

LESSON 1
SERVICE WITH A SMILE
2 TIMOTHY 1:1—2:26



1 Describe what you would consider to be superior service in a restaurant.

2 What do you appreciate most about those who provide good service?



Read the two-page Introduction to 2 Timothy, 2 Timothy 1:1—2:26, and the following notes:

☐ 1:6 ☐ 1:6, 7 ☐ 1:7 ☐ 2:3–7 ☐ 2:15 ☐ 2:16 ☐ 2:20, 21

3 How is the main message of this letter different from that of 1 Timothy?

4 How would you describe the relationship between Paul and Timothy? With whom do you have a similar relationship?

5 How can you make yourself “ready for the Master to use you for every good work” (2:21)?

In these two chapters, Paul describes many of the characteristics of the servant who wins God’s approval. A servant performs what is expected of him or her. A servant who earns special approval is faithful and serves well. Not only does this servant render superior service when asked, but this servant prepares him or herself so that he or she is always ready to do the best job for the master. Paul’s practical advice instructs anyone who wants to learn to serve God well: be strong with the special favor God gives you (2:1), endure suffering (2:3), remember Christ’s incarnation and resurrection (2:8), correctly explain the word of truth (2:15), avoid godless, foolish discussions (2:16), keep yourself pure (2:21), follow anything that makes you want to do right (2:22), and do not quarrel (2:24), to mention a few. These guidelines are practical, yet provocative. They take a lifetime to master, yet we can practice almost any of them any day. These serve as practical guidelines for all who one day want to hear the words “Well done, my good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21).



6 Why is it important to learn to endure suffering in Christian service?

7 How are excellent employees in a service business similar to faithful servants of God? Why is this a helpful illustration for us?

8 What is your motivation for Christian service?



9 What excites you most about the opportunity to serve God and others?

10 What bothers you most about the idea of lifelong, faithful Christian service?

11 List all of Paul's directives in these two chapters that are meaningful and helpful to you in learning how to be a better servant of God:

Verse	What Paul said	Why it is important for me

12 Which of these directives is most difficult for you to carry out? Which most urgently needs your attention and prayer?

13 What hinders your faithful Christian service?

14 Take the list in question 11 and turn it into a one-week training program for yourself. What can you do this week to better prepare yourself for God's service (for example, read books, make appointments, etc.)?



A Second Timothy was the last book in the New Testament that Paul wrote. Why is this fact important to us?

B What did Paul mean when he said he was an apostle by God's will? How does God affect your purpose in life?

C What is the "grace, mercy, and peace" that comes from God (1:2)?

D How can God help us overcome our fear of people?

E What is significant about the fact that we have done nothing to earn salvation? Why is it impossible for us to earn salvation?

F What is the difference between a herald, an apostle, and a teacher? How would you describe your special role in the Christian ministry?

G How can we learn to "be strong with the special favor God gives" us in Christ Jesus (2:1)?

H Why do you think 2 Timothy 2:2 is used to teach the discipleship process? Who are you discipling?

I In this day and age, how can we learn to endure suffering? How are a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer similar? Why did Paul use these examples?

J What is the distinction between fighting over words and making important distinctions? How do we avoid these kinds of arguments?

K How do we correctly explain the word of truth? How do some misrepresent it?

L How do we learn to teach others gently? What sensitivities and skills does this task require?

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