

# Grow for Impact

Acts 16:1-5  
Dr. Paul Cannings

## A. Grow (v. 1):

1. Paul came to Derbe - Paul was purposeful in making sure once and for all that he attained his goal of arriving in Derbe and Lystra.
  - a) Lystra was only twenty miles or so from Iconium, and a close relationship between the Christians of the two cities would have been natural.<sup>[1]</sup>
  
2. Behold - Despite everything Paul endured, someone stood out and that was a young man, name Timothy who became a true disciple of Paul due to the influence of his mother and grandmother.
  - a) In connection with 14:20 R., *W. P.*, regards him as being only fifteen years old initially and now as being about eighteen; although the interval between the two visits of Paul was a little more than a year, but this makes Timothy entirely too young. We can only estimate his age, but he was at least twenty-one.<sup>[2]</sup>
  - b) As Paul styles him "his own son in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2), he must have been gain to Christ at the apostle's first visit; and as Paul says he "had fully known his persecutions which came on him at Lystra" (2 Tim. 3:10, 11). He may have been in that group of disciples that surrounded the apparently lifeless body of the apostle outside the walls of Lystra, and at a time of life when the mind receives its deepest impressions from the spectacle of innocent suffering and undaunted courage [HOWSON]. His would be one of "the souls of the disciples confirmed" at the apostle's second visit, "exhorted to continue in the faith, and" warned "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Ac 14:21, 22).<sup>[3]</sup>
  
3. Disciple name Timothy - Timothy made himself someone who was dedicated to being a student of the Word of God (this led him to become a teacher along with Paul; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15) and a sincere follower of Christ because he was committed to practice what he was learning. Timothy was a true disciple, not just a church attender.
  - a) This is an application of the principle that Paul expressed in I Cor 9:20: "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law that I might

gain them that are under the law.” Where no essential principle was involved, Paul applied the principle of expediency and of conciliation in a way that many latter Christians cannot understand or appreciate. It was probably at this time that Timothy was set aside for his mission by the elders in Lystra (I Tim 4:14).<sup>[4]</sup>

4. Believer; faithful - Timothy prove to be dependable, reliable and faithful with whatever was entrusted to him. He remained steadfast, while having a godly character, with whatever he was learning or whatever was assigned to him.

- a) His gifts and destination to the ministry of Christ had already been attested (1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14); and though some ten years after this Paul speaks of him as still young (1 Tim. 4:12), “he was already well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium” (Ac 16:2), and consequently must have been well known through all that quarter.<sup>[5]</sup>

5. Well spoken of; testify – Everyone who witnessed who Timothy was in character and faithful work confirmed it by providing a good report.

- a) So then, you will know them by their fruit (Matthew 7:20).

6. Brethren - The persons who spoke well of Timothy were those who were saved and a part of the church community in Derbe and Lystra. In other words, being saved and being a part of the church community they were witnesses and they benefited from the service Timothy provided. They also shared the same Biblical values so they could identify that Timothy's growth was genuine.

## **B. Forge Ahead (vs. 3-4):**

1. Paul wanted this man to go with him; went out – Paul, seeing Timothy's growth and effective service, purposefully made sure that Timothy goes with him on his missionary journeys.

- a) During Paul's initial visit to Lystra, members of three generations of one family come to faith in Jesus Christ—a grandmother (Lois), a mother (Eunice), and a son (Timothy) (see 2 Tim. 1:5). This young man, Timothy, has taken root and grown so much in his faith and the knowledge of the Lord that Paul now wants him to accompany him and Silas in their missionary efforts.<sup>[6]</sup>

2. He took him – Paul took the initiative, after discipling Timothy and hearing of his good reputation, to have faith in Timothy. He took Timothy with him wherever he was going.

a) Timothy would become a major player on the missionary team. He participated in six of Paul's epistles (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Philemon. 1) and received two more. Paul calls him a son (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:2), a fellow worker (Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 16:10) and includes Timothy whenever possible in his itinerant ministry before ultimately placing him in a leadership role at Ephesus. To be accepted in ministry to Jews, Timothy had to affirm his Jewish heritage and be circumcised.<sup>[7]</sup>

3. Because of the Jews who were - Paul circumcised Timothy because most likely the Jews who were continuously living in these areas would have known about his father and mother.

4. All knew; see – All the Jews in Derbe and Lystra had a complete knowledge and understanding of who Timothy's father and mother were.

a) “Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law” (1 Cor. 9:19–20). There was nothing inherently evil now in circumcision. It is a matter of indifference as long as it is not mistakenly taken as essential to salvation (1 Cor. 7:19).<sup>[8]</sup>

5. They went through - Paul and Timothy made it their mission to continuously keep working their way from city to city.

6. Delivering - Despite these obstacles Paul and Timothy with no plan to ever stop continuously kept handing over all the Biblical dogma that was agreed upon by the apostles (Acts 15).

7. Decrees - What Paul and Timothy were handing over to the people that they were serving was the doctrinal principles that were agreed upon by the apostles and elders. These rules and regulations were put in place by the Lord and instituted by the apostles and elders.

a) Paul and Timothy reminded committed to the doctrine agreed upon by the apostles and elders (Acts 15). This helped the churches they developed to be cohesive.

8. Decided – What Paul and Timothy were teaching was a judgement made (Acts 15) completely by the apostles to be distinctive about the Biblical principles God wanted to institute into His church.
9. For them to observe – These principles must repeatedly be so noteworthy that those who hear them must continually guard against them ever being polluted.

### C. Be the Difference (v. 5):

1. So the churches - This message was only delivered to those who are called out for the purposes of God.
2. Were being strengthened, established - To be strengthened here means that Paul and Timothy were establishing a strong doctrinal position in each church so that the churches were solid doctrinally.
3. Were being strengthened in the faith - Paul and Timothy's purpose for going to each of the churches was directly related to deepening these believers' conviction in the doctrines provided by the apostles so that they remain steadfastly, intensely trusting the Word of God in the midst of a proliferation of religions. Prayerfully this leads them to fully surrender their lives to the will of God.
  - a) "The faith" is objective, firm in *what* the churches believed; Luke has repeatedly used this word in that sense, *quae creditur*. To be made firm in the faith is to have strong confidence (subjective) to hold the divine truth and reality given us to hold (objective).<sup>[1]</sup>
4. Increase in number daily – Paul and Timothy's work in these churches led to an exceedingly great number of people joining the church. This is a fulfillment of what Christ said, that "the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Luke 10:35-38).
5. Increase in number daily – We are a part of the increase because despite these circumstances these men grew for impact (Paul just got approved after 14 years of ministry and training; Acts 15).

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<sup>[1]</sup> Polhill, J. B. (1992). *Acts* (Vol. 26, p. 342). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>[2]</sup> Lenski, R. C. H. (1961). *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (pp. 639–640). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House.

- [3] Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [\*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible\*](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 196–197). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.
- [4] Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F. (Eds.). (1962). [\*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Ac 16:3). Chicago: Moody Press.
- [5] Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [\*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 197). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.
- [6] Arnold, C. E. (2002). [\*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John, Acts\*](#). (Vol. 2, p. 364). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- [7] Gangel, K. O. (1998). [\*Acts\*](#) (Vol. 5, p. 267). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- [8] Arnold, C. E. (2002). [\*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John, Acts\*](#). (Vol. 2, pp. 365–366). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- [9] Lenski, R. C. H. (1961). [\*The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles\*](#) (p. 642). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House.