**Sermon Based Community Group Leader Guide**

**2 Timothy 3**

**\* Read 2 Timothy 3. Open in Prayer.**

**\* Sermon Overview**

In this sermon, Pastor Aaron will call us to continue in knowing and following Jesus by avoiding false teachers and continuing in the gospel by remembering Paul’s example and obeying Christ’s Word. In particular, he will focus on the eight things Paul mentioned in verses 10-11, reflecting on how these eight things lead us to know and follow Jesus. Finally, he will highlight how godly women (specifically, Timothy’s mother and grandmother; also, note how these two women stand in contrast to the weak women in verses 6-7) played a role in passing on the gospel in the Scriptures.

**\* Prompt Questions**

1. Was there anything that stood out to you in the pastor’s sermon? Are there any clarifying questions that you may have regarding the sermon?

2. How have you been seeking to apply the sermon in your own life this week? Or, what is one way that you can apply the sermon to your life this week?

3. What was the take away from the sermon for you? If you had to sum up the main idea of the sermon in one sentence, what would it be? What main themes do you see in the text and did you hear in the sermon?

4. How have you seen God at work this week in your life and in the lives of those around you? How has God been working in you this week through His Word, through prayer, through the body of Christ, and through service/evangelism? What were the highlights and lowlights of your week? How can we be praying for you specifically?

**\* Observation/Interpretation Questions[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Note: Please do not feel compelled to get through every one of these questions. I have given them in hopes that they will drive us back to the text so that we may diligently search the Scriptures as the Bereans did (Acts 17:10-15). These questions will give us a grasp of what the text says/means so that we can apply the text to our lives. I would encourage you to spend the majority of your time on application questions so that we can become “doers of the Word and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

**1. What is the context of 2 Timothy 3?**

*In his last letter, Paul writes to Timothy to encourage him to remain steadfast in knowing and following Jesus. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul begins by instructing Timothy to avoid false teachers (verses 1-9). After describing the character and the actions of the false teachers (verses 1-9), Paul turns to encourage Timothy to continue in the gospel (verses 10-17). Timothy will continue in the gospel (1) by following Paul’s example (verses 10-11) and his mother’s and grandmother’s example (verses 14-15; see 2 Timothy 1:5) and (2) by obeying God’s Word (verses 12-17). Through these means, Timothy will remain steadfast as a man of God who leads others to know and follow Jesus.*

*Note that 2 Timothy is written by Paul near the end of his life as he is in prison in Rome. In this letter, he encourages Timothy to guard the gospel, pass on the gospel, continue in the gospel, suffer for the gospel, and proclaim the gospel. Paul is deeply concerned for the truth of the gospel, and he encourages Timothy to stand firm in the gospel in opposition to the false teachers of his day.*

*As you read this passage, note the following themes: (1) the powerlessness of the false teachers teaching and the folly of their lives/ministry; (2) the call to imitate Paul as he follows Christ; (3) the suffering/persecution that marks the godly life; (4) the influence of a godly mother and grandmother; (5) the authority, power, and sufficiency of God’s Word.*

**2. What is going on in 2 Timothy 3:1-9?**

*In 2 Timothy 3:1-9, Paul continues to encourage Timothy to stand firm in the gospel against the false teachers of his day. One way that he does this is by describing the ungodly character of the false teachers (verses 2-4), the powerlessness of the false teachers (verse 5), and the satanic actions of the false teachers (verses 6-9). Along with describing the teaching and lifestyle of the false teachers, Paul leaves Timothy with a command and a promise. The command is to avoid such people, which is done by excommunicating the false teachers from the church (verse 5). The promise is that the false teachers will be expose (verse 9; note that in verse 11 the Lord rescues Paul in contrast to the Lord exposing false teachers).*

*Note that the “last Days” (verse 1) equals the time between Christ’s ascension and Christ’s return. Also, note that in verses 2-4 Paul lists 19 descriptors of the teaching and conduct of the false teachers. In short, the false teachers neither love God nor their neighbors. Finally, note that verse 9 can serve as a promise to Timothy. Just as God was victorious over Jannes and Jambres (note that these are the names of the magicians in Exodus 7:8-13 who opposed Moses; they stand as symbols of those who oppose the truth of God) and Christ was victorious over sin and death, Timothy, in Christ, will be victorious over these false teachers.*

