

12 Final Legacy Lessons from Saint Paul

Read Time: 4 Minutes, 25 Seconds

Paul's second letter to Timothy encapsulates his final admonitions to his top protégé. This letter reveals some of Paul's powerful and significant life secrets.

A person's final words are usually the most important before they depart this world. Consequently, we need to take the second letter of Paul to Timothy seriously because it's the apostle's final words meant to perpetuate his ministry to the next generation and beyond.

1. Paul knew he was sent by God, which meant that his faith in his purpose and calling was unshakable (2 Tim. 1; 2 Tim. 11). He called himself an apostle, which means "sent one." He framed his letter to Timothy with that description, thus reminding him that he wasn't just a professional minister. God sent Paul to be a primary voice in Timothy's life. Unfortunately, too many approach ministry as a profession instead of a calling. If it is just a profession, one is merely a hireling, not a true shepherd. To function with that divine mindset, one has to sow one's life into the gospel. One must not preserve any part of it for one's self interest.

2. Paul considered Timothy his beloved child (2 Tim. 1:2). Paul considered the church as a family of families. Consequently, he wasn't merely looking for church members, but for sons and daughters.

3. Paul lived a life of intercession for key people in his life (2 Tim. 1:4; 2 Tim. 5). He also remembered Timothy's tears. Thus, he was connected to people emotionally, not just in ministry.

4. Paul imparted spiritual gifts and knew his disciple's divine assignment (2 Tim. 1:6). Paul knew Timothy's spiritual condition and sense of purpose and calling, so he could keep reminding him of it. He commanded Timothy "...to preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke and exhort, with complete patience and teaching" and to "be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

5. Paul left a pattern of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13,14). This refers to a system of teaching doctrine that was to be a spiritual deposit for Timothy and others. They were to keep these with them to carry on the preaching ministry long after Paul was gone. Too often, pastors preach topically with excellent oratory and rhetorical skills, but do not leave a systematic way of thinking for the congregation. A by-product of this is a lack of discernment and vulnerability to heresy.

6. Paul admonished Timothy to reproduce himself in others (2 Tim. 2:2). He left Timothy with the criteria he used in picking potential disciples; people needed to be faithful and able to teach. I.e., if a person had the ability but did not prove to be faithful, they would not fit the criteria Paul used to make them a disciple.

7. Paul admonished disciples to be tough (2 Tim. 2:3-7). True biblical discipleship requires a similar mindset as being in the military or athletics. Consequently, it takes focus and perseverance. A person needs to relentlessly push themselves to go forward, even while experiencing pain and suffering.

8. Paul focused primarily on the Scriptures. Paul didn't waste his time with endless genealogies, foolish controversies and conspiracy theories. He was devoted to studying the Old Testament and writing parts of the New Testament. He said, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and is 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.”

9. Paul expected Timothy to befriend other sincere believers (2 Tim. 2:22). 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.” He also told Timothy to avoid those who “have the appearance of godliness, but deny its power” (2 Tim. 3:5). Hence, Paul admonished his disciples not to spend discretionary time with insincere people.

10. Paul modeled leadership with his life (2 Tim. 3:10; 2 Tim. 11). He reminded Timothy, “You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.”

The greatest lesson taught by a leader is the life they lead. Christianity is caught, not merely taught.

11. Paul finished his assignment well. He said, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearance.”

Thus, in his final words before his execution by Nero, Paul had no regrets. He knew he had finished the race and fought the good fight. Before Jesus died, He said, “it is finished” (John 19:30). Psalm 91 ends by telling us that with long life, God will satisfy us and show us His salvation. God wants us to die satisfied by fulfilling all He has given us to accomplish.

12. Paul knew he could not die until his assignment was finished (2 Tim. 4:17; 2 Tim. 18). As long as he was in the

will of God, Paul knew the devil could not kill him. Paul had divine protection; hence he was temporarily impervious to death until he finished the race. I.e., He testified while preaching one of his last messages, “the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion’s mouth.” This gave him the faith and patience to endure hardships, challenges, and personal suffering.

In conclusion, may we all learn from Paul’s final lessons so that we can perpetuate the faith for generations to come.
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