DEAR TIMOTHY
“Where Are Your Children?”
1 Timothy 1:1-2

Lionel Street is on the rise in the US. Cigna recently conducted a US survey of 20,000 adults regarding loneliness. Nearly half surveyed (46-47%) reported feeling alone on an intermittent to frequent basis. Forty-three percent (43%) reported frequently feeling isolated and unsatisfied in their relationships. The age group reporting the highest levels of loneliness were 18- to 22-year-olds. Social media is not a big help. Heavy social media users averaged a loneliness score of 43.5; those who never used social media scored 41.7.

According to Julianne Holt-Lunstad, PhD, professor of psychology at BYU, loneliness can contribute to poor health with risks equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Her work concluded that loneliness can be more harmful than the effects of obesity (Perspectives on Psychological Science, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2015).

With continued family disintegration and increasing challenges to romantic partnerships, many feel doomed to a life of living alone. Others feel trapped in unfulfilling groupings that are stale and unrewarding. If we struggle to find intimacy and relationship as a society, what is the solution?

C.S. Lewis wrote an insightful treatment of human relationships in a work titled The Four Loves (reprint by HarperOne, 2017). Lewis described four expressions of love that are vital for human flourishing. He based this analysis on four words for love found in classical and biblical Greek. Of all the loves, Lew- is invests considerable value in Friendship. From the Greek, “philai,” we get the word Philadelphia - the city of brotherly love. Friendship is the love of brothers, not broth- ers of kinship, but of purpose. This “philia” grows out of common conditions and en-
1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,
2 To Timothy my true son in the faith:
Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Acts 16:1-5
1 Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. 2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Philippians 2:19-23
19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:
• Underline all the words related to family in all three passages.
• Circle all the words that relate to faith, church and the gospel in all three passages.
• Draw arrows from “mother” and “father” to words that describe them in all three passages.
• Bracket the reasons for Timothy’s circumcision in Acts 16.
• Underline “genuine concern” and “proved” in Philippians 2.
• Double underline “served” in Philippians 2.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about ______________.”
1. What is the relationship of hope to salvation and discipleship (1Ti 1:1-2)?

2. From the passages cited, describe the relationship between Paul and Timothy.

3. What reputation did Timothy have before joining Paul?

4. Why would Paul lead Timothy to do something that he encouraged others not to do (Ac 16:3; Gal 5:1-12)?

5. Why did Paul think so highly of Timothy (Php 2:19-21)?

6. Why did Paul consider Timothy a “true son”?

7. Where was Timothy when Paul wrote this letter? What was Timothy doing?

8. How is spreading the Gospel enhanced with mentorships and partnerships?

9. Who do you consider to be close to you (a brother, sister, son, daughter, father or mother) in your faith? Why?

10. Is faith in Christ a personal and private matter or is it a shared experience with others? Explain.
Who are you partnering with to do the Christian
life and ministry? Who do you lead and serve to-
gether with? Who is your Timothy? Also consider,
who is your Paul? Who in your life has the permis-
sion to challenge you to greatness? Who is follo-
wing your example? Discipleship is always about follow-
ing and leading. Good leaders have been great fol-
lowers; great followers are groomed to be great lead-
ers. Who are you supporting and assisting? Who are
you preparing to take your place? Paul and Timothy
are great examples of the circle of discipleship. May
we find “true sons” and may we be good mothers
and fathers of faith.

Commentary On The Text

The two loudest voices who proclaimed the arrival
and the achievements of Jesus the Christ, the Son of
God, were none other than John the Baptist and Paul
the Apostle. Both men were zealous and extreme in
their views and speech. Both men challenged reli-
gious convention and both were arrested for publicly
speaking the truth. Both John the Baptist and Paul
were executed as martyrs for the faith at the hands of
governmental rulers.

Though they had much in common, these two
fiery torches of truth burned in decidedly different
lamps. John went to the lonely wilderness and people
came out to see his eccentricities. Paul went to the
bustling cities and sought out a hearing with a variety
of audiences. John made a prophetic spectacle of him-
self in both diet and apparel. Paul made himself “all
things to all people so that by all possible means,” he
might save some. Perhaps the greatest contrast be-
tween these two men was each man’s involvement
with people. In the New Testament, John the Baptist
had disciples (Mk 2:18) but was mostly described as
alone. Paul, in stark contrast, was almost never por-
trayed alone. Only at his last was he isolated
(2Ti4:16), but even in this state of abandonment he
called for others to join him. Unlike John with his so-
litary voice crying in the wilderness, Paul surrounded
himself with a choir of harmonizing voices that am-
plified his own influence. Paul was not a solo act; he
played with a very large band. Paul worked with peo-
ples and through people to spread the Gospel to the
far reaches of his world. Perhaps the greatest expres-
sion of this people-work comes at the end of his letter
to the Romans. Paul rolls the credits in Romans chap-
ter 16 to showcase 37 people he loved and served
alongside. Paul was not a “lone ranger.”

