

5

Good Advice

2 Timothy 3:10—4:8

It is said that “advice is cheap,” which is probably due to the fact that there are more people selling it than buying it. The book of Proverbs, however, encourages us to value advice when it teaches, “Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise” (19:20).

GROUP DISCUSSION. What is the best and worst advice you have been given? What happened when you followed each?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. How do you normally react to people who give you advice: (a) appreciative? (b) resentful? (c) indifferent? (d) skeptical? What does this tell you about yourself?

2 Timothy is a letter the apostle Paul wrote to a young pastor he had trained. In it, he encourages Timothy to stand strong in a world full of godlessness, false teaching and bad advice. *Read 2 Timothy 3:10—4:8.*

1. What information does Paul give about his character and suffering?

2. Why is it important to consider the character of those we seek advice from?

3. According to the criteria given in 3:10-11, who do you know that you might go to for advice?

4. How was Timothy to evaluate the advice he received from others, including Paul (3:14-15)?

5. Why was Paul such a good mentor for Timothy?

6. Focus on 3:15-17. What is the purpose of Scripture?

7. How can Scripture be used in helping us to make decisions?

8. How might Scripture be misused in decision making?

How can you avoid this?

9. What does good advice consist of according to 4:1-2?

10. Why might some people be motivated to give bad advice?

11. How can you avoid having “itchy ears” (4:3) as you seek advice?

12. How will this study change the way in which you seek advice?

Pray for God's guidance as you study Scripture and seek advice.

Now or Later

A contrast between people with “itchy ears” and people who know how to accept advice is found in Acts. *Read Acts 17:1-12.*

In what ways does Paul follow the principles of good advice you discovered in 2 Timothy?

Why did the people of Thessalonica not listen to Paul’s advice?

How is this similar to the people with “itchy ears” in 2 Timothy?

How is it similar to people in your community?

What is commendable about the Berean style of evaluating advice?

Have you been more like a Thessalonian or a Berean in accepting advice?