

Mentored for the Mission

BY ALAN HUESING

Read Acts 16:1-5, 1 Timothy 1 and 2 Timothy 1.

What do we know about Timothy's family? _____

How did he become a Christian? _____

How was Timothy involved in Paul's second missionary journey? (Acts 15:36-18:22)

Paul was a missionary who not only won people to faith in Christ but also disciplined them to become mature believers. He was truly a Great Commission Christian who made disciples (not just converts) of all nations, baptized them into the fellowship of the church, and taught them all he had been commanded. Paul was a powerful and effective advocate of the mission, serving as mentor to dozens of Christians as they grew in faith and shared the gospel with others. His worldwide network of *on mission* friends and associates was truly incredible. In the last chapter of Romans, Paul sent greetings by name to 27 of his fellow workers and friends in a church he had *never* personally visited. Read the words of advice he wrote to them in Romans 16:17-19. He encouraged them by writing that God "will soon crush Satan under your feet." Then he signed the letter with the eight friends who were working with him at the time.

One of those friends and co-workers was a young man named Timothy. He had been one of Paul's many protégés ever since the missionary first met him in his hometown of Lystra where he lived with his mother and grandmother, both Jewish believers, and his Greek non-Christian father. Luke wrote that the Christians at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy, and Paul wanted to take him on as a team member (Acts 16:2-3). Timothy became one of Paul's closest companions and partners, traveling with him throughout Asia Minor and Europe. Later, Paul sent him to serve the churches in Ephesus, Thessalonica and Corinth. It was Timothy who Paul sent for in his final days as a prisoner in Rome. He assisted Paul in maintaining, teaching and serving the network of believers by joining him as he wrote several of his letters, now part of our Bible.

God had blessed Timothy with a godly grandmother and mother who shared their faith and instilled it in him (2 Timothy 1:5). Because of their efforts to teach their son, he was ready and useful to the great missionary when he passed through Lystra. Timothy was willing to meet whatever requirements necessary to serve under the tutelage of Paul for a lifetime. What a privilege to be mentored by someone God would use to evangelize the world and write half the books of the New Testament!

The blessings of the Paul-Timothy partnership were mutual. Paul loved Timothy as his "true son in the gospel" (1 Timothy 1:2). He constantly prayed for him,

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"I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you ..."
(2 TIMOTHY 1:6, NIV).

missed him when he wasn't around, and wrote letters full of advice to help him out. Paul knew Timothy would multiply the scope of his ministry because he would outlive and out-travel him. In his last letter, written from a jail cell in Rome, Paul encouraged Timothy to carefully select trustworthy men to whom he could pass on the powerful legacy and instruction he had received. These men would then faithfully pass on this training to others.

List nine pieces of advice, experience and instruction Paul gave Timothy through his letters:

1 Timothy 1:12-17 _____

1 Timothy 2:1-2 _____

1 Timothy 4:12 _____

1 Timothy 5:1-2 _____

1 Timothy 6:6-10 _____

2 Timothy 1:6-8 _____

2 Timothy 2:2 _____

2 Timothy 2:15 _____

2 Timothy 2:22 _____

How do you think Paul would have described Timothy? _____

How do you think Timothy would have described Paul? _____

It's been said that every Christian should have a mentor and every Christian should be a mentor. Paul was mentored by Gamaliel, Barnabas and others. Then he mentored Timothy and dozens of other believers. Joseph mentored his stepson, Jesus, who then mentored the 12 apostles. Eli mentored Samuel, who mentored the first king of Israel. Moses served as mentor to Joshua, Elijah mentored Elisha, and the list goes on.

What family member(s) have had a dramatic positive effect on your faith? _____

Who is your mentor and partner in God's mission? _____

Who can you serve as mentor? _____