

The Pastoral Epistles

II Timothy 1:15-18 – “¹⁵You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, ¹⁷but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me— ¹⁸may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day!—and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.”

Relationships of life can be challenging. There are those who are for you, and those who forsake you. Paul categorized people into those classifications in this passage.

The first category is for those who’ve deserted Paul. At the time Paul could have used all of the friends or brothers he knew standing with him, but these abandoned him in his hour of greatest need.

Application questions: Does desertion evoke a certain feeling in your life? Have you ever been deserted?

In the context Paul is obviously making a contrast between those who’ve left him and those in the house of Onesiphorus. Because of that comparison, it seems plain that Paul would, and did feel disappointment at the falling away of the Asians. Furthermore, he mentions two individuals who iconize the indifference, Phygelus and Hermogenes. (Witness Lee categorizes what happened in Asia as _____. While this may be the case, it seems more likely that the believers of Asia have simply estranged themselves from the Apostle Paul during his imprisonment in Rome.)

The second category is for those who’ve been refreshing to Paul’s soul. These were willing to even come and visit Paul in his bondage. They were so devoted to Paul that they put forth effort to locate him in Rome. The assumption is made that they were risking their own well being by doing this.

Application questions: Does loyalty spark a certain feeling in your life? Have you ever been blessed with someone to stand by you in hardship?

The prayer of Paul is that those who have supported him through his bondage would be granted mercy. On “that day,” Paul desires mercy from God. The obvious interpretation is that this is referencing the Judgment seat of Christ. The practical interpretation is that the reference is for the day when mercy is needed, then they would receive it.

Application questions: Has there ever been a time in your life when you needed mercy? Did you notice when you received it?