TIMOTHY 3

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these (3:1–5).

The power and focus of Christianity lie in the cross of Christ. It is the salvific Jesus—who died on the cross as a substitutionary atonement for sin—that affords us justification before a holy and righteous God. Whenever an individual or organization changes this message, for instance viewing Jesus as a mere sociological change agent (Liberation Theology) or as a mere human role-model for us to emulate in character (The Fellowship¹), they have changed the essence of the Gospel. In so doing they manifest exactly what Paul warns of in this passage: *holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power.*

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William Samuel Johnson



“[I] ... am endeavoring ... to attend to my own duty only as a Christian. ... Let us take care that our Christianity, though put to the test, ... be not shaken, and that our love for things really good wax not cold.”

— William Samuel Johnson, signer of the Constitution, member of the Continental Congress, judge, framer of the Bill of Rights, president of Columbia College, U.S. Senator.

Edwards Beardsley, *Life and Times of William Samuel Johnson* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), 184.

alone and He only is
the way to Heaven!

Contextually, the point is this: trials, persecution, and betrayal may be from pretenders who really do not believe the way you do! Those who bring hurt into your life may not be saved. Paul’s advice relative to people who fall into this category is to *avoid such men as these* (3:5).

For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes’s and Jambres’s folly was also.

Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (3:6–12).

Again, here is this clear promise from *Scripture*: *persecution* is normative (3:12). I am in agreement with commentators who hold verse 12 to be related to verse 5: those who hold to *a form of godliness* (v. 5) are less likely to be characterized by *persecution* (v. 12).² Why? Because Jesus and Paul and other biblical writers repeatedly

associate genuine godliness with *persecution* in the following passages:

A. JESUS IN MATTHEW 10:22–23

“You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.”

B. JESUS IN LUKE 21:12

“But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name’s sake.”

C. JESUS IN JOHN 15:20

“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”

D. PAUL IN ACTS 14:22

Strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”

E. PAUL IN 1 THESSALONIANS 3:4

For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we



were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.

These various passages serve to associate genuine *godliness* with *persecution*. Having gone elsewhere to underscore this point, let's turn our attention back to 2 Timothy 3.

Paul's contrast of verse 5 with verse 12 in 2 Timothy 3 (of those who hold to a *form of godliness* and who have *denied its power*) continues on in the passages that follow verse 12. Note this below. What he is about to say in verses 13–17 is that genuine *godliness* coupled with the *sacred writings* (*Scripture*) has *power*! This *power* is seen manifest in others' *salvation*.

But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (3:13–15).

Paul is not talking about some kind of powerless social, exemplary Jesus here, i.e., a *form of godliness*: he is speaking about the salvific Jesus revealed in the *sacred writings*, the *Scriptures*—wherein is the *power*—the Gospel to transform lives! What's the point relative to our theme? Don't be so concerned about persecution, trials, and betrayal by the powerless, the imposters.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof,

for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (3:16–17).

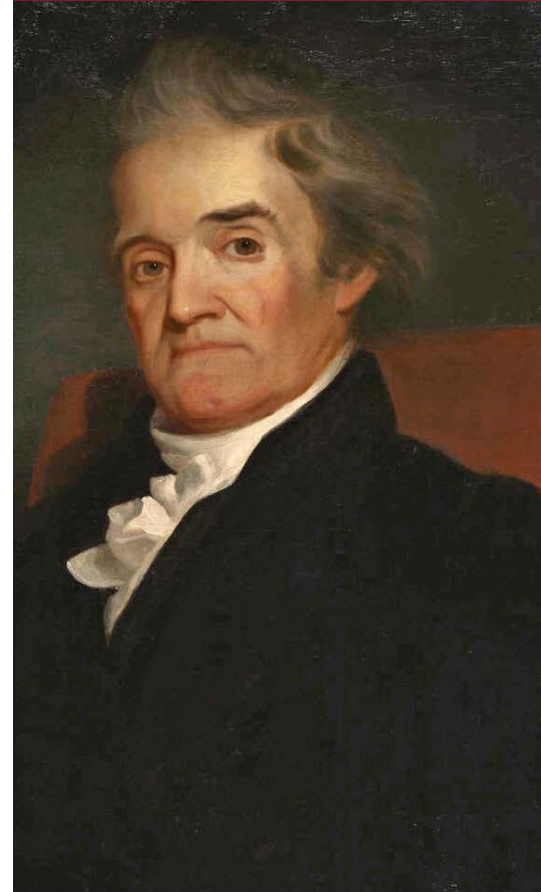
The ability to discern evil men who are imposters, who are powerless, who do not hold to the *sacred writings* is further delineated in the following passage listed above: *Scripture* will always be the final arbiter of truth for the genuine believer. Here then is an additional means by which to weigh the validity of your persecutors: what is their view of *Scripture*? Is it authoritative?

