Setting of the Book

- Paul to Timothy, last words during 2nd Roman imprisonment 64-65 A.D.
- Paul calls on his young coworker to continue the fight of faith, even as Paul approaches the end of his own life.
- A bold, clear call for perseverance in the gospel in the midst of suffering.
- Key themes: suffering, power of gospel in Spirit, boldly use gift(s), power of Scriptures.

Review: 1 Tim 1:1-14 - Unashamed

- Exhortation to continue in faith, use gift without fear, rely on power of Spirit (1:7).
- Boldly testify of the gospel and suffer with endurance (1:8-9).
- Gospel is power of God for salvation through grace given in Christ, who destroyed death and brought life (1:9-10).
- Guard the deposit of the gospel message as a stewardship (1:12,14).
- Follow Paul’s pattern of sound doctrine, faith, and love (1:13).

Review: 1 Tim 1:15-2:13 – Endurance

- Be strong in grace (2:1) grace in Christ, raised from the dead, David (2:8)
- Pass on the message of the gospel (2:2) to others who will do the same.
- Endure suffering – (soldier, farmer, athlete) – for the salvation of others (2:10).
- Power of the Word of God “not chained.”
- Union with Christ: we died with, live with, reign with, he is faithful to us. (11-13).
PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

Principle #1: Your goal is to discern the author’s intended meaning to the original audience.
Unfortunately, most people begin their Bible study by asking, “What does this passage mean to me?” While there may be multiple possible applications to my life, there is only one meaning—the author’s intended meaning; and we must first seek this out. This involves three important steps.

1. Always start your study with prayer, asking the same God who composed Scripture through these ancient authors to give you insight to understand His intended meaning.

2. Be very careful to avoid reading your 21st century circumstances and theological issues into the text as they will skew your understanding.

3. Work diligently to see the text from the point of view of the original readers. To do this: [a] dig into the historical and cultural background using Bible dictionaries and commentaries, and [b] spend a few moments thinking about the original audience’s religious understanding by asking, “What books of the Bible did they have access to? What did they know about God? About Jesus? About salvation? Etc.”

Principle #2 - Assume a “normal” use of language. The Bible was given to us because God desired to communicate with us, not to hide Himself from us. Therefore, we should not be looking for “hidden” meanings as we study. Instead, we should use the “normal” techniques we would use to understand any piece of literature:

1. Study the grammar. Yes, most of us hated grammar in junior high, but it really is helpful for understanding Scripture! Pay attention to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. Think through any figures of speech. Observe how phrases and clauses are connected into sentences and how sentences are linked together into paragraphs.

2. Remember that chapter divisions came later. When Paul wrote Corinthians or Luke wrote the book of Acts, they wrote single, unified stories without verse or chapter divisions. These books were meant to be read just like you would read a letter or a novel. Always keep the overall story in mind as you study each passage.

Principle #3 - Let Scripture interpret Scripture. Since God is unchangingly truthful and always consistent (John 17:17; Hebrews 3:6; James 1:17), we can, and should, expect the same of His Word. This has two practical applications:

1. Check your conclusions. Always compare your conclusions with the teachings of Scripture as a whole. If you find that your interpretation of a passage contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture elsewhere, you probably need to revise your conclusions.

2. Allow clear passages to illuminate ambiguous passages. Whenever you encounter a passage that is confusing or open to multiple possible interpretations, use clearer passages of Scripture to guide you to the correct interpretation.

One last caution - remember that God revealed Scripture progressively, not all at once. Therefore, we should not be surprised by differences between how people related to and understood God at different times in the history of Scripture. For example, while Abraham needed only believe that God was faithful in order to be justified (Genesis 15:6), in the NT era, we must believe in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-7).
Inductive Bible Study

This method has been used by a wide variety of our groups over the years. If your group strongly desires to go for more depth in their Bible study, this is a good method to use. It works well if people do some work outside the group and then come ready to discuss their research.

O.I.A. stands for:

- Observe
- Interpret
- Apply

**Step 1: Observe (What do I see in the passage?)**
1. Ask and answer the **who, what, when, where, and why** questions.
2. Mark up the passage:
   a. Underline all verbs.
   b. Circle any key words or phrases.
   c. Box any connecting words (like, as, but, so that, in order that). Ask yourself how and why these words are being used.
3. Write out 2-5 observations per verse.
   a. Write out everything that you observe. Look for things that are emphasized, repeated, related, alike or unlike, and true to life. Give the passage a second look and write down anything you missed.

