

UNWAVERING

STEADFAST FAITH FOR AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD

LESSON 1

Unwavering Foundation

Scope and Sequence

New Testament Book Study – 2 Timothy

Lesson Objective

Students will understand that the foundation of the Gospel of Jesus is solid and will commit to live according to God's purpose without shame.

Sticky Statement

An unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith.

Key Verse

2 Timothy 1:8

Definitions

Ashamed: *“feeling shame, guilt, or disgrace”*

Salvation: *“deliverance from the power and effects of sin through the person and work of Jesus Christ”*

Checklist

1. A PowerPoint is available for this lesson.
2. Sand (Hook)
3. Optional video: “Sand art: A big sandcastle in Los Cristianos, Tenerife, Spain” <https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS21/29-1/> (Hook)
4. Optional video: “Two Hours in Two Minutes – High Speed Video of Sandcastle Construction” <https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS21/29-2/> (Hook)
5. Paper (Next Steps)
6. Writing utensils (Next Steps)

LESSON OVERVIEW

- I. Unwavering in our **Faith** (2 Timothy 1:1-7)
 - a. Encouragement from a **friend** (2 Timothy 1:1-6)
 - b. Gifts from **God** (2 Timothy 1:7)
 - The Spirit of **Power**
 - The Spirit of **Love**
 - The Spirit of a Sound **Mind**
- II. Unashamed of our **Foundation** (2 Timothy 1:8-11)

Ashamed: “feeling shame, guilt, or disgrace”

- a. We have **salvation**. (2 Timothy 1:9)

Salvation: “deliverance from the power and effects of sin through the person and work of Jesus Christ”

- b. Jesus was **victorious** over death. (2 Timothy 1:10)
- c. We have a **purpose**. (2 Timothy 1:11)

- III. Paul’s Unwavering **Example** (2 Timothy 1:12)

- IV. Paul’s **Challenge** to Timothy (2 Timothy 1:13-14)

An unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith.

HOOK

Teacher’s Note: Depending on your budget and space, bring a bunch of sand with you for the lesson and place it in a large container like a child’s swimming pool at the front of the teaching area. If possible, prior to teaching the lesson, build a sandcastle in the sand that you have brought. If desired, you could use the sand as part of an icebreaker or game prior to teaching. If gathering a large amount of sand is not possible, having just a small bucket of sand will help make the Hook come alive to the students. For those who can’t bring sand, a picture of a sandcastle has been included in the PowerPoint.

[Show the picture of the sandcastle or refer to the sand that you have brought.] How many of you have ever built a sandcastle? [Wait for hands or responses.] Did you build them on the beach, in a sandbox; where did you build your castle? [Allow for responses.] How many of those sandcastles are still standing today? [Wait for a response.]

Sandcastles go away, don’t they? Sandcastles will not last. For a sandcastle, not only the foundation but the entire structure is made of sand, a material made up of tiny granules that don’t stick together when dry. Eventually, the base is going to become unstable and fall apart. It is inevitable; it happens over and over again even with the most elaborate sandcastles.

Even though they don’t last, there are people who still take the time to make some incredible sandcastle art. Check out this video.

Teacher’s Note: Show one of the following sandcastle videos. The first video is only 18 seconds long, but shows an elaborate sandcastle: <https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS21/29-1/>.

The second video is 2 minutes long and shows a sandcastle being constructed: <https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS21/29-2/>.

If you don’t have access to technology, or can’t watch the video, just continue teaching with the next paragraph.

So, if you were building a sandcastle and I asked you how confident you were that it would last, what would your response be? [Allow for response.] But, if your building materials were solid and you had a concrete foundation instead of sand, then your answer would be different, wouldn’t it? If your foundation was strong and your building materials were different, there would be confidence that the foundation would be unwavering.

Let’s move from the physical to the spiritual. Don’t answer this out loud. How confident are you in your beliefs about God? Very confident? Somewhat confident? Doubtful? Skeptical? Is the foundation for your beliefs more like the sandcastle, or is it made of stronger stuff? If you had to explain your beliefs to someone, could you do it?

