

1. Understanding the Value of a Godly Family

Today, we are beginning a new series of topics to help our physical and spiritual children learn to function as godly leaders. We will see that there is great value for those who grow up in a godly family because they have had the opportunity to see godly examples of leadership. However, for those who have not had physical parents that were Christians, they need spiritual parents who will provide those examples for them. This is one reason why we will greatly expand our ministry as we learn to become spiritual parents to those who have not grown up in godly Christian families.

Timothy had a godly mother and grandmother that provided him much help by their examples. However, his father was a Greek and there is no mention that his father was a follower of the Lord. As a result, Paul became a spiritual father to Timothy. In 2 Timothy 1:1-2 we read, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” In this introduction, we see that Paul called Timothy a beloved son. This was due to the fact that Paul had become a spiritual father to Timothy.

We also see that Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. We have mentioned in other topics that Paul was appointed as an apostle to the Gentiles even though he did not meet one of the qualifications for an apostle. Acts 1:21-22 says, “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” Paul had seen Christ after His resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:8 says, “Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.” However, he had not accompanied Christ throughout His public ministry and so Paul had also told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 1:1, “Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother.” God had revealed that it was His will for Paul to be an apostle.

Timothy and all who believe are made alive and promised spiritual life. Ephesians 2:1 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Christ had given Timothy spiritual life. We see that Paul considered Timothy a beloved or much loved son in the Lord. Paul also wanted Timothy to experience the grace, mercy and peace that has been given to us by the Father and by Christ. Here we see that Paul wanted Timothy to experience the grace (the loving-kindness) of God in his life. He also wanted Timothy to experience the mercy (the free salvation and forgiveness of sins through Christ) of God. The desire of Paul was that Timothy would also experience the peace (the inner peace that is the result of a right relationship with God) of God.

Paul went on to write in 2 Timothy 1:3-5, “I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.” Paul could say that as he gave thanks to God, he gave thanks from a pure conscience. A pure conscience is a conscience that is free from sin or guilt.

We also see that Paul continually prayed for Timothy night and day. Here we see one of our most important ministries for our physical and spiritual children. We need to pray for them continually. Paul also prayed for the Christians in the various cities continually. 1 Thessalonians 1:2 says, “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.” Here, we see that Paul prayed for the new Christians in every city that he had visited. Colossians 1:3 says, “We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” Since Paul had not visited Colosse, we see that he also prayed for the Christians in cities that he had never personally visited.

Even though Paul knew that he would soon be killed for his faith in Christ, Paul longed to see Timothy one more time before he died. His previous visit with Timothy had probably ended like his last visit to the elders at Ephesus. Acts 20:36-38 says, “And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.” Since Timothy had shed many tears their last time together, it was probably due to the fact that he knew he might not see Paul alive again on this earth. Paul said that it would bring great joy to his life to have the opportunity to see Timothy one more time before he was put to death.

As Paul thanked God for Timothy and his faith, he remembered the spiritual background that the Lord had given to Timothy. First, Paul recognized that Timothy had a genuine faith. The word that is translated “genuine” means a faith that is genuine and has no hypocrisy. This genuine faith had been shared with Timothy by both his grandmother and his mother. 2 Timothy 3:14-15 says, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood (a newborn infant) you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Here, we see that Timothy began to learn the Old Testament Scriptures from the time that he was a very young boy. This is a tremendous example for every Christian parent and shows the importance of helping our children to memorize and meditate on Scripture long before they can even begin to read.

Romans 15:4 says, “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” Because Eunice, Lois and Timothy had been studying the Old Testament Scriptures long before Paul and Barnabas first brought the Gospel to their area, they recognized that Christ fulfilled the Old Testament and were quick to place their faith in Christ once they heard the Gospel. We also see that this passage provides a key example for Christian mothers whose husbands have not yet become Christians or who are raising children without a father even being in the home. Mothers and grandmothers have a real ministry as they pray for their children. Then as they teach them the Word of God and show them how to apply the Word of God in their lives by their own example, they will see the Lord work in a great way in the lives of their children and grandchildren.

In 2 Timothy 1:6-7 we read, “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of

love and of a sound mind.” The word that is translated “stir up” has the meaning to cause a fire to flame up or to stir up the mind of a person. Here, we see that Paul is encouraging Timothy to keep using the spiritual gift that he had received. In 1 Timothy 4:14 Paul had written Timothy, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” Paul had probably been a part of the team of elders that had recognized this gift in Timothy and laid his hands on Timothy along with the other elders.

This gift had probably been officially recognized by the elders at the time that Paul asked Timothy to go with him. Acts 16:1-3 says, “Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.” Since the cities of Derbe, Lystra and Iconium were more than forty miles apart, Timothy had already been doing outreach to other cities. 2 Timothy 4:5 says, “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” Since Paul saw his zeal for outreach, Paul and the other elders recognized that Timothy would be able to equip other saints for evangelism. Paul realized that Timothy needed to rekindle his equipping ministry.

The growing persecution of the early church may have caused Timothy to become fearful and to neglect his equipping gift. As a result, Paul reminded Timothy that God is not the One who gives a spirit of fear. Instead, Paul wanted to remind Timothy of three things the Holy Spirit gives us. First, the Holy Spirit gives us a spirit of power. Christ told the disciples in Luke 24:49, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Then Christ added in Acts 1:8, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The power of the Holy Spirit means that we have that power when we yield to Him and He will give us courage to witness with boldness.

Second, the love of Christ motivates us. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” Third, the Father gives us wisdom to exercise self-control or self-discipline. Like Paul, we want to encourage our physical and spiritual children to serve the Lord in the strength of the Lord and not let Satan cause them to become fearful because they are depending on their own strength. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the value of both their physical and spiritual family.