*For similar lists of evil deeds in verses 2-5, see 1 Timothy 1:8-11; Matthew 15:17-20; Romans 1:29-31; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 1 Peter 4:3-4; Revelation 21:8; 22:15.*

*As you read this passage, what false teaching do you see in our day? Why is it important that our teaching and conduct complement rather than contradict each other? What does it look like to avoid false teachers (put another way, what would the process of disciplining a false teacher in our midst look like)? How might the promise in verse 9 that false teachers will be exposed be an encouragement for Timothy to continue in the gospel?*

*In an effort to summarize verses 2-9, Tony Merida makes the following observations about the false teachers: (1) Their lives are totally self-centered; (2) their religion is a show; (3) their proselytizing is evil. Tony Merida writes, “The self-centered people described in these verses first had misdirected love….In addition to these misdirected loves, these self-centered people have corrupt relationships….Seen together, these two groups of sins, misdirected loves and corrupt relationships, reveal that the underlying failure in fallen humanity is disobedience to the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40): they love neither God nor people.” He continues, “To summarize 3:1-9, Timothy and others were to avoid these men and these practices. They must avoid self-centered lives with misdirected loves and corrupt relationships, religious forms devoid of Christ’s power, and the evil tactics of false teachers. There is a better way, and Paul describes it in the following verses.”*

*John Stott writes, “Only the gospel offers a radical solution to this problem. For only the gospel promises a new birth or new creation, which involves being turned inside-out, from self to unself, a reorientation of mind and conduct, and which makes us fundamentally God-centered instead of self-centered. Then, when God is first and self is last, we love the world God loves and seek to give and serve like him.”*

**3. What is going on in 2 Timothy 3:10-13?**

*In 2 Timothy 3:10-13, Paul encourages Timothy to continue in the gospel by following his example. As for what Timothy might imitate, Paul notes eight areas: my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings (with persecutions and sufferings counting as one area). From Timothy’s earliest moments of knowing Paul (in Acts 13-14), he has seen Paul demonstrate the power of godliness in his teaching and conduct.*

*Note that the sufferings and persecutions mentioned in verse 11 are from Paul’s first missionary journey (see Acts 13-14), which is where Paul first met Timothy (a resident of Lystra). On this first missionary journey, Paul was drove out of Antioch and Iconium and was left for dead in Lystra after being stoned. Thus, Timothy’s first encounter with Paul would have been one of seeing Paul endure persecution and suffering for what he believed, yet he continued on in the gospel, trusting in the Lord who rescued him (see Psalm 34:19; 2 Timothy 3:11-13; 4:18). For passages on suffering as a way/expectation of life for believers, see Matthew 16:24; John 15:18-21; 16:33; Acts 14:21-22; Philippians 1:29.*

*For other passages that call for imitation, see 1 Corinthians 4:15-17; 10:32-11:1; Philippians 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9.*

*As you think about these verses, take time to reflect on the eight areas that Paul mentioned in verses 10-11. How do you see each of those played out in the life of Paul? How might we reflect Christ in those eight areas in our own lives? How might we help one another reflect Christ in these eight areas? How is it that God uses the persecutions and sufferings of saints to advance the gospel?*

**4. What is going on in 2 Timothy 3:14-17?**

*In 2 Timothy 3:14-17, Paul commands Timothy to continue in the gospel by following Paul’s example and obeying Christ’s Word (which he’d been taught from an early age by his mother and grandmother). In this passage, Paul reminds us of the origin/nature and the power/purpose of God’s Word. First, Paul notes that all Scripture is God-breathed, which means that all Scripture is God’s Word. Since what Scripture says, God says, it claims an authority in our lives. Second, Paul notes that since Scripture is God’s Word it is profitable for salvation, instruction, and transformation. Scripture is profitable for salvation because it reveals the gospel; Scripture is profitable for instruction because it instructs us in all things that pertains to life and godliness (thus, Scripture is sufficient); Scripture is profitable for transformation because it is the God-designed means for transforming/equipping us to do good works.*

*For passages pointing to the New Testament as Scripture, see 1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 3:15-16; Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 2:17; 13:3; Galatians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.*

*As you dwell on these verses, ask the following questions: What do you believe about God’s Word? How have you been obedient to read/hear/study/memorize/meditate/apply God’s Word this week in your own life? How can we encourage one another to continue in the gospel by encouraging one another with the Word? If we believe that God’s Word is authoritative and sufficient, how should that impact our day-to-day lives?*