Your foundation for belief is important. Our beliefs determine the direction of our lives, the choices we make, and the paths we travel. If what we believe does not have a firm foundation, it is easy to abandon those beliefs. Having a wavering foundation can cause our lives to fall apart when any kind of pressure or change comes.

But there is good news! Those who believe in Jesus don’t have to waiver or wonder about their foundation. Belief in Jesus is the strongest of foundations and **an unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith**. When the pressures of life begin weighing on you, you can be unwavering because of the strong foundation you have through Jesus.

Tonight’s lesson is the first in a four-part series called (as you might have guessed) “*Unwavering*.” The subtitle is “*Steadfast Faith for an Ever-Changing World*.” The goal of this series is to help you discover the unwavering foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This first lesson will help us see that **an unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith**.

LESSON CONTENT

The four lessons in this series are actually a study from the New Testament Book of 2 Timothy. The “**book**” of 2 Timothy is actually the Apostle Paul’s second **letter** to a guy named Timothy who was the pastor at the church in the city of Ephesus. The Apostle Paul is a prime example of someone with an unwavering faith because of his unwavering foundation.

In his first letter, the Apostle Paul informed Timothy, the young pastor, as to how a church is supposed to function. You see, Paul was Timothy’s mentor; their relationship was almost like a father-son relationship. These guys seemed to be close friends, but Paul was in prison facing a grim future. This letter, 2 Timothy, was actually the last letter Paul would write. Soon after this letter was written, Paul was executed by the Roman government.

Paul endured many hardships in his life that came with following Jesus. But, despite all the hardships, his faith in Jesus Christ never wavered. He had an unwavering foundation in Jesus Christ. His life demonstrated the truth that **an unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith**.

So, at the time he was writing this letter, the Apostle Paul was facing many unknowns. Not only was he imprisoned because of his belief in Jesus, the Emperor Nero was in charge of the Roman Empire. Nero was known for being one of the most brutal Roman Emperors ever, especially toward Christians.

Paul and Timothy lived in a culture that was anti-God and anti-Jesus. While in prison with no hope of release, instead of focusing on himself, Paul concerned himself with encouraging this younger pastor who possibly would have to endure the same or worse hardships than he was facing. Paul wanted to encourage the young Timothy to have an unwavering faith.

I. Unwavering in our **Faith** (2 Timothy 1:1-7)

Since Paul knew that **an unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith** and since he wanted Timothy to know that truth, he wrote his letter to be an encouragement to Timothy.

a. Encouragement from a **friend** (2 Timothy 1:1-6)

Paul used several phrases in his letter to encourage Timothy to remain unwavering.

Teacher's Note: *If desired, instead of simply listing the next six statements, you could have the students open their Bibles to 2 Timothy 1:1-6 and search for different phrases Paul used that were encouraging. For example, you could say, "Open your Bible to 2 Timothy 1:1-6. Take a few seconds to look at those verses. Then, yell out a phrase Paul wrote that would be an encouragement to you if this letter was written specifically to you." [Allow time for the students to yell out some phrases.]*

- He told him about the "promise of life" (2 Timothy 1:1).
- He spoke of "grace, mercy, and peace" (2 Timothy 1:2).
- He reminded Timothy that he prayed for him without ceasing (2 Timothy 1:3).
- He recognized Timothy's genuine faith (2 Timothy 1:5).
- He recognized Timothy's godly heritage (2 Timothy 1:5).
- He encouraged him to stir up the gift that was already in him (2 Timothy 1:6).

How could the Apostle Paul, a man who was in prison because of his faith, say such encouraging words to Timothy? Where did this encouraging attitude come from? What was its source? *[If desired, allow for responses.]*

Paul could be encouraging because he had an unwavering foundation himself, and **an unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith**. Jesus Christ was his foundation and the source of his encouragement to Timothy. Look at those six verses again.

- The promise of faith was "in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:1).
- The grace, mercy, and peace came from God and "Christ Jesus our Lord" (2 Timothy 1:2).
- When he prayed for Timothy, it was to God (2 Timothy 1:3).
- The genuine faith in Timothy was faith in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 1:5).
- The faith of his mother and grandmother was in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 1:5).
- The gift that was in Timothy was from God (2 Timothy 1:6).