Paul had a few favorites in his band. One of these
“favorites” was Timothy. “Timothy was a much
younger colleague of Paul’s who had become his fre-
cquent traveling companion and close friend. Accor-
ding to Acts 6:1-3, Timothy was from Lystra, a Lycaon-
ian town in the Roman province of Galatia in south-
central Asia Minor. Paul probably met him for the
first time (ca. AD 46-48) during his first missionary
endeavor in this area (cf. Acts 13:49-14:25 and 2 Tim
3:11). It is altogether likely that he and his mother
and grandmother became converts at this time. During
Paul’s second visit in this area (ca. AD 49-50), on the
recommendation of the local believers (Acts 16:2), he
decided to take Timothy along on his travels. But be-
because Timothy was of mixed lineage (Jewish mother
and pagan father), and as so not to undermine his
mission among Diaspora Jews, he had Timothy cir-
cumcised. Thus began a lifelong relationship of mu-
tual affection (cf. Phil. 2:19-24). Paul variously calls
Timothy his “beloved and faithful son in the Lord” (1
Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:22; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2) and his
fellow worker in the gospel (Rom. 16:21; 1 Thess. 3:2;
1 Cor. 16:10; Phil. 2:22). As his son, he became Paul’s
most intimate and enduring companion, who fol-
lowed him closely (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 3:10-11; 2 Tim.
1:13; 2:2), shared his point of view (Phil. 2:20) and
could articulate his ways to the churches (1 Thess. 3:2
-3; 1 Cor. 4:17). As Paul’s fellow worker, Timothy had
been entrusted with three previous assignments to
churches to Thessalonica, ca. AD 50 (1 Thess. 3:1-10),
to Corinth, ca AD 53-54 (1 Cor. 4:16-17;16:10-11), and
to Philippi, ca AD 60-62 (Phil. 2:19-24). He also col-
loborated in six of Paul’s extant letters (1 and 2 Thessal-
nians, 2 Corinthians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippi-
ans; cf. Romans 16:12). In the present letters [1 and 2
Timothy] he is on yet another assignment, this time a
most difficult one. He has been left in Ephesus to stop
some false teachers who were in the process of undo-
ing the church as a viable Christian alternative for
that city” (Gordon Fee, Understanding the Bible Com-
mentary: 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, 1-2).

Timothy was Paul’s protégé. Paul was Timothy’s
mentor. These two succeeded with the support of
each other. The ministry and legacy of Paul would be
unthinkable without this friendship and partnership.

Paul’s discipleship of Timothy comes to comple-
tion when Timothy is separated from Paul and must
lead when Paul cannot. The greatest test of successful
discipleship occurs when the discipler exits the stage
and the disciple is forced to take the lead role. The
books of 1 and 2 Timothy present a receding Paul
instructing an ascending Timothy to lead one of the
most influential churches in the Roman Empire (1
Timothy 1:3).

Who are you partnering with to do the Christian
life and ministry? Who do you lead and serve to-
gether with? Who is your Timothy? Also consider,
who is your Paul? Who in your life has the permis-
sion to challenge you to greatness? Who is following
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ing and leading. Good leaders have been great fol-
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we find “true sons” and may we be good mothers
and fathers of faith.
Word Studies/Notes

1Ti 1:1 Hope “The special characteristic stated about Christ Jesus is that he is our ‘hope’ (elpis). Paul's apostleship to ‘all people,’ Jew and Gentile exists not only because God is Savior for all people but also because of the sure expectation Paul has for himself and for those who respond to the gospel embodied in Christ Jesus as our hope. In the NT, because elpis [hope] is based on the person and work of Christ Jesus, the word takes on a note of confident expectation, even if that expectation is not yet fully realized and is still in the future (cf. Rom. 5:2, 5; 8:24, 25; 15:4, 13; Tit. 1:2; 2:13; 3:7). Because the hope is that of the gospel (Col. 1:23) and is embodied in the one who brings the gospel, Christ Jesus (Col. 1:27, ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory’), Paul may speak of the bringer or basis of the hope of future salvation. which comes about at the return of Christ (Tit. 2:13)” (George W. Knight, New International Greek Testament Commentary, 62).

v. 2 true “Paul says not only that Timothy is a teknon [son] but also that he is a true (gnesios) child. This note is found also when Paul refers to Timothy in 1 Cor. 4:17 (‘faithful’ piston) and especially in Phil. 2:22 where of Timothy’s worth and service it is said as patri teknon sun emoi edoulēsien [‘as a father with a son, he has served together with me’]. The keynote of faithful service and proven worth is probably the significance of gnesios [true]” (Knight, 64).

