

# Run the Race

**2 Timothy**



**6 INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDIES FOR  
SMALL GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS**

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**2 Timothy**

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*Run the Race*

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# *How to make the most of these studies*

## **1. What is an Interactive Bible Study?**

These ‘interactive’ Bible studies are a bit like a guided tour of a famous city. The studies will take you through 2 Timothy, pointing out things along the way, filling in background details, and suggesting avenues for further exploration. But there is also time for you to do some sight-seeing of your own—to wander off, have a good look for yourself, and form your own conclusions.

In other words, we have designed these studies to fall half-way between a sermon and a set of unadorned Bible study questions. We want to provide stimulation and input and point you in the right direction, while leaving you to do a lot of the exploration and discovery yourself.

We hope that these studies will stimulate lots of ‘interaction’—interaction with the Bible, with the things we’ve written, with your own current thoughts and attitudes, with other people as you discuss them, and with God as you talk to him about it all.

## **2. The format**

Each study contains sections of text to introduce, summarize, suggest and provoke. We’ve left plenty of room in the margins for you to jot comments and questions as you read. Interspersed throughout the text are three types of ‘interaction’, each with their own symbol:



### **For starters**

Questions to break the ice and get you thinking.



### **Investigate**

Questions to help you investigate key parts of the Bible.



### **Think it through**

Questions to help you think through the implications of your discoveries and write down your own thoughts and reactions.

When you come to one of these symbols, you'll know that it's time to do some work of your own.

## **3. Suggestions for Individual Study**

- Before you begin, pray that God would open your eyes to what he is saying in 2 Timothy and give you the spiritual strength to do something about it. You may be spurred to pray again at the end of the study.
- Work through the study, following the directions as you go. Write in the spaces provided.
- Resist the temptation to skip over the *Think it through* sections. It is important to think about the sections of text (rather than just accepting them as true) and to ponder the implications for your life. Writing these things down is a very valuable way to get your thoughts working.
- Take what opportunities you can to talk to others about what you've learnt.

## 4. Suggestions for Group Study

- Much of the above applies to group study as well. The studies are suitable for structured Bible study or cell groups, as well as for more informal pairs and threesomes. Get together with a friend/s and work through them at your own pace; use them as the basis for regular Bible study with your spouse. You don't need the formal structure of a 'group' to gain maximum benefit.
- It is *vital* that group members work through the study themselves *before* the group meets. The group discussion can take place comfortably in an hour (depending on how side-tracked you get!), but only if all the members have done the work and are familiar with the material.
- Spend most of the group time discussing the 'interactive' sections—*Investigate* and *Think it through*. Reading all the text together will take too long and should be unnecessary if the group members have done their preparation. You may wish to underline and read aloud particular paragraphs or sections of text that you think are important.
- The role of the group leader is to direct the course of the discussion and to try to draw the threads together at the end. This will mean a little extra preparation—underlining important sections of text to emphasize, working out which questions are worth concentrating on, and being sure of the main thrust of the study. Leaders will also probably want to work out approximately how long they'd like to spend on each part.
- We haven't included an 'answer guide' to the questions in the studies. This is a deliberate move. We want to give you a guided tour of 2 Timothy not a lecture. There is more than enough in the text we have written and the questions we have asked to point you in what we think is the right direction. The rest is up to you.

# 1

## 2 Timothy 1–4

# *When the going gets tough*

The Appalachian Trail is the longest continuous walking trail in the world. It stretches for over 3,500 km up the east coast of the United States. Walking the Appalachian Trail is virtually the equivalent of hiking from Sydney to Darwin, or from Land's End to John O'Groats three times. It's a long walk.

Each year about 2000 wide-eyed bush walkers try their hand at the Appalachian Trail. Very few make it. Half the walkers don't even make it one third of the way. One in ten of them drop out within the first week. There have been cases of people travelling half way around the world and spending a small fortune on camping equipment, only to pull out after three days of walking. They turn up, it would seem, expecting a nice stroll through the woods with the sun shining, birds singing and squirrels playing. What they get are rocks, mountain climbs, rain, hypothermia, ticks, bears and snakes. It just isn't what they expected.

As the saying goes, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going". When things get difficult, when things aren't as easy as you thought they might be—that's when you see a person's true colours. That's when you see what people are made of.

The going was tough for the Apostle Paul when he wrote 2 Timothy. It is a letter which shows us what Paul is made of, what his true colours are. And his colours are inspirational.



### **Investigate**

One of the nice things about 2 Timothy is that it isn't very long. Quickly read through the following questions; then read through the whole of 2 Timothy; and then come back and answer the questions.

1. Note down as many things as you can discover about Paul's situation when he wrote the letter.
2. How many things can you discover about Timothy?
3. Why do you think Paul is writing this letter?
4. What are some words which would describe the mood of the letter? (e.g. happy, sad, angry, etc.)
5. What sorts of topics does Paul write about?

6. Are there any words or phrases which are repeated throughout the letter?

7. Did any verses stand out to you as especially powerful? Is there one particular verse which you think captures the overall message of the letter?

## **Guard the good deposit**

As you would now appreciate after reading the letter, 2 Timothy is written at a dark time in Paul's life. He is chained up in a Roman prison (1:16-17), deserted by many (1:15, 4:16), and not expecting to live much longer (4:6-7). Against this background, he writes to Timothy to urge him to stand firm and to continue promoting the gospel. It is a stirring letter. Some of the most moving verses in the New Testament are to be found here.

For the purpose of these studies, we will be viewing 2 Timothy 1:14 as a good summary statement of the letter:

Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

The “good deposit” is a reference to the gospel (cf 1:8ff). In other words, Paul is keen for Timothy to protect and promote the message of Jesus Christ so that when Paul himself dies, the true gospel will still be circulating.

Throughout these studies, we will discover the ways and means by which Paul wishes Timothy to guard the gospel. It's in this way that 2 Timothy has great relevance to us. The gospel is still incredibly precious and it is still worth protecting!

Throughout these studies, God's Word radically shows us just how important the gospel is, and therefore just how much trouble we ought to be prepared to go to in order to safeguard it and share it. Get ready to be instructed, rebuked, corrected, trained and changed! After all, that's what God's Word is all about (2 Tim 3:16).



## Think it through

1. Imagine that you are Timothy.
  - a. How would you feel after receiving a letter like 2 Timothy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. What would you want to write back and tell Paul?
  
2. In 2 Timothy 1:14, Paul tells Timothy that “the Holy Spirit who lives in us” will help him to guard the gospel. How do you think the Spirit does this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. “I can’t relate to the Apostle Paul. He’s such a super-Christian. I only get depressed when I read his letters.” How might you respond to a comment like that?