**Step 2: Interpret (What does the passage mean?)**
1. Record questions you have that will help you get at the meaning of the passage:
   a. Who is... The author talking about? Accomplishing the action?
   b. What is... The meaning of this word? Significance of the phrase? Implication of this statement? Meaning of this figure of speech? The author’s flow of thought and tone?
   c. Why did the author... Choose this word? Include this phrase or statement? Not include or talk about something? Connect these ideas?
2. Principles of Interpretation
   a. The goal is to discern the author’s intended meaning to the original audience:
      i. Study who the author is and the characteristics of the original audience.
      ii. Don't ask what it means to you; instead ask what it meant in its original context.
      iii. Study the surrounding verses and/or larger passages around your text to get a feel for what is going on.
   b. Study the grammar of the passage instead of looking for hidden meanings:
      i. Pay attention to nouns, verbs, adjectives to help you get at the plain meaning.
ii. Think through the figures of speech and how they contribute to the meaning.
iii. Study the words used.
c. Let Scripture interpret Scripture
   i. Compare your conclusions with the teachings of Scripture as a whole.
   ii. Allow the clear passages to illuminate the difficult passages.
   iii. Look up cross references and find other places where words and topics are used.
3. Compare multiple translations such as ESV, NIV, NET, HCSB, or NLT (*Bible Gateway is a website that can easily do this on one page*). Doing this can help give you a feel for the meaning.
4. Look up background information in a Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia (*Blue Letter Bible is a great online resource for this*).
5. Compare your findings with truths you find in commentaries.
6. Summarize the passage in a big idea statement, chart, drawing, etc.

**Step 3: Apply (How will it work in my life?)**
1. List universal principles and life lessons from the passage. These are statements of truth from your study of the meaning of the text that can be applied to any situation at any time.
2. Write out an application, stated as “**I will...**”
   a. Use the acronym SMART to clarify your objectives:
      i. Is it **Specific**? (Is it clear and unambiguous?)
      ii. Is it **Measurable**? (Can I track this?)
      iii. Is it **Attainable**? (Is this a realistic goal right now?)
      iv. Is it **Relevant**? (Does it relate to what I need in my life to obey?)
      v. Is it **Time-bound**? (How will I know when I have completed my application?)
3. Who will keep me encouraged and accountable to do what I plan to apply?
Use Words Wisely

Observation Skill: Circle Key Words or Phrases

Read the passage below, write down your observations, questions, and themes, and underline all verbs. This week we will begin to circle all of the key words or phrases. These are words or short phrases that are important theologically (like “word of truth” in 2:15) or thematically set the theme or main idea for the passage (like “approved” and “worldly and empty chatter” in 2:15,16).

2 Timothy 2:14–26

14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.”

20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. 22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. 24 The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.
THEMES
List any themes or big ideas you see in this passage. ____________________________________________

__________________________________________

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS
1) Underline in these verses the productive and destructive ways that we can use our words.

MY OBSERVATIONS
List at least one observation per verse in the space below.

14-16

17-19

20-21

22-23

24-26
Interpretation Skill: Look Up Background Information

This week’s interpretive skill greatly improves our understanding of what a passage meant to its original readers—LOOK UP BACKGROUND INFORMATION. You can find helpful insights by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary or by looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary. One of the best dictionaries is The New Bible Dictionary by Wood & Marshall. The IVP Bible Background Commentary by Craig Keener is another excellent example of a verse-by-verse background commentary.

Interpretation Questions
1) Answer any two of your own interpretive questions:

2) What does it mean to accurately handle the word of truth? (see 2 Tim 2:18, 23-25, 3:15-17)

3) Why does Paul so strongly condemn the teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus? Why is their teaching about the resurrection so dangerous (see 1 Cor 15:12-19)? (Also, look back at the interpretive skill section about looking up background information, so you can get a better idea of what is going on).
4) What is the meaning of the figurative language in verses 20-21? Describe the characteristics of honorable and dishonorable vessels.

5) Based on this passage, is it possible for a Christian to be a dishonorable vessel? If so, how?

6) Look back at the descriptions you underlined in the observation section.
   a. Is Paul talking about the form or content of our speech, or both?

   b. What are the results of using our words well? What are the consequences of using our words destructively?

**My Summary Title:**
Use your own words to create a title that communicates the main idea of this week’s passage.
This week’s application section involves the same three steps as last week’s, which we will continue to use throughout our study: reflect on your own life, list principles, and choose one to apply this week. It is often helpful when working through the second and third steps to consider the following list of questions:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?

**Reflection Question**

1) Paul tells us not only to flee from sin, but also to pursue righteousness (v. 22). Practically speaking, how can you pursue righteousness this week with your words, your actions, and your attitudes?
**List Principles**

List at least five principles from 2 Timothy 2:14-26. A principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in the passage that is relevant to your own life.

1. ______________________________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________________________

3. ______________________________________________________________________

4. ______________________________________________________________________

5. ______________________________________________________________________

**Plan of Action**

Circle the one principle above you will seek to apply this week. Now create a plan to apply this principle by answering these two questions:

- **What exactly** will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

- **Whom, other than the Lord,** will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

*End your study by returning to the Lord in prayer. Thank Him for what you have learned this week, ask Him to help you apply the principle you have chosen, and lay before Him the needs of your fellow small group members.*