BIBLE CONNECTIONS WITH JOSEPH

2 Timothy 1:7–8 (read in 1:3–18)

A companion study from the set Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps · Bible Connections with Joseph

> This study walks 2 Timothy 1:7–8 (read in 1:3–18) through the six steps: 1 Read It — the passage and what's around it · 2 Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening · 3 Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it · 4 Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture · 5 Come Back — put what you found into today's language · 6 Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus.
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> If it's heavy, pray about it and talk to someone you trust (or the friend who gave you this sheet). If you don't have anyone yet, a local church is a good place to ask.
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> Keep your own Bible open; this page sends you into the passage rather than printing it. It quotes the Christian Standard Bible (CSB); where you see LORD in capital letters, that is how the CSB prints God's personal name. A reference like 4:6 means chapter 4, verse 6; 'v.' means verse.

1 · Read It — the passage and what's around it

Start with your own Bible: open it and read the passage for yourself first, and this page will walk through it with you. Verse 7 is the line people quote: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment." The video this study goes with ("7 Bible Verses for Anxiety (What They Really Say)" on the Bible Connections with Joseph YouTube channel) reads it with verse 8. This page reads it the way Paul wrote it, inside one whole thought that runs from verse 3 to the end of the chapter, so read all of 2 Timothy 1:3–18 in your own Bible in one sitting before you go on.

Here is how the passage moves. In verses 3–5 Paul thanks God for Timothy, a young church leader Paul had trained: he remembers Timothy's tears, and the faith that lived first in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice and now lives in him. Verses 6–8 are the charge. Verses 9–12 tell the good news the charge is for, and why Paul himself stands firm in prison. Verses 13–14 tell Timothy what to guard and who helps him guard it. Verses 15–18 close the chapter with two pictures: the people who turned away from Paul, and the one man who kept coming back.

The verse everyone quotes sits in the middle of the charge, between two small words. Verse 7 opens with "For," so it gives the reason for verse 6, where Paul tells Timothy to "rekindle the gift of God that is in you" (v. 6). This page reads that gift as the Holy Spirit, whom every believer receives (step 4 explains another reading). Timothy was also given gifts for his work as a pastor. Those came from the Spirit too, so they belong inside the one great gift, the Spirit Himself, who gives every believer what they need for the work God gives them. You have the same gift: the Holy Spirit lives in you too. A believer is someone who trusts Jesus. If you aren't sure that's you yet, verses 9–10 show what God has done in Christ, and you can bring that question to Him in prayer and to someone you trust. The power, love, and sound judgment of verse 7 are what the Holy Spirit does in us. Verse 6 also says the gift is in Timothy "through the laying on of my hands." Laying hands on someone was how the church prayed over a person and set them apart for their work (see 1 Timothy 4:14), so Paul is pointing back to the day Timothy was set apart to serve. Then verse 8 opens with "So," which means the thought keeps going: verse 7 is also the reason for what Paul asks next.

◆ **Read verses 6–8 together as one movement. What two things does Paul ask Timothy to do in verse 8, and what does verse 7 hand him to do them with? Then trace the word "ashamed" through the whole passage: who is told not to be ashamed, who says he isn't, and who showed that he wasn't?**

2 · Cross Over — who wrote it, to whom, and what was happening

Paul is in custody when he writes this letter, most likely in Rome near the end of his life; in 4:6–8 he says his time is short. In verse 8 Paul calls himself "his prisoner": he belongs to Christ, and he is in chains for the gospel, the good news about Jesus. This imprisonment is harsher than the house arrest at the end of Acts. Verse 16 mentions his chains, and when his friend Onesiphorus came to Rome he had to search hard to find him (v. 17).

Timothy is a young leader with a congregation and a reputation, most likely at Ephesus, the main city of the Roman province of Asia, in what is now western Turkey. That is the "Asia" of verse 15. His mother was a Jewish believer and his father a Greek (Acts 16:1). The faith Paul praises in verse 5 came down to him through his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, and he had known the Scriptures since childhood (3:15). Paul doesn't say when Timothy wept (v. 4); it may have been when the two of them last parted. Now his mentor is a prisoner, and being seen with Paul costs something.

◆ **Read 2 Timothy 1:15–18. Who turned away from Paul, and who stood by him in his chains? Verse 15 says Timothy already knows this. What does that tell you about the choice in front of Timothy?**

3 · Stand in Their World — hear it the way they heard it

Now hear the passage the way Timothy heard it. It opens warmly. Before Paul asks anything of him, he tells Timothy he prays for him night and day, longs to see him, and is sure the faith of his grandmother and mother lives in him too. Verse 6 hangs on that: "Therefore." Paul starts from the faith Timothy already has, and on that ground tells him to rekindle the gift of God in him. He treats Timothy's faith as the real thing, and the gift as worth tending.