*ESV Study Bible: “Whereas it seems that Paul and Timothy’s opponents stressed certain aspects or portions of Scripture (for example, genealogies, see* [*1 Timothy 1:4*](https://www.esv.org/1%2BTimothy%2B1%3A4/)*;*[*Titus 3:9*](https://www.esv.org/Titus%2B3%3A9/)*), Paul stresses the authoritativeness of all of Scripture. The divine origin of Scripture is the reason for its power to convert (*[*2 Timothy 3:15*](https://www.esv.org/2%2BTimothy%2B3%3A15/)*) and its usefulness in training (*[*2 Timothy 3:17*](https://www.esv.org/2%2BTimothy%2B3%3A17/)*). Because Scripture comes from God himself, ‘all’ of it is profitable in a range of ways, ultimately leading to****righteousness****.”*

*Tony Merida writes, “The Bible shapes our beliefs as well as our lifestyle. It relates to both doctrine and conduct, and it is totally sufficient to shape us into the image of Christ by the power of the Spirit.”*

*R. Kent Hughes writes, “The Scriptures were life to Moses and food to Jesus. They cannot and must not be anything less to us. They are the very breath of God. They are our breath, our life, our food. Because Scripture is all of this, we too can continue on in the gospel.”*

*John Stott writes, “The whole Bible unfolds the divine scheme of salvation—man’s creation in God’s image, his fall through disobedience into sin and under judgment, God’s continuing love for him in spite of his rebellion, God’s eternal plan to save him through his covenant of grace with a chosen people, culminating in Christ; the coming of Christ as the Savior, who died to bear man’s sin, was raised from death, was exalted to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit; and man’s rescue first from guilt and alienation, then from bondage, and finally from mortality in his progressive experience of the liberty of God’s children.” He continues, “So, since the Bible is a book of salvation, and since salvation is through Christ, the bible focuses its attention upon Christ. The Old Testament foretells and foreshadows him in many and various ways; the Gospels tell the story of his birth and life, his words and works, his death and resurrection; the Acts describe what he continued to do and teach through his chosen apostles, especially in spreading the gospel and establishing the church from Jerusalem to Rome; the Epistles display the full glory of his person and work, and apply it to the life of the Christian and the church; while the Revelation depicts Christ sharing the throne of God now and coming soon to consummate his salvation and judgment. This comprehensive portraiture of Jesus Christ is intended to elicit our ‘faith’ in him, in order that by faith we may be saved.”*

**\* Application Questions**

Note: Please do not feel compelled to use every question, for you will have time for 3 to 5 questions. I’ve tried to offer enough for you to pick the ones you think will best fit your group, as you know what your ladies or men are going through at this time and may need to hear. Also, please note that these questions might be adjusted to reflect what the pastor calls us to do in application of the sermon.

1. How do we avoid the type of false teachers that Paul describes in verses 2-5? Do you see or know of professing believers who these verses describe? If we see or know of such people within our own church family, how ought we to respond?

2. As you think of the phrase “having the appearance of godliness but denying its power,” what other biblical figures come to mind? In our own lives, how do we cultivate the power of godliness?

3. In verses 6-7, Paul portrays the dangerous actions of false teachers (wolves in sheep clothing). How can we guard one another from being captured by false teachers? Also, in verses 6-7, Paul describes the condition of the weak women. In our own day, how can we faithfully help believers in Christ who are wrestling with sin and struggling with immaturity?

4. In verses 8-9, Paul notes that false teachers oppose the truth and that false teachers will be exposed. How might this passage serve as a warning to false teachers and a promise to believers who remain steadfast? (Note the contrast between Paul and the false teachers—the Lord rescues Paul but the Lord exposes false teachers)

5. In verses 10-11, Paul lists eight areas of his life and ministry in which Timothy has sought to imitate Paul as Paul followed Christ. As you think about these eight, which stands out to you? How might we pursue growth in these eight things?

6. In verses 11-13, Paul notes that the believer will face persecutions and suffering (see John 15:18-21; 16:33). In the midst of persecution and suffering, what must we remember? Why is it that persecution and suffering mark the life of a godly person? How has your faith been strengthened as you watched a godly saint endure persecution and suffering?