It all pointed back to an unwavering foundation of Jesus Christ. As a result of that foundation, Paul, in the midst of a situation where he could have feared, stood unwavering in his faith. As he stood firm, he highlighted several reasons why Timothy's faith could remain unwavering. He began with the gifts that God had given.

b. Gifts from God (2 Timothy 1:7)

Listen to what the Apostle Paul told Timothy. *[Read 2 Timothy 1:7.]* All believers in Jesus, including the young Timothy, have been given great gifts from God, and a spirit of fear is certainly not from God.

Paul had a lot to fear. He was in prison. He was on death row. He had every right, humanly speaking, to fear and no one would have blamed him for being afraid. Yet he chose to focus on what God **gives** in the midst of the unknowns. Instead of allowing himself to waver in the spirit of fear, Paul told Timothy that God had **given** him the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind.

- The Spirit of Power

If your faith rests on a foundation like a sandcastle, there is not much power, but there is constant fear of destruction. Our foundation is better than that. God gives power to us through the Holy Spirit who lives inside us. With His power, we are able to have confidence in the face of fear. When your faith rests on an unwavering foundation of Jesus Christ, you have no reason to fear; you have power to overcome fear by the Spirit of God inside of you!

- The Spirit of Love

God also gives us a spirit of love. Love overcomes fear. In fact, perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). When your faith rests on the unconditional love of Christ, you can stand firm, unwavering in your faith. When you know that God loves you no matter what failures you have, you never have to worry about your faith in Jesus being connected to your good works. You can rest in the assurance that you are not condemned but fully loved!

- The Spirit of a Sound Mind

The other gift God gives us is a sound mind. Having faith in Jesus Christ does not require you to “check your brain at the door.” It doesn’t require you to stop thinking for yourself or to just have faith in faith. No, God gives us a sound mind, a way to be self-disciplined, to be rational in your thinking.

This is the ability to discern the truth and have an understanding that may be beyond our years. With this sound mind, we remind ourselves that faith is the “**substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen.”

Fear is not from God, but with power, love, and a sound mind we can start to see how we can live with an unwavering faith. But there’s more that Paul wanted to tell his younger friend about being strong and unwavering. When your foundation is unwavering, there is no reason to be ashamed. **An unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith.**

II. Unashamed of our Foundation (2 Timothy 1:8-11)

Would someone be willing to read 2 Timothy 1:8 for us? *[Choose someone to read and allow time for 2 Timothy 1:8 to read.]*

What Paul said next to Timothy was based on what he wrote in 2 Timothy 1:7. Since God has not given us the spirit of fear, but He has given us the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind, we don’t have to be ashamed. *[Show the PowerPoint slide with the definition of the word “ashamed.”]* The word “**ashamed**” means *to feel shame, guilt, or disgrace*.

Let's stop for a moment and do a quick self-evaluation. Don't answer this out loud; just think to yourself. Have you ever been a little embarrassed about the fact that you are a follower of Jesus? If so, you are not alone. Evidently, the **pastor** of the church of Ephesus, the young Timothy, struggled with those feelings as well. The Apostle Paul didn't shame him; he didn't reprimand him. Paul simply pointed Timothy to the unwavering foundation of Jesus Christ and reminded him that he didn't have to be ashamed! Maybe that is the encouragement that you needed to hear tonight!

The reality is that being ashamed is just a different manifestation of fear. When we are ashamed, we are fearful of reactions that others may have toward us. To be ashamed of the message of God is to completely forget about all that He has given us. Despite the pressure that we feel from the world around us, we are to hold onto the message of God and the unwavering foundation upon which our faith is built. We don't have to be ashamed because our salvation is in Jesus Christ.

a. We have **salvation**. (2 Timothy 1:9)

Listen to 2 Timothy 1:9. *[Read 2 Timothy 1:9.]* We have salvation because of Jesus Christ. *[Show the PowerPoint slide with the definition of the word "salvation."]* When we say, "**salvation**," we mean **deliverance from the power and effects of sin through the person and work of Jesus Christ**. Salvation is by God and from God. It's nothing that we have done on our own (Ephesians 2:9). Having salvation gives us hope! It is an unwavering foundation.