Then verse 8. "The testimony about our Lord" means telling people about Jesus. Standing near Paul costs Timothy something in front of people whose opinion matters to him. The shame Paul names is specific: being publicly tied to a man in chains, and to a message about a Savior who was put to death on a cross like a criminal. Timothy could supply the taunts himself: look what happened to your teacher, and the same is waiting for you. Fear pushes you to shrink back, and one form it takes is fear of what people will think — of being exposed, or seen as foolish.

Then the end of the chapter. Timothy knew the people in verse 15, two of them by name. He also knew Onesiphorus, who had helped Paul at Ephesus (v. 18) and then went looking for him in Rome. So Paul sets two roads in front of Timothy, both walked by people he knew: the ones who turned away when standing near Paul got costly, and the man who kept coming back, chains and all.

◆ **Paul doesn't answer that fear with a promise that the feeling will go. Read verse 8 again, then verse 12. What does Paul ask Timothy to do, even if Timothy is afraid, and what does Paul lean on himself?**

4 · Verify It — hold it up against the fullness of Scripture

Here is the reading so far: the gift of God is the Holy Spirit, given to every believer. He is a Spirit of power, love, and sound judgment, and He equips you to stand with Jesus and His people while you are afraid, relying on God's power. Hold that up against the fullness of Scripture before you trust it.

Start inside the passage. In verse 14 Paul tells Timothy to guard "the good deposit," the sound teaching entrusted to him (v. 13), through the Holy Spirit "who lives in us." That "us" reaches past Paul and Timothy: the Spirit lives in every believer (Romans 8:9).

Verse 6 is read two ways. Some readers of verse 6 take "the gift of God" narrowly, as the gifts God gave Timothy for his work as a pastor when hands were laid on him. Their reason is in verse 6 itself: the gift is in Timothy "through the laying on of my hands." In 1 Timothy 4:14 Paul reminds Timothy of a gift given to him when the elders laid their hands on him, the day he was set apart to serve. Read that way, verse 6 is about a pastor's gifts, and the "us" of verse 7 means Paul and Timothy as ministers first. The other reading, this page's, takes the gift as the Holy Spirit Himself, given to every believer. Both readings agree the gift comes from the Holy Spirit; the question is whether verse 6 speaks of Timothy alone. And both land in the same place for an anxious reader: whether it means the Spirit Himself or the gifts He gave Timothy, the power, love, and sound judgment are the Spirit's, not ours. Your part is to rekindle what God has already given and lean on it, the way you would tend a fire someone else lit.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (a 1640s summary of Bible teaching used by Reformed churches; a tool, not an authority over the Bible) echoes the broader reading, borrowing verse 6's own words for every believer: they "ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them" (chapter 16, section 3). But the reasons for reading verse 6 broadly come from Scripture itself, and there are three. First, the Spirit Himself is the greater gift, and every believer receives Him: anyone who belongs to Christ has the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9); all believers were baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13); and God has sent the Spirit of His Son into the hearts of His children (Galatians 4:6). Second, the gifts for service come from that same Spirit, who gives them to each believer as He decides (1 Corinthians 12:4–11). So Timothy's gifts for his work flow from the Spirit he already had; they sit inside the greater gift. Third, the passage itself widens out to every believer: the God who saved and called us (v. 9), and the Holy Spirit who lives in us (v. 14).

Now four passages test the reading from different sides. Romans 8:15 — Paul says the same thing to every believer in Rome: "you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the

Spirit of adoption." Psalm 56:3 — "When I am afraid, I will trust in you." Read the psalm around it: a believer who is afraid and trusting in the same breath. Matthew 8:23–27 — the disciples are afraid in the storm, Jesus speaks to their little faith, and He is in the boat with them the whole time. 1 John 4:17–18 — from 1 John, a short letter near the end of the New Testament (a different book from the Gospel of John). Read what kind of fear the writer means; verse 18 ties it to punishment. Does God's gift only carry you through fear, or does it also work on the fear itself?

Scripture answers: both. The Spirit works on the fear itself. Perfect love drives out the fear of punishment (1 John 4:18), because those who are loved by God have nothing to dread from Him. The Spirit we received is the Spirit of adoption, who makes us God's children instead of frightened slaves (Romans 8:15). David says he sought the Lord, and the Lord answered him and delivered him from all his fears (Psalm 34:4). And often the Spirit carries you through while you are still afraid. That is what verse 8 asks of Timothy: stand with Paul and share in suffering, relying on the power of God, and the verse doesn't make him wait for the fear to leave first. Psalm 56:3 says the same thing from the inside: afraid and trusting at once. Sometimes the fear eases as you go; sometimes it walks with you all the way. Either way the power is His, and He is with you in it.