v. 2 son “The apostle’s description of Timothy as my true son in the faith (gnesios means ‘genuine, sincere’) is striking of the intimate Christian relationship between two men. There was nothing spurious about Timothy’s standing in the faith. While there is no article in the Greek phrase, which could therefore be translated ‘in faith’, it is preferable to interpret the phrase as referring to the gospel. Timothy stood in the same tradition as Paul himself. The father-son relationship terminology to express master-disciple relationship was widespread in contemporary society, especially in the mysteries (cf. Dibelius-Conzelmann). It took on new meaning, however, when related to the Christian faith” (Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles, TCNT, 70).

v. 2 faith “The locus of their relationship was their shared belief in Christ. The: prepositional phrase that describes this, ‘in faith,’ is Pauline shorthand for being a Christian; here it describes the sphere in which Timothy is Paul's child. the common bond that unites them as family (cf. Titus 1:4, "in our common faith"). It is about the equivalent of the reality described by the other Pauline phrase, ‘in Christ,’ with ‘in faith’ viewing that reality from the perspective of the activity (and content) of belief” (Philip H. Towner, The Letters to Timothy and Titus, New International Commentary on the New Testament, 99-100).

Ac 16:3 circumcised “Timothy's case differs substantially from Titus's because Timothy has a Jewish mother and was raised with Jewish faith; he merely lacked circumcision. As Luke’s Paul opposes only Gentile, not Jewish, circumcision, the same may be said for the epistolary Paul (1 Cor. 7:18-19; Gal 5:6; 6:15). Further, Timothy's circumcision is here explicitly a missionary strategy, not a concession to others’ mistaken standards of salvation or holiness. Paul specifically says that he practiced Jewish customs and submitted to Jewish law to reach Jewish people (1 Cor. 9:20). It is difficult to believe that this submission to Jewish customs excluded circumcision where it was not a matter of Gentiles’ salvation, especially when Paul lists circumcision as among his own Jewish 'qualifications' (Phil. 3:5)” (Craig S. Keener, Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: Volume 3, 2303).

Other Texts to Consider

1 Corinthians 4:17 “For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.”
4 APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT
Live out your faith in loyal and compassionate partnership with other followers of Christ.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE
(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)

3 LIVING QUESTIONS
The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?
FAMILY TALK

Mary Alice began cutting my hair when I was 18. Every time I was in her chair she dropped a little God-Jesus-prayer nugget for me to consider, which for years went in one ear and out the other. When I was 26-years-old and at the end of my rope, I asked my friend Mary Alice to take me to church. Though she was wrangling infant twins at the time, she joyfully and willingly took me by the hand and ushered me into a place I had only been a handful of times in my life. I was frightened and uneasy; I was also hurting, broken and knew something was missing. She lent me her Bible and sent me to the book of John. With grace, love and peace, she and answered hard questions from a defiant unbeliever whose only experience with God was a man banging on a podium. She corrected wrong theology and put me on a path toward a Holy God that wanted a relationship with me. I remember the day God called me. I gripped her hand as a life support as I made the long walk down the aisle to profess faith in Jesus Christ. Still today, her favorite question to me is, “How’s your walk?” Chances are there’s someone that has poured into your life. Now it’s time to pass this legacy of discipleship on to our kids! Tell them your story, answer the hard questions, lead them with grace and love. We are praying for you!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Does The Bible Say?</th>
<th>What Do You Think?</th>
<th>What Do You Do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read 1 Timothy 1:1-2</td>
<td>In your own words, write what grace, mercy and peace mean?</td>
<td>Write a letter to someone who has helped you understand the Bible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1. Who is writing this letter and what do we learn about him?
2. Who is the letter written to and what do we learn about them?
3. Who gave Paul authority in his ministry?

CORE COMPETENCY: Disciple-Making

I multiply godly beliefs, qualities, and behaviors in others to encourage them to grow in Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: Proverbs 19:20

Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPix Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week. Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

I completed my Bible Study
I memorized this week’s verse
I brought my Bible to church
I brought a friend

CHILD’S NAME         GRADE         PARENT SIGNATURE
**OUR CORE COMPETENCIES**

**CENTRAL BELIEFS**

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God’s primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

**Humanity** (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God’s resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God’s promises and my secure eternity with Him.

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.

**CENTRAL PRACTICES**

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:42-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God’s purposes in my life, others’ lives, and in the world.

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God’s purposes.

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God’s purposes.

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

**CENTRAL VIRTUES**

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

**Joy** (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

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