

COMMUNITY NIGHT

DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET





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HELLO!

We are excited for what God is going to do this summer in and through your life! Here is the purpose of this devotional:

To train and equip you to study God's Word so that you can understand, see the Gospel in, and correctly apply Scripture to your life in order that God is glorified.

That sounds weighty, intense, and academic, but our heart is to show you that God's Word brings life. That if we are His, it should be oxygen we breathe in our daily lives. The process we will be using is a very easy way to look at any passage in the Scriptures. We suggest that as you read through 2 Timothy section by section that you would even take one day for each of the 5 questions. The questions we will be answering in each segment are:

- 1 What does this teach me about God?
- 2 What does this teach me about man/mankind?
- 3 What does this teach me about the Gospel?
- 4 How should I respond?
- 5 How should I pray?

We do want to say that this is NOT the only way to study God's Word, but it is a wonderful method. And having a method is nearly always better than not having one. So, if you have another way that you study Scripture share it with the others in your group!

We hope that you grow into Christ this summer as we are encouraged by, wrestle with, talk about, dive into, and breathe in deeply the oxygen that is God's Word in 2 Timothy!

2 TIMOTHY 1 | LAURA STORY

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well." - 2 Timothy 1:5

What do you want people to remember about you? Your talents? Your sense of humor? What is the most memorable thing about you?

In the beginning of Paul's letter to Timothy, after recounting the constancy of his thoughts and prayers, he pays Timothy what may be the highest of compliments: "I remember your sincere faith." Paul doesn't mention Timothy's love, his boldness nor his kindness, though I'm sure Timothy possessed all these in great measure. Instead, with laser focus, Paul commended Timothy's sincere faith. If this is something so notable about Timothy's life, I instinctively must ask myself, what is sincere faith? And more importantly, do I have it?

Looking at 2 Timothy 1:5, there are three things we learn about sincere faith. First, **sincere faith is without wax.** So what on earth does that mean? If you examine the root of "sincere", its actually made up of two Latin words: "sine" meaning without and "cera" meaning wax. In the ancient world, dishonest merchants would use wax to hide cracks in their pottery, displaying them in the shade so the wax was not exposed to the sunlight. Reputable merchants displayed their pots in the sun, even hanging a sign over them reading "sine cera". Timothy's faith was without wax; it was real.

In my freshman year at Calvin College, I experienced a crisis of belief. I can't remember why this South Carolina girl chose a school in Michigan, so far from friends and family, but I was determined to become my own person and decide for myself what I really believed. Within weeks, I found myself abandoning the morality that my parent's faith had instilled in me, making terrible decisions in my effort to "find myself." I finally hit rock bottom, with an enormous emptiness left over from the alcohol and partying. I finally discovered it: sincere faith. A faith, durable and rooted in grace, for my every failure. A faith that did not hide the

cracks and defects of who I was, but rather exposed them. Sincere faith is not trying harder to believe in something. Nor is it thinking happy thoughts when life is hard. Sincere faith is a gift God gives; not for the *faithful* but the *faithless*.

Secondly, **sincere faith is generational**. It was hard as a college kid to fully appreciate the how my parent's faith had prepared my childish heart for faith. The countless hours spent in Sunday school watching old ladies act out an archaic story on a flannel graph board seemed pointless to me, yet it was there that I was exposed to the Word of God. What began as seemingly silly stories of men getting eaten by whales and seas splitting in two, has become a compass for my life. This gift of faith is the greatest gift my parents could have ever given me. These days, I am reminded every time my three-year-old picks up her toy flip phone and says to me, "Hold on mommy. I need to send a quick email!", that she is always learning something from me. Will my kids see in me a life of sincere faith?

Finally, and possibly most importantly, **sincere faith dwells in you**. This word "dwell" doesn't infer a space temporarily occupied, but a residence that is permanent. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ and have acknowledged your sin and relinquished the reigns of your life to Him, there is nothing you can ever do to lose your faith. Sincere faith is not a rope we tightly grasp when we slip and fall; it is the grip of God that is holding onto us; on mountaintops, through valleys and every moment in between, always redeeming and restoring. Wouldn't it be great if a sincere faith is the lasting memory of you? I certainly hope it will top the list of memories that others have of me.