One more test pushes from the other side. Scripture also commands the fear of God, so verse 7 can't mean that every fear is wrong. Proverbs says the fear of the Lord is where knowledge and wisdom begin (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10), and the New Testament carries it straight to Christians: the early churches lived in the fear of the Lord and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31), and Peter tells believers to fear God (1 Peter 2:17). The fear Paul names makes you shrink back from God's work; the fear of God is reverence, and it draws you toward Him. Reverent awe is the fear of a child before a great and good Father: it bows, it listens, and it stays close. The fear of verse 7 pulls away and goes quiet. The first is a gift to keep; the second is the one the Spirit helps you stand against.

◆ **Does the reading square with all of Scripture? If any of these sharpens it, limits it or corrects it, write how. If they do, let your reading change to fit them.**

5 · Come Back — put what you found into today's language

One word carries this verse. If you feel afraid often, hear this first: feeling afraid is not what Paul is warning against. "Fear" in verse 7 is deilia, and the Greek suggests timidity, even cowardice, and the cowardice Paul means is fear that makes you shrink back. So the verse is about what fear makes you do, rather than a promise that you'll never feel afraid.

The shrinking back is the refusal to stand, when fear makes the choice and you step away from Christ and His people. You can tremble and still stand. Paul is writing to someone who may well be afraid, and he is telling him how to go anyway.

Put together, verse 7 is a gift handed over — power, love, and sound judgment — for a job that's going to cost something. It's a verse for people who are afraid and are going to move anyway. The reason they can is

at the end of verse 8: “relying on the power of God,” not on having calmed down first. And the Spirit God gave is a Spirit of power: fear doesn’t get the last word. You can rely on Him instead of your feelings.

The rest of the passage says why that power can be trusted. It is the power of the God who has already saved you and called you, by His own purpose and grace and not by anything you did (v. 9). It is the power of Christ Jesus, “who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (v. 10), so the worst that standing with Him could cost has already been beaten. Paul shows what that does in a prisoner’s life. He suffers and is not ashamed, and he gives the reason himself: “I know whom I have believed” (v. 12). He is sure that One is able to guard what has been entrusted until that day, the day Christ appears again (see 4:8). Paul’s confidence rests on whom he trusts more than on how strong he feels; the strength is in the One you hold on to, so even a small faith holds on to a strong Savior. And you don’t keep the faith by your own grip: you guard what God entrusted to you through the Holy Spirit who lives in you (v. 14). Onesiphorus shows what that looks like in an ordinary believer’s life. He went looking for Paul, found him, and refreshed him, and he wasn’t ashamed of his chains (vv. 16–17).

◆ **Write verses 7 and 8 in one or two plain sentences of your own, the way you’d say them to a friend who has only ever been handed verse 7. Then add one sentence from verses 9–14 that tells your friend why they can rely on God’s power.**

6 · Carry It Home — what it asks of you, and how it points to Jesus

Paul began with the faith Timothy already had, and the gift he told Timothy to rekindle is the same Spirit who lives in you. So take what follows as an invitation, and start small. Is there a place where fear makes you shrink back right now, whether it’s fear of what people will think or something else? It might be a conversation you keep avoiding, a setting where speaking about Christ feels hard, or someone you keep at a distance because standing near them costs you. Often it is very ordinary: the lunch table at work when faith comes up, a family dinner, a group chat, a friend who asks what you believe, the neighbor you keep meaning to check on, or simply telling someone you will pray for them. Paul hands Timothy a reason to trust God more deeply, and it reaches that place too. Verse 8 says whose power carries you there, so you can take one small step leaning on the Spirit’s power, without waiting for the fear to go. Then think of Onesiphorus. Is there a believer near you who is paying a cost for following Jesus, someone you might seek out and refresh? It might be a coworker who gets teased for their faith, a friend whose family has gone cold since they started following Jesus, or someone sick, alone or worn out in a hard season. A visit, a meal, a text, an hour of your time: Onesiphorus simply went looking and kept coming back. If you don’t have a church family yet, start with the people already around you.

◆ **What does this passage ask of you this week? And how does it point you to Jesus? Start with whose testimony verse 8 names, and what verse 10 says He has done.**

> This study is one of eight in Bible Verses for Anxiety, Through the Six Steps. The full set: bibleconnectionswithjoseph.com/companions/anxiety-verses/

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