7. In verses 14-15, Paul highlights the influence of Timothy’s grandmother and mother in teaching him the faith (see 2 Timothy 1:5). In your own life, how has the influence of a godly woman encouraged you to know and follow Jesus?

8. In verses 16-17, Paul highlights the authority, power, and sufficiency of God’s Word. What role does the Word of God play in your life? In this last week, how has God’s Spirit pressed upon your heart and mind a passage from God’s Word to transform you into the image of Christ? In this last week, how have you seen the sufficiency of God’s Word in helping you to be competent and equipped for every good work?

9. As you look at this passage, how does it call us to obedience and an others-focused mentality? Remember, Pastor Aaron is challenging us to be about obedience and others in 2018.

10. Here are some good questions to reflect on and act on this week (these were passed along to me by Pastor Aaron and Dr. David Jones):

 A. What do you take as the main theme from this sermon?

 B. What have you learned today about Jesus’ character that has affected you daily?

 C. Do you have any clarifying questions concerning the sermon?

 D. What did the Holy Spirit convict you of because of His Word today?

 E. Will you ask forgiveness and what will you change?

 F. Will you be willing this week to pass on to someone else what you’re learning about Jesus? How will you be intentional this week to do so?

11. In his book, Asking the Right Questions, Matthew Harmon gives the following instructions/questions for understanding and applying the Bible:

 A. Understanding the Bible

 1. What do we learn about God?

 a. Look for God’s character (who he is, what he is like).

 b. Look for God’s conduct (what he is doing).

 c. Look for God’s concerns (what things, events, people, he is concerned about).

 2. What do we learn about people?

 a. Look for aspects of what it means to be created in God’s image.

 b. Look for the fallen condition.

 c. Look for how God’s people should live.

 3. What do we learn about relating to God?

 a. Look for things to praise and thank God for.

 b. Look for sin to confess and repent.

 c. Look for promises and truths to believe.

 4. What do we learn about relating to others?

 a. Look for how we should interact with and treat others.

 b. Look for ways to pursue reconciliation with others.

 c. Look for specific ways to love, serve, and care for others.

 B. Applying the Bible

 1. What does God want me to think/understand?

 2. What does God want me to believe?

 3. What does God want me to desire?

 4. What does God want me to do?

**\* Sermon Take Away**

Continue in the gospel by following Paul’s example and obeying Christ’s Word.

**\* Bible Reading Plan**

1. Monday—Titus 1; Ecclesiastes 9

2. Tuesday—Titus 2; Ecclesiastes 10

3. Wednesday—Titus 3; Ecclesiastes 11

4. Thursday—Philemon; Ecclesiastes 12

5. Friday—Hebrews 1; Song of Solomon 1

6. Saturday—Hebrews 2; Song of Solomon 2

7. Sunday—Hebrews 3; Song of Solomon 3

* **Unhindered Series (Part 2)**

1. May 20th—Acts 25-26

2. May 27th (Memorial Day Weekend)—Acts 27:1-44

3 June 3rd—Acts 28:1-31

* **Ten Commandments Series**

1. June 10th—1st Commandment

2. June 17th—2nd Commandment

3. June 24th—3rd Commandment

4. July 1st—4th Commandment

5. July 8th—5th Commandment

6. July 15th—6th Commandment

7. July 22nd—7th Commandment

8. July 29th—8th Commandment

9. August 5th—9th Commandment

10. August 12th—10th Commandment

* **Vision Series/Journey of Discipleship Series**

1. August 19th—TBD

2. August 26th—TBD

3. September 2nd—TBD

* **Gospel of Mark Series**

1. September 9th—Mark 1

2. September 16th—Mark 2

3. September 23rd—Mark 3

4. September 30th—Mark 4

5. October 7th—Mark 5

6. October 14th—Mark 6

7. October 21st—Mark 7

8. October 28th—Mark 8

9. November 4th—Mark 9

10. November 11th—Mark 10

11. November 18th—Mark 11

12. November 25th—Mark 12

13. December 2nd—Mark 13

14. December 9th—Mark 14

15. December 16th—Mark 15

16. December 30th—Mark 16

* **Stand Alone Sermons**

1. December 23rd—Christmas Message (Passage TBD)

2. December 24th—Christmas Message (Passage TBD)

1. For this discussion guide, I used the following resources: Philip Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*; R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chappell, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*; John Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy*; David Platt, Danny Akin, and Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*; *ESV Study Bible*; *NIV Zondervan Study Bible.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)