

## 2. Learning How to Become a Man of God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn the value of a godly family. Children who have godly Christian parents have the opportunity to see godly examples from the time of birth. Those whose physical parents are not Christians need godly spiritual parents who will provide the love of a nursing mother and the example of a godly father. In order to help physical children who grow up in our home, or spiritual children who may be adults at the time they become Christians, we want to provide an example for them to follow.

In 2 Timothy 1:8-9 we read, “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.” Here, we see that Paul asked Timothy not to be ashamed of two things. First, Paul did not want Timothy to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ even though Paul was facing death and knew that Timothy probably would suffer persecution also. This is an encouragement to stand strong in persecution. Second, Paul did not want Timothy to be ashamed because Paul was suffering as a prisoner for Christ because of his faithful commitment to be true to the Lord.

Instead, Paul asked Timothy to continue to share with him the sufferings of Christ for the Gospel. Part of our ministry as Christians is to suffer for Christ. Paul and Barnabas established the churches in Galatia. Acts 14:21-22 says, “And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’” As a young Christian, Timothy had heard that there would be much suffering because Satan is in total opposition to the church. Here, we see that many years later Paul encouraged him to continue to share those sufferings.

However, Paul reminded Timothy that they did not share those sufferings in their own strength but in the power of God. 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 says, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.” Here, we see that God works in a powerful way. Paul also explained to Timothy why God saves us and calls us. God does not call any person based on their works. Instead, God saved us and called us according to His own purpose. He did that because of His grace. This choice to save us and call us was made in Christ Jesus before the world was ever created.

Although the purpose of God was complete before the world was ever created, it was not revealed at that time. 2 Timothy 1:10-12 says about this purpose, “But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.” God revealed how this purpose would be fulfilled when Christ came to this earth.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Christ defeated death by His resurrection.

Christ also revealed the fact that through faith in Christ we would receive eternal life and immortality (would never die). That is the message of the Gospel that Paul said that he was called to preach to the Gentiles. He was also called to be the apostle to the Gentiles and to be a teacher of the Gentiles. Paul had earlier said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:5-7, “For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.” Because Paul understood that God had appointed him to this ministry, he was glad to suffer to share that message.

As a result, Paul was not ashamed to be the prisoner of Christ. Paul knew that he had believed in Christ and he was convinced that Christ was able to keep him. The word that is translated “to keep” means “to guard a person or thing so that it remains safe.” Paul had earlier written to the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians 3:3, “But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one.” Here, we see that Paul wanted the Thessalonians and all who would read this book to be convinced that the Lord would keep His promises. Paul knew that his life was secure with the Lord for eternity.

Paul wanted Timothy to have the same peace that he had. That is why 2 Timothy 1:13-14 says, “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.” The word that is translated “pattern” is only used one other time in the New Testament. 1 Timothy 1:16 says, “However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” Here, we see that the Lord chose to use the life of Paul as a pattern for all who would receive eternal life. In the same way, Timothy was told to hold the pattern of sound words that Paul had taught him. Titus 2:1 says, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.” Here, we see that “sound words” speaks of the Word of God and the doctrines that are taught in it.

Timothy was told to hold to these doctrines in faith and love in Christ Jesus. “Faith” means that he was “*to know for certain that the Word of God is true.*” “Love” speaks about the way that he taught the Word of God to others. Ephesians 4:15 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—.” In the same way, we want to help our children grow in faith so that they know that the Word of God is true. Then, we want to help them learn to share the Word of God with love.

The word that is translated “which was committed to you” means “*the pure knowledge of the gospel that has been given to you to faithfully pass on to others.*” Since Timothy had traveled for many years with Paul, he had learned from Paul the teaching that had been taught to Paul by the Lord. Paul had told Timothy earlier in 1 Timothy 6:20-21, “O Timothy! Guard what was

committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace *be* with you. Amen.” Here, Paul reminded him again that the message of salvation that is revealed by the Word of God had been committed to him to faithfully pass on to others. As we learn the Word of God, it has also been committed to us to faithfully pass it on to others. Timothy was able to faithfully pass on the Gospel message because the Holy Spirit who lived in Him and lives in us makes it possible for us to guard that message so that it remains safe.

Paul went on to tell Timothy about some of those who had been in Rome with Paul. 2 Timothy 1:15-18 says, “This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found *me*. The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered *to me* at Ephesus.” First, Paul spoke about most of the Christians in Rome that had been reached with the Gospel in Ephesus and the surrounding province of Asia. Because of the persecution of Paul and the fact that he soon faced death, the Christians of Asia had turned away from him. The word translated “to turn away from” means “*to desert or leave a person.*” Although the Word of God does not mention Phygellus and Hermogenes any other place, these two people would have been known to Timothy and may have been people who were becoming leaders of others.

In contrast, we see that the entire household of Onesiphorus had been a great help to Paul both in Ephesus and Rome. The word translated “refreshed” means “*to cool off or to refresh one’s spirit.*” Here we see that Onesiphorus was not bothered by the fact that Paul was in prison. As soon as Onesiphorus arrived in the city of Rome, he immediately began to look for Paul. He kept looking and asking questions until he found out where Paul was located. Then, he had been a great encouragement to Paul during the previous few months. Here, we see a great example of love. Onesiphorus did not fear for his own life. Instead, he just wanted to be an encouragement to Paul and did what was necessary in order to provide that encouragement. We also see that Paul wanted the family of Onesiphorus to be encouraged. 2 Timothy 4:19 says, “Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.” Here, we see that Paul wanted Timothy to give a special greeting to the family of Onesiphorus because of the great love that he had shown to Paul and because of the love that his household had shown to Paul when he was in Ephesus.

In these verses, we see that Paul gave Timothy several instructions about how to become a man of God. He was to pass on these instructions to others. We want to pass on these same instructions to our physical and spiritual children. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn how to become men of God.