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Questions from Laura:

- 1) Who do you know that has a sincere faith? How can you tell?
- 2) Do you feel as if your faith is sincere? Why or why not?

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-13 | JEFF NORRIS

This is a lengthy passage, packed full of rich truth...far too much to address in one short devotional. In light of that, let's just focus on the first 3 verses:

1 "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

The apostle Paul tells a young pastor, Timothy, to devote his life to investing the truths of God and His Word into the lives of faithful men who will then turn around and do the same with others. This process is what the church has long called **discipleship**. This is the mission of the church, and Paul is only reiterating what originally was expressed by Jesus Himself in Matthew 28:19-20:

*"Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

College students today want to change the world, and rightfully so. But far too often they want to do it with some new trendy ministry endeavor or social media experiment that will take the world by storm.

When Jesus came, he didn't put together an amazing band or recruit the best religious speakers of the day or create a video that went viral; no He simply poured His love, His time, and His Word into the lives of 12 men. And then those men (minus Judas Iscariot) turned around and poured their lives and the gospel into others, who poured their lives and the gospel into others, who poured their lives and the gospel into others...etc., etc.,

etc. And the world hasn't been the same since.

Please don't misunderstand. I love a good band. And I love a great speaker. And I love viral videos. They each have their place in expanding the Kingdom of God. But they all take a backseat to our primary mission which is to make disciples through life on life discipleship.

I implore you to be a 2 Timothy 2:2 Christian! Discipleship is how we change the world. It's slow and it's messy but it's the primary way the Lord designed the Kingdom of God to move forward. If you don't know where or how to start, talk to a pastor or a ministry leader or a close Christian friend and ask for help. You won't regret engaging in such a worthy mission!

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Questions from Jeff:

1) What has discipleship meant to you? What has it looked like for you in the past?

2) Do you want to engage in the mission of making disciples of Christ? Why or Why not? Who are the people in your life who don't know Jesus who God is calling you to pursue towards discipleship?

2 TIMOTHY 2:14-26 | MELISSA & TYLER BEGGS

“But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are his,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.’” 2 Timothy 2:19

It is the first full day of our anniversary trip and with a 1,000-piece puzzle before us (Yes, we are 24- and 25-year old elderly people). We first want to hurriedly scurry for any pieces we can put together, without first looking at the big picture: the lid of the puzzle’s box, the one thing that holds the key and power to put the whole puzzle together. After we flip the pieces right side up, we step back and take a moment to look at the big picture of the puzzle’s box, clearly seeing what the puzzle really is. We then begin working, as everybody does, on the outside edge of the puzzle.

In 2 Timothy 2:14-26, Paul gives Timothy encouragement on how to walk alongside and love the false teachers in his day as a worker approved by God. The false teachers at the time this passage was written were spreading lies, producing quarrels, and were upsetting people’s faith. I can only imagine the temptation Timothy must have felt to well up with anger, hate, frustration, and selfish-ambition toward the false teachers. How easy it would be for us to respond similarly with a quick word of spite or indignation as impatience in the tribulation springs up in our hearts. In contrast to this type of response, Paul exhorted Timothy to:

“Flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.”

This is such a heavy weight of responsibility and such a high calling. It’s in complete and

utter opposition to the natural inclination of our hearts to respond in such a Christ-like way. In our own strength, this exhortation is simply a list of do's and don'ts, an insurmountable burden to bear, and, our rule-following hearts immediately set out to accomplish this without the power of the Spirit of God himself.

Imagine if Tyler and I would've started on our puzzle by randomly trying to find pieces that seemed to fit together without the outer edge or even looking at the box. Accomplishing our goal of finishing the puzzle would be completely aimless!

Verse 19 of 2 Timothy 2 is the outer edge of the puzzle, the framework in which we work. It shows how to be Christ-like while living among a world of opposition, quarrels, and false teachers. It states, "But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.'" Who we are is Christ's, set apart, made new, and given the ability to surrender ourselves to His power and His working. Apart from this "outer edge," the big picture of the Gospel at work in our lives, we are incapable of being a worker approved by God. We can never and will never be able to naturally piece together our lives to patiently endure evil, to teach with gentleness and extend kindness to those who approach us with lies, hate, malice, and mischievousness. We must acknowledge that we are God's bondservants, those without rights and fully surrendered to our Master, in order to walk out our God-given calling in power, faithfulness, and obedience, giving him glory in it all. Only then will the rest of the pieces will fall into place.