God created us for a purpose, saved us for a purpose, and invites us to live for His purpose. God has had this purpose for our lives from the beginning of time. It's an unwavering purpose that has never changed. He is inviting each and every one of us to embrace it and live it. But our reason to not be ashamed doesn't stop with salvation. Listen to what else Paul tells Timothy. *[Read 2 Timothy 1:10.]* The phrase "who has abolished death and brought life" is referring to Jesus' resurrection.

b. Jesus was **victorious** over death. (2 Timothy 1:10)

Jesus' resurrection brought all who believe in Him life and immortality; we have **eternal** life because of our salvation. There is nothing eternal about a sandcastle. There is nothing **eternal** about a faith built on a foundation as flimsy as sand, but when you know that you have **eternal** life, you can rest in that unwavering truth.

We don't have to fear death because even though our earthly bodies will die one day, we can have absolute confidence that our souls will continue on forever and ever. The Apostle **Peter** echoed this truth when he wrote that the resurrection of Jesus is our "living hope" (1 Peter 1:3). This type of hope gives us a reason to live; it gives us a purpose in life. Notice how the Apostle Paul described it. *[Read 2 Timothy 1:11.]*

c. We have a **purpose**. (2 Timothy 1:11)

As Paul reminded Timothy that he, the Apostle Paul, had been called by God to be a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, this message of God saving us and Jesus being raised from the dead needs to be proclaimed to the world. The Apostle Paul, resting on the unwavering foundation of Jesus Christ, found an unwavering purpose in life. He wanted everyone, but specifically the Gentiles, to know that they too could have an unwavering faith.

You and I also have an unwavering purpose. The message of salvation through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection is our unwavering foundation and through that foundation, we find our unwavering purpose. Which one of your friends needs an unwavering foundation? Which one of your friends simply needs a reminder that the foundation of Jesus Christ is an unwavering foundation? Who needs to be reminded that **an unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith**?

Paul could have stopped there. But, like a good math teacher who likes to give you real-world examples of how you use geometry in everyday life, Paul wanted to give a real-world example of someone who had this unwavering purpose because of their unwavering foundation. To do that, he shared his own story. He gave Timothy a personal example.

III. Paul's Unwavering Example (2 Timothy 1:12)

Would someone please read 2 Timothy 1:12? *[Allow time for 2 Timothy 1:12 to be read.]*

Paul admitted that it was **because** of this Gospel message that he was suffering. Don't miss that reality! As a result of standing firm on the truth of the Gospel, Paul was experiencing difficult times. Sometimes it is easy to think that if we stand firm on the unwavering foundation of Jesus Christ, everything will be easy. No, difficulties will come. Sometimes they will come simply because of your beliefs in Jesus. But remember, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is an unwavering foundation. It isn't going anywhere. To move off of that foundation is a move toward a wavering foundation. Stay put; **an unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith.**

But despite everything the Roman government had thrown at him, Paul was resolved to not be ashamed. He had an unwavering foundation that he believed and was 100% committed to. He believed that God would hold true to His promises. He was trusting, not in himself or in what he was experiencing, but in the One who was "able to keep" him standing firm!

IV. Paul's Challenge to Timothy (2 Timothy 1:13-14)

Paul had an unwavering faith because it was built on the unwavering foundation of Jesus Christ. Nothing can destroy that foundation. Nothing can rock it. So, his words to Timothy were confident and meant to inspire confidence. Look at 2 Timothy 1:13 and 14. Someone tell us what words Paul used to help Timothy express confidence in his unwavering foundation. *[Allow for responses. Answers: "Hold fast" and "keep."]*

We too can have that same unwavering belief in our unwavering foundation of God and His promises. So, just as Paul challenged Timothy, hold fast to the truth of Jesus and keep the unwavering faith; if you are a believer in Jesus, you have an unwavering foundation, and **an unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith.**

CONNECTION

So, how confident are you in the faith? Has there been some fear in your life? Have you been ashamed to call yourself a believer because of your own doubts about the faith? Have you ever been timid when it came time to express your faith or share the Gospel with someone?

Maybe you just needed a reminder that the truth of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, is an unwavering foundation. If so, hopefully you have been encouraged to keep the faith, your foundation is unwavering.

