



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 the struggles they may face on their school campuses 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 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 the 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 would 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.

When do you feel most alone in your walk with God?

Have you had any longtime friends check out of Christianity to try something else (as Demas did)? What are some reasons given for checking out?

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.

Share that this next exercise sheds light on several unfriendly situations common to believers. Students will be doing this exercise in solitude.

Explain—

- 1. Find a place 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 students 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 spiritual lives?

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 at school 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.

Encourage discretion in response to this question—no names. Responses might include: a coworker skimming from the cash register, a friend embracing philosophies that undermine the Christian faith, a friend adopting 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. What are some specific ways you could live out your responses to these relationships and 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."

How could our student ministry help you handle these situations?

A student ministry can help its students confront enemies by keeping the students accountable for their reactions and interactions and by being a sounding board and a source of encouragement to react in Christ-honoring ways. A student ministry can help its students keep channels of communication open with those who doubt and can provide a source of prayer and support for those relationships.

8. Wrapping It Up

Onesiphor-ize Your Student Ministry

Before closing with prayer, have your group look again at 2 Timothy 1:15-16, focusing on Onesiphorus (pronounced *Oh-ness-IF-ar-us*). Then brainstorm this question:

In the middle of mass desertion, Paul singled out one guy—all because he refreshed Paul and wasn't ashamed of Paul's imprisonment. How can our student ministry be more like Onesiphorus to you—a place where you can get recharged and encouraged whenever you interact with people and live in situations that are antagonistic to the gospel?

Here are a few ideas:

- Create or maintain a safe place where every student is loved and accepted, in contrast to the unsafe place of the world they live in.*
- Develop a way to encourage Christians around the world who are persecuted for their faith, and to strengthen them to withstand hardships not too different than Paul's in 2 Timothy.*
- Plan an activity that will help students remember what Onesiphorus did for Paul. Consider an Onesiphorus party. (Key in on the word refreshment that Paul used.)*

Close by praying that your student ministry can be a true refreshment stand for students as they seek to live the gospel in a non-gospel world.