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Questions from the Beggs:	
1)	What feelings come up for you when you hear "servant of Christ"?
2)	What does it look like to be a servant of Christ on a day to day basis?

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9 | DAVID MCNEELY

December 26, 2004 is a day many people will never forget. In the Indian Ocean at 7:58 Western Indonesian Time, the third-largest earthquake ever recorded on a seismograph had the longest duration of faulting ever observed (somewhere between 8-10 minutes). It caused the entire earth to vibrate and triggered other earthquakes as far away as Alaska. This undersea megathrust earthquake initiated tsunamis along the coast of landmasses bordering the Indian Ocean. Fourteen countries were impacted by one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history imposing its will. At least 230,000 people did not survive. Indonesia received the most damage but Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand were also devastated.

Many were playing in the ocean when they observed a wall of water making its way toward them. They had no warning. Although scientists knew of the earthquake a full half hour before the tsunami hit the northern coast of Indonesia no system had been developed to warn people. An hour and a half passed before the waves made it to Thailand. Still no one received any prior warning.

Had a warning system been in place many people could have reached safety. We tend to read the warnings in the scriptures as if they are meant for “them.” We read it and assume other people need it. But my hope for us all in reading 2 Timothy 3:1-9 is that we ask, “Lord, what do you want me to heed?”

When a warning is given in scripture there is a good reason. There are warnings against laziness, lust, greed, and a whole slew of other things. In this passage though, Paul warns us against false teaching. We will drown under false teaching. It will kill the soul. God’s people should never be caught off guard. He has not failed in establishing an effective warning system. His word is sufficient for every need. It teaches, corrects, rebukes,

guides, etc. So when a warning is given, pay attention!

Paul starts out pleading, “Understand this!” I added the exclamation but I’ll bet the farm Paul would have put it there had he written in English. Warning! Warning! “In the last days there will come times of difficulty.” These times are coming. These times are here. These times will continue. So get ready!

He then makes a list of at least 25 character defects in people that are leading God’s people astray by teaching things not in accord with the scriptures. These people were gifted communicators. They were easy to listen to. But they didn’t teach truth. In essence Paul says, “RUN.” Get away. Call them out. Bank on God’s Word rather than man’s eloquence. How about you today? Are you in danger of listening to some great communicators who set aside God’s Word? I pray not. But rather than thinking about those other people who need to make sure they won’t be led astray, think about what you must do to set your own mind on truth. The people of Berea checked up on Paul’s teaching to make sure what he was saying was what God has already said (Acts 17:11). Please do this same with anyone who teaches you.

Paul tells us the fate of false teachers in verse nine, “they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all.”

Kevin DeYoung provides 15 Discernment Diagnostics for us to think about when hearing something that sounds strange.

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2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17 | TYLER BEGGS

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” – 2 Timothy 3:16-17

What does it mean that God breathed out Scripture? That’s a little weird, right? When I hear “breathed out” I think of a dog breathing his nasty breath in my face or someone creepily breathing down my neck. Neither are particularly pleasant. This is not what Paul is speaking of though as he reminds Timothy of this fact.

If we go back to the garden of Eden we see that when God made Adam He “breathed into his (Adam’s) nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (Genesis 2:7). God’s breath is what gave Adam life! So, when Paul is speaking about all of scripture being “breathed out by God” he reminds Timothy—and us as well—that the source of life is in God’s Word.

Do you think of the Bible in that way? Do you think of the verses that you read throughout the week as life giving? When a preacher on Sunday reads Scripture are those words what we hold onto for dear life because without them we can’t breathe?

I think that often I walk through my life suffocating. You may relate. Too often I go through my week thinking I can manage on receiving oxygen Sunday morning from a stage. I suffocate by struggling and falling into temptation over and over again and it is slowly killing me. The silly thing is that I know of and possess an unlimited supply of oxygen. God’s Word is on my bedside table, on my phone, and since I work at a church it’s even at my job! I don’t know about you, but I am tired of suffocating.