V. 2 TIMOTHY 4

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry (4:1–5).

Again, standing for truth and refuting error is normative for the believer. But it will beckon hardship which we need to endure. Train to expect this.

Noah Webster



“The virtues of men are of more consequence to society than their abilities; and for this reason, the heart should be cultivated with more assiduity than the head.”

— Noah Webster, Revolutionary War soldier, judge, legislator, educator, “Schoolmaster to America.”

Noah Webster, *On the Education of Youth in America*, 1788.





For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come (4:6).

Paul's personal martyrdom was near. The Greek language he uses is picturesque, likening himself to a ship losing its tether, slipping from the dock.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith (4:7).

Again, normative to mature believers is the battle for truth and the refuting of error.

In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. Make every effort to come to me soon; for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica (4:8–9).

Paul knew of his coming reward from the Savior whom he had so faithfully served. Demas, on the other hand, is another defector. Why did he defect? The things of the *world* were a higher priority in his heart.

In the Philemon epistle (written by Paul earlier on), one learns that Paul called Demas a “fellow worker.” In Colossians 4:12–14 (approximately five years earlier) Paul signifies that he was a close associate. So, for Paul to use the word *deserted* (*enkataleipo*) in 2 Timothy 4:10 indicates a pendulum swing in Demas' heart. The word means “utter abandonment.” Paul said Demas loved the present world more. In your heart are you like Paul or Demas? Time, persecution, and trials will tell.

PAUL'S BETRAYERS

As seen in this study, Paul encountered many setbacks during his ministry. If we, too, are intent on the Gospel, the Great Commission, and the pursuit of making disciples, should we also anticipate that all our friendships will turn out great? No.

THE ENVIOUS MINISTERS

Philippians 1:18

In Paul's imprisonment, some other believers used the opportunity to discount him. Paul's response was to say that if Christ was proclaimed, no matter their motives, he'd rejoice.

BARNABAS

Acts 15:39

Coworkers in the Great Commission, they had a sharp disagreement later in ministry and went separate ways.

ALEXANDER & HYMENAEUS

1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 4:14

These two men were heretics who stole the church that Paul had spent three years laboring to plant in Ephesus.

PHYGELUS & HERMOGENES

2 Timothy 1:15

Nothing much is known about these two promising Christian leaders, who were evidently close to Paul but jumped ship when there later arose a personal cost of some sort (cf. 2 Timothy 1:16).

PHILETUS

2 Timothy 2:17

Paired with Hymenaeus in this passage (the heretic mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20), Philetus, too, had left sound doctrine.

DEMAS

2 Timothy 4:10

Demas, too, needs to be added to the list of betrayers in ministry; he was a fair-weather follower. He saw where Paul's life was headed, and he did not want to risk persecution and imprisonment with him.

The next opponent and persecutor Paul lists here in 2 Timothy 4 was *Alexander the coppersmith*. This most likely is the same *Alexander* (of *Alexander* and *Hymenaeus* fame) previously mentioned at the start of this study (from 1 Timothy 1:20). He was never a disciple like *Demas*. *Alexander* could have been similar in trade to Demetrius the silversmith (Acts 19:24) who greatly resented the apostle because of his impact on his business. Whatever the case, Paul's preaching altered *Alexander's* career trajectory and as a result he responded in kind by harming Paul back (how, specifically, the text does not say):

Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith



Samuel Adams

did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching (2 Timothy 4:10–15).

Notable is Paul's response to such a man: he states *the Lord will repay him according to his deeds* (cf. Romans 12:19). As difficult as this is, vengeance is not a biblically appropriate action for any human in response to *harm*.

