**Community Group Discussion Guide
2 Timothy 1:1-18**

*Read 2 Timothy 1:1-18*

*Set the Context…*

**Context:** Paul’s second letter to Timothy is probably the most personal of all his letters. With Paul writing from behind prison bars (2 Tim. 1:8) and nearing the end of his life (4:6-8), he seeks to inspire and instruct Timothy to carry out the work that he has already begun. Paul is entrusting his apostolic ministry to the next generation. This is a pivotal mark in the church’s history, as Paul’s work will be tested by how well his disciples can carry on what he has begun. This epistle is very much about legacy and passing on the torch of ministry through discipleship.
 The letter ranges in topics, covering instructions, warnings, truths, and even personal information. With so much entailed in the letter, it seems that Paul is ensuring he leaves nothing undisclosed to his dearest disciple. Second, the letter to Timothy is Paul’s last words to his spiritual son, and like any father handing down the family business, he wants to exhaust any advice that will be helpful to the fruitfulness of his ministry.

**Commentary:** Paul begins with his common greeting, “***Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God…To Timothy…Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord***” (2 Tim. 1:1-2). What stands out in this greeting among others is Paul’s title for Timothy, “***my beloved child***”. In this, Paul models an ideal affection Christians should have for those they disciple. To Paul, discipleship is not a personal improvement project, but rather a family bond that seeks to bear one another’s burdens to be conformed to the image of Christ.
 Flowing from his greeting, Paul reminds Timothy of God’s grace in both of their lives, how it is a blessing that they know and pray for one another (1:3-4), and that God provided a mother and grandmother who fear the Lord for Timothy to be raised by (1:5). With God’s gracious providence saturating Timothy’s life, Paul instructs Timothy to, “***fan into the flame the gift of God…for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power love and self-control***” (1:6-7). This is the idea of stirring up and using the gift that God placed deep inside Timothy. Sometimes it takes someone else seeing potential and calling it out of us before we really begin to do what God has called us to do. These instructions lay the foundation for Timothy’s call and work of ministry. Instead of relying on men or resources for his ministry, Paul urges Timothy to look to the Lord for guidance and encouragement. The work of ministry is then a dependance on the Lord’s grace and power. It is this power that Timothy should rely on as he succeeds Paul’s ministry.
 In a similar manner, Timothy must “***not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord…but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God***” (1:8). Inherently, this tells us that ministry is hard, and that, as sheep in the midst of wolves, we should expect hostility from the world. But we are called to be unashamed and to do the work of the Lord anyway. In order to persevere through this suffering, Paul reminds Timothy that their calling to ministry is not about their preferences or skills, but solely fixed on the grace of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus (1:9), who by his death and resurrection “***abolished death and brought life and immortality to light***” (1:10). It is then with this good news that Paul was entrusted to be a steward, even enduring suffering, and external shame for its sake. To Paul, the gospel message is “***the good deposit***” (1:14), and he wants to ensure Timothy is prepared and willing to guard it by any means necessary.
 Concluding the first chapter, Paul makes Timothy aware of the people he will experience in ministry. Some are like Phygelus and Hermogenes, who abandoned him in Asia (1:15). Walking in the will of God by gospel ministry can, at times, be lonely. Others are like Onesiphorus, who often refreshed Paul while he was imprisoned (1:16-17). Few things make us long for community like being on mission for Jesus; good friends of a common faith can be the grace we need to persevere. It can be assumed that Paul wants Timothy to look for partners in ministry like Onesiphorus—men who are not ashamed of the gospel and vessels of mercy and grace.

*Share main truths of the passage along with verses that teach them and discuss how to apply to our daily lives …*

**Main Points:**

* The Greeting (2 Tim. 1:1-2)
* Paul’s exhortation to Timothy (2 Tim. 1: 3-14)
* Antagonists and protagonists in gospel ministry (2 Tim. 1:15-18)

**Discussion/Application Questions:**

2 Timothy 1:1-2

1. Paul considers his disciple, Timothy, his spiritual child. How does this inform the way you think about a discipleship relationship? How can you grow in becoming an intentional disciple maker?
2. Is there anyone you have shared a Paul and Timothy relationship with? If so, how has it transformed your Christian walk?
3. At this moment, who is God calling you to invest in a discipleship relationship with?

2 Timothy 1:3-14

1. Who is a Christian in your life that you have shed tears with? How did this experience impact your Christian walk?
2. All Christians have been uniquely gifted by God. What are some gifts you have recognized in your own life, and how you can you “fan [them] into flame”?
3. Are there people in this group that you have noticed a gift in that you could encourage?
4. “God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power”. How does this truth give you courage to engage the lost world with the gospel?
5. Who is one person you can share the gospel with this week?
6. Paull tells Timothy that God has called us to a “holy calling”. In your life, who is an example of living a “holy” life? What stood out about this person’s life?
7. Paul tells us, “[God] saved us…not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace”. How does this truth humble you and bring you to appreciate God’s work in Christ?

2 Timothy 1:15-18

1. In your walk with Christ, what are some ways that you have faced opposition from unbelievers and how did you react?
2. How can the grace of God help empower Christians to overcome opposition to the gospel message?
3. This passage reminds us that real friends are so essential when on mission. Who are your real friends? How do they help you stay on mission?
4. Who are you being a “real friend” to? How are you helping someone else stay on mission?
5. Paul thanks Onesiphorus for his assistance while in prison. How can we be of assistance and encouragement to our pastors and staff at Highview? How can we be encouragement to those serving on the mission field?

*Share a key take away or challenge for the week…*

*Pray together in light of 1 Timothy 2:1-18…*

**Prayer Guide:**

Pray for our church that we would continue to cultivate an environment of love and affection for one another. May we aspire to build relationships like Paul and Timothy, who considered themselves to be family. May we also seek to love the lost world, for even though they are not brothers and sisters, they need to experience the love of Christ and the gospel message.

Pray for our city that those who might oppose the gospel message or seek to make it hard for the church to do mission would have their hearts softened. Pray for the conversion of our neighbors, friends, and co-workers.

Pray for our world that missionaries on the field would find true community and friendship. Pray that people from our church and others around the world would have their gifts called out of them and be inspired to take the gospel to every nation tribe and tongue. Pray for those ministering in persecuted countries to be unashamed of the gospel and be protected by God’s mighty hand to serve him.