



TEACH IT COLLEGE AGE SESSION 7

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the 2 Timothy Scripture sheets
- the student journal page for Session 7
- his or her Bible, pen, and notebook

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- colored pencils (at least one color per student)

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 7

As students experience this session, they will—

- examine some of Paul's relationships and see that not everyone was on his side.
- compare their personal struggles with the lonely struggles Paul and Timothy sometimes experienced for the sake of Christ.
- be challenged to encourage and strengthen their friends to continue following Christ even when it's difficult.

PRAYER

Spend some time praying together for the people in your students' lives who are antagonistic toward their faith.

OPEN

Odd Man Out

Ask a few volunteers to share about any of the following life incidents:

- **a time when you suddenly felt like the odd man out in a group of friends.**
- **a time when you felt completely alone.**
- **a time when you were the victim of a bully.**
- **a time when you were the bully**

After about five minutes, transition into the study by saying something such as—


Following Christ creates a distinct line of demarcation between those who do and those who don't. And when people are on opposite sides of the line, an atmosphere of antagonism can occur. The apostle Paul experienced this extensively throughout his missionary career, and in 2 Timothy, he gives some insight into what this looks like.



3. Digging In

An Enemy List

Tell your students to—

Read 2 Timothy 1:14-17, 2 Timothy 2:15-18, and 2 Timothy 4:9-16 from your Bibles and with colored pencil draw a frowny face  over any names that represent some kind of trouble for Paul.

When most have finished ask your students what they found. Because some of these represent friends who turned away, we'll call them "frenemies." List the names and any info about these people on the whiteboard.

Frenemies

- All in Asia (including Phygelus and Hermogenes): They deserted Paul (1:15).
- Hymenaeus and Philetus: They wandered away from the truth; they destroyed the faith of others; their teaching spread like gangrene (2:17-18).
- Demas: He deserted Paul because he loved this world (4:10).
- Alexander the metalworker: He did much harm to Paul and strongly opposed Paul's message (4:14-15).
- Everyone at Paul's first defense: They all deserted him, but Paul didn't want it held against them (4:16).

4. Cross-Checking

The Scoop on Demas

Demas is an interesting character because of a passing statement Paul made about him in 2 Timothy 4:10. For the next few minutes, have the group focus on Demas to discover his history with Paul and his motivation for deserting. Ask volunteers to read aloud **Colossians 4:14** and **Philemon 1:23-24** from their Bibles.

Give students a minute to think of a scenario that might explain Demas' behavior, based on what Paul wrote about him. There's space for them to jot down their thoughts under The Scoop on Demas on the journal pages. Then discuss the following questions as a group.

What kind of story can we piece together about Demas?

Let students use their imaginations, but encourage them to stick close to the facts in Scripture, which include:

- At one time Demas was in Paul's inner circle of dear friends.
- He made the greetings list in two of Paul's letters.
- He must have built some great relationships with the folks in Philemon's church and in the Colossian church.

But why did he desert the cause of Christ?

He loved this world.

Think for a minute: How could people love this world so much that they'd desert the Christian faith?

- Like the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-23), they want money and things more than a relationship with God.
- They love their favorite sins and don't want to give them up.
- They don't want to take up their crosses and follow Christ. (They want the benefits of being a Christian, but not the obligations.)
- When the going gets tough, they're outta here.

What does Demas' story have to say to us today?

Even respected Christians who seem very committed can be distracted by the world's stuff and desert their callings.

5. Taking It Inward

Today on Dr. Phil

Have the class play Dr. Phil for a minute. Ask—

What do you think Paul’s state of mind might have been, based on the people he named in his letter?

-He had a right to be depressed and discouraged based on the number of friends who’d turned away from him and what he believed.

-He may have been feeling deserted and lonely.

-His greatest fear may have been that Timothy would desert the faith, too. He was definitely trying to encourage Timothy.

Then discuss the following questions.

During what stage of life have you felt most alone in your Christian walk?

When do you feel most alone now?