So, this is my exhortation to us: BREATHE! Breathe in the source of life! We NEED it and cannot survive this life without it. So, just breathe.

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2 TIMOTHY 4 | GARRETT MOORE

The time is coming. It was coming for Pastor Timothy. Guaranteed. The Apostle Paul, the man who had invested his time, wisdom, and life into Timothy, gave a sober warning. Paul knew a couple things well: the Scriptures and the times. Both told him that difficulty was on its way. He wanted Timothy to approach the coming days with clear eyes. Every word of this letter is weighty in a unique way. These were essentially Paul's last words, his last opportunity to remind, encourage, and strengthen his spiritual son. Writing from a Roman prison, awaiting his death, Paul tells Timothy that opposition to the gospel is as sure as the sun rising and setting.

Why? Did he just want to pass along some prophetic trivia? Did he want to discourage Timothy? Was he implying that the spread of the gospel would be hindered by this opposition? No, on all counts.

Paul writes these words to fortify Timothy!

Every representative of God faces opposition. 2 Timothy 3 mentions a couple guys who opposed Moses. Paul himself was opposed and incarcerated the gospel's sake. Timothy is not greater than Moses, nor Paul, nor his master, Jesus, who was crucified for being the perfect self-image of God. In this world you will have tribulation, Timothy. Know it, expect it, and that will make a significant difference in the way you respond to it. These days we have all sorts of obstacle races in which people pay to compete. There's the "Warrior Dash," "Tough Mudder," "Spartan Race," etc. There is even "The Color Run" in which you get multi-colored powder thrown at you while running a 5K. Jogging through clouds of fuchsia and turquoise is probably not a major obstacle, but if you were just beginning your daily run through the neighborhood and someone jumped out from behind a tree to pelt you in the face with paint-dust, it might trip you up a bit. Even a small obstacle can have significant impact if it is not anticipated.

Paul wants Timothy to know for certain that a far greater challenge than a race awaits him. It will come from within the Christian community, from “brothers and sisters” and there will be a progression to the opposition. 1) Annoyance: At first, it will seem that they just don’t have the stomach for his teaching. 2) Substitution: Then, they will find and listen to people that preach what they like to think about God. 3) Hardening: They press the “mute” button, cutting themselves off from even hearing the truth. 4) Delusion: Like a kid aimlessly straying from his mom at the grocery store, they don’t even notice that their hearts and minds now belong to someone else.

So, expect it. As a Christian, you are a representative of the Lord and His good news, so you’re going to get some opposition. You will have tribulation. Don’t be afraid. Jesus has overcome the world and He is with you. Paul describes Him in verse 1 as the one who judges the living and the dead. He has all authority in heaven and on earth. Your life is in His hands alone, no matter if people are merely annoyed with you, or they have hardened their hearts toward you. Not only that, Colossians says He actually is your life!

So, talk about this good news. Rehearse it to yourself. Repeat it to other believers (they need to be reminded and encouraged)! Relay it to unbelievers. Prepare for the opportunity in opposition to shine the light of God’s grace and mercy to the dark and desperate world. Sometimes the good news will sound like a rebuke, or an urgent plea for faithfulness, or a refusal to approve of sin. Coupled with patience and a heart to teach, though, it will give life. So speak it. Often. And if, by chance you find yourself on the spectrum of opposition, reject it, and believe good news instead. Come back home. He is life and His words through His servants will give life. Believe it, speak it, repeat it, no matter what opposition comes. Jesus is life.

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Questions from Garrett:

- 1) Have you ever experienced the type of opposition that Timothy has? How did you respond?
- 2) How do you prepare for opposition similar to the type Timothy experienced?

NOTES

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CONCLUSION

We asked an array of different people the question:

“What are 5 books every college student should read before they graduate?”

Here are some of the results:

Top 5 (by frequency of suggestion):

- 1) *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis**
- 2) *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer**
- 3) *A Praying Life* by Paul Miller**
- 4) *The Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tower**
- 5) *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman**

This is only the tip of the iceberg. We received a total of 126 suggested titles! So, if you are looking for a book about a certain topic or you want the whole list, feel free to contact TylerB@perimeter.org



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