

2 Timothy 2:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Analysis

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The conjunction "therefore" connects this exhortation to chapter 1's themes—Timothy must respond to desertion and opposition by finding strength in grace. "My son" (teknon mou, τέκνον μου) reinforces their intimate relationship and Paul's fatherly authority. The command "be strong" (endynamou, ἐνδυναμοῦ) is passive/middle imperative—literally "be empowered" or "be strengthened." This isn't self-generated strength but strength received from external source.

The prepositional phrase "in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (en tē chariti tē en Christō Iēsou, ἐν τῇ χάριτι τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) locates the source: God's enabling grace, not human effort. Charis (χάρις) here denotes not merely unmerited favor in salvation but ongoing divine empowerment for service. This grace exists "in Christ Jesus"—inseparably connected to union with Him. Ministers don't serve in self-generated strength but in grace constantly supplied through relationship with Christ.

This verse establishes a crucial principle: faithful Christian ministry requires continual reliance on divine grace. Timothy faces desertion, opposition, false teaching, and his own timidity. Human strength will fail. Only by abiding in Christ and receiving His grace can Timothy persevere faithfully. This grace isn't passive but active empowerment enabling believers to fulfill calling despite inadequacy and opposition (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Historical Context

The first-century church faced severe testing. Persecution under Nero intensified, many believers compromised or apostatized, false teachers arose within churches. In this context, ministers like Timothy could easily become discouraged, overwhelmed, or defeated. Paul's exhortation to "be strong in grace" addressed this real crisis. Ancient Stoic philosophy taught self-sufficiency through willpower and reason—finding strength within oneself. Christianity radically departed from this, teaching total dependence on divine grace for both salvation and sanctification. This countercultural emphasis on grace-dependence versus self-reliance distinguished Christian spirituality from prevailing philosophies.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. In what areas of ministry or Christian service are you relying on self-generated strength, willpower, or natural abilities rather than God's enabling grace?
2. How can you practically "be strengthened" in grace through prayer, Scripture meditation, corporate worship, and conscious dependence on Christ?
3. When facing discouragement, opposition, or inadequacy in serving Christ, how quickly do you turn to grace in Christ versus trying harder in human strength?

Interlinear Text

Σὺ	οὖν	τέκνον	μου	ένδυναμοῦ	ἐν	τῇ	χάριτι	τῇ
Thou	therefore	son	my	be strong	in	G3588	the grace	G3588
G4771	G3767	G5043	G3450	G1743	G1722		G5485	
ἐν	Χριστῷ	Ἰησοῦ						
in	Christ	Jesus						
G1722	G5547	G2424						

Additional Cross-References

2 Timothy 1:7 (Parallel theme): For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Ephesians 6:10 (Parallel theme): Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Philippians 4:13 (References Christ): I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

1 Corinthians 16:13 (Parallel theme): Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

2 Peter 3:18 (Grace): But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 1:18 (Parallel theme): This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

Haggai 2:4 (Parallel theme): Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:

Joshua 1:7 (Parallel theme): Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

1 Timothy 1:2 (Grace): Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:2 (Grace): To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

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