

# FACTORS OF FAITHFULNESS

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS

### LESSON ONE: FAITHFUL IN BIBLE STUDY

#### 2 TIMOTHY 2:15

##### MAIN POINT

God calls us to be faithful students of the Bible. We receive Him as the saving Author of the Bible, recognize the authority of the Bible, take on serious analysis of the Bible, and respond with steadfast application of the Bible.

##### INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

- Imagine for a moment that a young friend wants to run his or her first marathon and has asked you to serve as coach and trainer. Would you accept? Why or why not?
- Even if you have no personal experience with distance running, where might you begin as you help your friend with the physical and mental preparation the race will require?

Living as Christ's followers in the world means we've been called and put to work in carrying out His mission. This responsibility demands our best devotion and effort, but we're not strong enough within ourselves. We need the strength that only the Lord can provide. Thankfully, He promised that He would freely give us His strength as we depend on Him. Today, we will be considering how we become faithful students of the Bible according to Paul's encouragement in 2 Timothy 2:15.

##### UNDERSTANDING

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

- Have a volunteer read 2 Timothy 2:15. We must begin by receiving God as the saving Author of the Bible if we want to rightly understand the Bible. Why is this the place we must begin?
- Read 1 Corinthians 2:14. How does this verse speak to the importance of beginning by receiving God as the saving Author of the Bible?

Without Jesus, we are all spiritually blind. First Corinthians 2:14 says, “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (NKJV). If you’ve only been born once, you are a natural person born into the natural world and blind to the spiritual world. You will never truly understand the Bible.

Those who have not received Jesus as Savior may read the Bible and appreciate it for its beautiful literature and historical facts. They may even appreciate the moral teachings of the Bible. But the reality is that no one can understand the deep meaning of God’s Word apart from being born again through Jesus.

**Have a volunteer read 2 Timothy 3:16.**

- How does this verse speak to God as the sovereign authority over the Bible?
- Why is it important that we believe all Scripture comes from God, not just parts of it?
- How would our faith and Christian walk be affected if we couldn’t trust the Bible completely?

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. This verse says all Scripture, not some Scripture. There’s no part of it that is not inspired. As you pick up the Bible, you read phrases like: “The word of God came unto me,” or “The Lord said,” or “God spoke,” or “Thus sayeth the Lord.” You read that repeatedly: “God said”. Either the Bible is the Word of God or it is the biggest bundle of lies the world has ever known.

- How must the Bible’s complete authority in our lives change the way we live? What needs to change for you now?

**Have a volunteer reread 2 Timothy 2:15.**

- How does this verse speak to the seriousness of understanding the Bible correctly?
- How does being a faithful student of the Bible help us to present ourselves approved to God, as this verse says?

It’s not enough to say that God is the Author of the Bible. It is not enough to say that the Bible, therefore, is absolutely authoritative. You must learn to study and analyze the Bible. We show that we value the Word of God and God Himself when we display a love for His Word and desire to understand it correctly.

## What aspects of study help us rightly understand the Word of God?

As we study, we should pay attention to context, common sense, and concentration.

First, we should read the Bible in context, seeking to understand the purpose of the writer and the audience to whom the text was originally written. We are not free to pick and choose what parts of the Bible to receive and hold onto. Instead, we must take the Word completely as it has been given to us.

Second, we should use common sense. When you read the Bible, don't check your brains at the door. Read poetry as poetry. Read prose as prose, prophecy as prophecy, promise as promise, parable as parable, and precept as precept. At times, when the Bible speaks, it uses metaphors and figures of speech. It is important to understand the type of literature being used that we might understand the message of the Scriptures.

Finally, we must use concentration. When you look at a passage of Scripture, think! Read it through. Think it clear. Write it down. Pray it in. Live it out. And pass it on.

### Have a volunteer read John 14:21.

- According to this verse, why is it important that we not only read the Bible but that we also do what it says?
- What are some important differences between *knowledge* of the Bible and *obedience* to the Bible?

If you read and study the Bible but don't apply it, it'll backfire on you. Inspiration, apart from obedience, will cause the Word of God to sour on you like food that you eat but do not digest and turn into energy. You must put these things into practice. Jesus made it clear in John 14:21 that those who love Him will not only receive the things He has said but also will put them into practice.

### APPLICATION

*Help your group members identify how the truths from 2 Timothy 2:15 apply directly to their lives.*

- How has God spoken to you today regarding the way you study the Bible? Where do your study habits need to change so that you might correctly understand His Word?

- How can our group members spur one another on to be faithful students of the Bible?
- What evidence does your life give that you love Jesus based on your obedience to His Word? What needs to change?

### **PRAYER**

Close in prayer, thanking God for His Word. Ask Him to help each member of your group receive Him as the saving Author of the Bible, recognize the authority of the Bible, take on serious analysis of the Bible, and respond with steadfast application of the Bible.