Researchers have noted that a majority of committed Christian teens—upon graduating from their high school youth ministries—check out of the Christian faith, similar to Demas. Have you found this to be true in your circles?

What reasons do you hear from friends and acquaintances as to why they might—or do—check out of the Christian faith?

Have you had any role models or people you looked up to walk away from the faith?

Chances are that many of your students are right there with Paul. They’ve seen friends—perhaps even adults they’ve looked up to—disappoint them by an inconsistent Christian life. Maybe they’ve seen them bail out completely. Ask—

What strength can you take from Paul’s letter to Timothy?

Have the students look up 2 Timothy 4:16-18 if they need some extra encouragement.

6. Digging Deeper



A To-Do List for the Frenemies

Share that the Bible gives tons of insight on how to deal with those who are antagonistic toward us or the gospel. Friction can come from various directions—from those who are declared enemies of the faith, such as members of atheist or humanist organizations. Or antagonism might be more subtle and come from those who’ve been disillusioned by the church or put off by Christians in some way.

This next exercise sheds light on several unfriendly situations common to believers. Let students know that they will be doing this exercise in solitude.

Explain—

- 1. Find places where you can get alone with God, such as a corner of the room, a hallway, or an empty room nearby.**
- 2. You’ll need your Bibles, journal pages, and pens.**
- 3. You’ll be doing both the Digging Deeper and the Taking It Inward exercises.**

The following are Bible references and possible observations:

Passage	The Situation	My Response
Matthew 5:44-48	-enemies -those who persecute me	-pray for them -love them -greet them
Luke 6:34-36	enemies	-do good to them -lend to them without expecting anything in return -be merciful
Romans 12:16-21	enemies	-don't repay evil with evil -don't get revenge -give the enemy what he or she needs
Galatians 6:1	a fellow believer caught in a sin	-restore him or her gently -watch out—don't get sucked into sin as well
2 Thessalonians 3:13-15	believers who aren't obedient	-don't hang out with them (in order to make them feel ashamed of their behavior) -don't treat them like enemies -warn them as fellow believers
James 5:19-20	believers who wander from the truth	do what you can to bring them back
Jude 1:20-23	those who doubt	be merciful to them

7. Taking It Inward

Putting a Face with the Name

When most have finished get the group back together, and discuss the following questions.

Some of the passages you just read spoke of “enemies.” Who are the enemies we face today in our daily walks?

Try to keep responses focused on the day-to-day enemies, such as classmates or teachers who are antagonistic toward the faith, parents or siblings who may not be supportive of a student's faith, organizations on campus or in the community that seek to take a stand against Christianity.

Describe a time when you've been in a situation in which a follower of Christ was being willfully disobedient or was wandering from the truth. How did you respond?

*Encourage discretion in response to this question—**no names**. Responses might include: seeing someone be flirtatious with a married man or woman, watching a friend embrace philosophies that undermine the Christian faith, watching a friend adopt a lifestyle that runs counter to Jesus' teaching.*

Ask any volunteers to share how they processed the following questions during their time of solitude.

Look at what you wrote in the column labeled My Response on your journal pages. When it comes to these relationships and situations, what are some specific ways you could live out your responses to these situations?

Encourage students to get specific in their responses. Make “pray for my enemies” be more like “write the person's name on a Post-it and put it on my mirror so that I will remember to pray for that person.”

Are there any situations in your life that sound a lot like the situations in these passages? If so, what?

8. Wrapping It Up

The Scoop on You

Ask students to write on the journal pages a situation that parallels what they've seen in Scripture in this session—a friend wandering from the truth, an enemy making life rough, or a friend or acquaintance who is doubting the Christian faith.

After a couple minutes, ask them to reread thoughtfully and prayerfully the responses they listed from the Scriptures in Digging Deeper. Challenge them to let the Scriptures shape their responses to the situations they're facing and to write some practical things they can do to respond to their situations.

Ask for volunteers to share what they came up with.

Close your session by asking for a volunteer to pray that students will operate out of God's wisdom in navigating influences around them that might be antagonistic to their faith.