Maybe you needed to be reminded that God has not given you the spirit of fear. One of the best things you can do is remind yourself that fear doesn't come from God. Instead, God has given you the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind.

If you are a follower of Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit inside of you. It is His power that can sustain you as a believer in Jesus. How does knowing that the Holy Spirit's power is inside you encourage you to stand firm in your faith? *[Allow for responses.]* How can the power of the Holy Spirit inside you give you confidence to share your faith? *[Allow for responses.]*

If you have the unwavering foundation of Jesus, you have the spirit of love. Have you ever feared that God would reject you or cast you out because of your failures? Have you ever allowed your failures to cause you to question your beliefs? God has given you the spirit of love! How can knowing that God loves you unconditionally help anchor you to His unwavering foundation? *[Allow for responses.]*

If you have the unwavering foundation of Jesus, God has given you a sound mind. How can you use your mind to solidify your faith in Jesus? *[Allow for responses.]*

Knowing that your foundation is strong will give you confidence in what you believe. A foundation built upon the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is unwavering, and **an unwavering foundation leads to unwavering faith.**

CHOICE

Do you have an unwavering foundation? If you have never trusted Jesus for salvation, today is a great day to do that. God is calling you to believe in Jesus. Because of His death and resurrection, you can be free from the power of sin. You can make that decision to believe in Him for salvation right now. When you do, your foundation for faith will be in Jesus, and that is an unwavering foundation.

If you already have believed in Jesus for salvation, do you have confidence in your unwavering foundation? Are you confident in the power of the Gospel? Are you confident in God's ability to keep His promises? Are you currently living without shame for His purpose and His plan for your life, or are you living for your own?

If you have been timid about your faith or have begun to waver in your beliefs about Jesus, will you ask God to help you remember that in Christ you have an unwavering foundation? Let's all bow our heads and talk to God.

If you are choosing to believe in Jesus for the first time today, you can do that by simply expressing to God what you believe in your heart about Jesus. You could say something like this:

"God, I want to have the salvation that you offer me. I believe that Jesus is my only way to have a relationship with You. I believe in what Jesus did on the cross to pay for my sin. I believe He rose again to defeat death. Save me from my sin."

If you trusted Christ today, please talk to a leader after we are done as we want to answer any questions you may have and encourage you in this step.

If you already believe but need to stop living like you are ashamed of God and need to start living again for His purpose, we are going to give you a few minutes to talk to God and ask Him to help you to live with confidence in the unwavering foundation of Jesus Christ. *[Pause for students to talk with God, and then pray for the students out loud.]*

NEXT STEPS

As a way to solidify your decision tonight, ask yourself, "How can I demonstrate that I have an unwavering faith in Jesus?" Maybe for you expressing your unwavering faith in Jesus means a post on social media. Maybe expressing your unwavering faith means finally having that conversation with your friend about Jesus. As you go to small groups, discuss ways that you personally or your small group together can boldly express your unwavering faith.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. If you have ever built a sandcastle on the beach, what feelings did you have when the waves began to get closer and closer to your castle?** *(The goal of this question is to help the students identify with the feeling of helplessness and frustration of trying to rely on something that is wavering. After the discussion of the sandcastle, follow up with questions about those same feelings in connection with faith. For example: “How can having a wavering foundation of faith cause these types of feelings in our lives?” “Have you ever had those types of feelings in connection with your faith?”)*
- 2. Why is it important to have an unwavering foundation for your faith?** *(Be sure to have the students discuss initial faith in Jesus, i.e., salvation, but also having confidence in the truths about Jesus Christ for daily living. Without an unwavering foundation for salvation, eternity is not secure. Without an unwavering foundation for daily living, we can be ashamed and live in fear, without direction. If desired, allow a student to share how having an unwavering foundation has solidified their faith in Jesus.)*
- 3. What are some ways that you can express your confidence in the unwavering foundation of Jesus Christ?** *(Have the group brainstorm creative ways of showing others that you firmly believe in Jesus Christ and are unashamed of Him. Ask each student to choose one of those ways this week to boldly express their faith in Jesus.)*

Resources and References

1. Walvoord, John F. and Zuck, Roy B. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old and New Testament* © 1989 Cook Communication Ministries.
2. TheBibleProject.com – <https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS21/29-3/>

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