**Vengeance is God's
business alone, wherein
His adjudication
is more accurately
compensatory.**

This is a very real thing that God does—just give Him time and allow Him the space to do it! He protects His under-shepherds.

At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them (4:16).

As if *Phygelus*, *Hermogenes*, and *Demas* were not sufficient personal illustrations of betrayal in 2 Timothy, Paul summarily states that in a general sense *no one supported me, but all deserted me*. When Paul was in Roman court, he had no friend to stand with him: they all *deserted* him! How awful! Had Onesiphorus or Luke been there, they would have surely stood with him, but Paul often went through persecution with no friends, no encouragement! Stop and think about that—and just how remarkable a man he was! It is in these lonely times that intimacy and inner strength in and with Christ are forged in our lives. In Philippians,

also written from imprisonment, Paul requests, *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings* (3:10).

**Spiritual maturity and
intimacy with Christ
are accomplished in
persecution, betrayal,
and abandonment,
wherein Christ is our sole
hope and resource.**

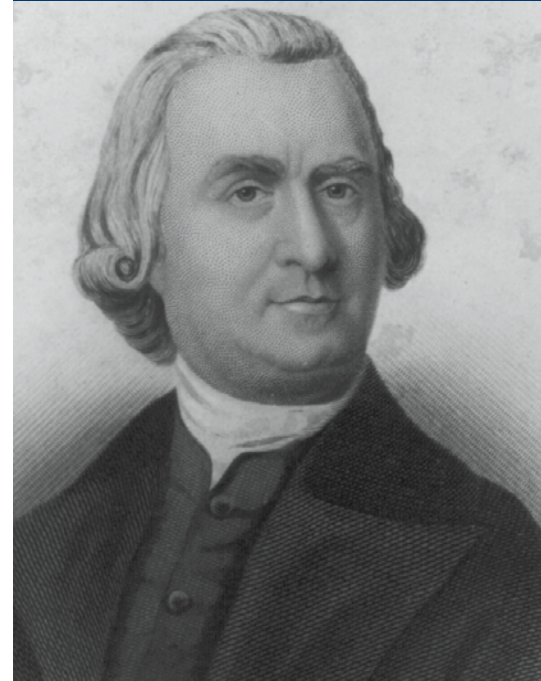
In this sense, betrayal is a very good thing. Nothing will build your core strength quite like Christ does! His economy for accomplishing maturity and strength in our lives is often different than ours. So count it all joy (James 1)!

Philippians 2:20–21 is another sobering passage along these same lines wherein Paul states, *For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests*. You would think that he would have had a band of men around him near the end of his life and ministry! But he did not.

**Fellow soldiers,
soul mates whose love
for Christ transcends
all forms of self-
interest are rare.**

VI. CONCLUSION

But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles



“If men of wisdom and knowledge, of moderation and temperance, of patience, fortitude and perseverance, of sobriety and true republican simplicity of manners, of zeal for the honour of the Supreme Being and the welfare of the commonwealth; if men possessed of these other excellent qualities are chosen to fill the seats of government, we may expect that our affairs will rest on a solid and permanent foundation.”

— Samuel Adams, signer of the Declaration of Independence, “Father of the American Revolution,” ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, Governor of Massachusetts.

Samuel Adams, letter to Elbridge Gerry, November 27, 1780.



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How Are You at Handling Betrayal?

might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen (2 Timothy 4:17–18).

In spite of his oft-dire physical condition and the herein-recorded too often emotional abandonments of those whom he'd earlier deemed loyal, such circumstances never affected his spirit!

Paul had a pliable heart but very thick skin by the time he wrote 2 Timothy—at the zenith of his life and ministry. He possessed an intimacy with Christ and a resounding faith that totally transcended, eclipsed, and governed the emotions of his earthly condition! He ruled his spirit—not the other way around! Void from this epistle is any sense of bitterness or resentment. Romans 8:35–39 reveals the visceral thinking of this wonderful man and

provides an apt capstone to this book survey:

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Do you possess this same biblically informed response to betrayal?

1. The Fellowships' 2005 IRS 990 Statement of Organization's Primary Exempt Purpose, Part III: "... modeling the principles of Jesus ... under the thoughts of Jesus."
2. Knight III, George W. *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) 442.

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