



5/13/26

You would think that when we have smaller passages, my responses would be shorter. You would think. 🙄 But I find when we have less verses to study, it's an opportunity to dive a little deeper into what's there. I pray that you and I will enjoy the sweet facets of the diamond of God's word as we examine each color of the prism. God never runs out of things to teach us.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

2 Timothy 1:1-7

*The focus this week is on "Godly Parenting." Godly parenting cannot guarantee that a child will grow up to be a faithful follower of Jesus, but it definitely makes a huge difference. When I speak to moms about "prodigal kids", or kids who have made some really destructive choices, the moms so often feel a ton of guilt, like it's all their fault. But what I explain to them from God's word is that though we **CONTRIBUTE** to how our kids live when they grow up, we don't **CAUSE** how they live. We don't get all the credit for their successes, and we don't have all the blame for their failures. My job is to be faithful to the Lord, to live a godly life (which is a life devoted to God), to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, and to pray for them faithfully and diligently. The rest is between them and the Lord.*

In 2 Timothy, Paul speaks about this to Timothy. Paul loved Timothy like a son, and he spoke to how Timothy came to put his own faith in Jesus. I learn of the beginning of their relationship in Acts 16. Timothy's mom was a Jewish believer, but his dad was a Greek, a Gentile. I'm guessing his dad wasn't a believer by the context of the passage. But Timothy was a believer when Paul met him. Timothy ended up traveling with Paul and eventually he became a pastor at Ephesus. In 2 Timothy, Paul is writing to him regarding his role as pastor... how to lead his church.

Vs. 1-2 ~ "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul always starts his letters with the understanding that he's in his position, sometimes quoted as a servant of Christ and sometimes quoted as an apostle of Christ, but always by the will of God. Truly, no one can do anything for Christ except by the will of God. Anything attempted apart from His will and without His help will fail.

I love the method for which Paul gives to explain God's will in his writing... it is "according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus." There is so much hope in this one phrase!!! Eternal life in Jesus is a promise from Jesus who made it possible by His death and resurrection. That's why Paul, who once persecuted those who followed Christ, could now write with the absolute assurance of eternal life in Christ.

He wrote this opening to Timothy, his beloved child through faith in that promise. Now, Paul knew that Timothy had been saved for years! He knew that Timothy understood the promise and the hope of eternal life! Why bring it up now? For me, this is a great reminder that no matter who anyone is, there is always room for reminding them of the truth. In many of his letters, Paul says, "It is good for me to remind you of this..." Why? Because our natural tendency will always be to drift away from the Lord if we're not diligent to persevere with Him. Even Timothy needed this reminder. There are more reminders coming.

Let me take this as an important principle for myself.

PRINCIPLE #1: Don't ever assume that someone just gets it. Continue to encourage myself and others with the words of hope from the Lord. The younger they are in their faith, the more they need to be reminded... but even the most seasoned veterans of the faith need to be encouraged and reminded.

Vs. 3-4 ~ "I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy."

Paul ALWAYS thanked the Lord in all circumstances. I notice right away that he brings up how he serves the Lord with a clear conscience. How could his conscience be clear? His whole purpose was to honor Christ in everything he did. He also said he remembered Timothy constantly in his prayers for him day and night.

PRINCIPLE #2: Thank God as I serve Him with a clear conscience. I thank Him because He's in charge, and by His authority He lavishes me with His grace and promise of eternal life. I serve Him because He's in charge and serving Him is the absolute best way I can thank Him. To thank Him without serving Him is empty.

PRINCIPLE #3: The most loving thing I can do for someone is pray for them. Instead of complaining about them, judging them, worrying about them, or even just thinking about them... turn my thoughts of them to a conversation with the one who has all power, authority, and love. The Lord loves even my children and grandchildren exponentially more than I do. Talk with Him

about them... His will be done!

Along with that, don't assume that someone is strong enough in their faith that they don't need prayer. EVERYONE needs to be prayed for. Even Paul asked people to pray for him. No one is beyond the need of God's grace and strength.

I think Paul truly did think of Timothy as a son in many ways, and Timothy thought of Paul as his spiritual father... the separation of miles brought a longing to be reunited so that joy could be fulfilled.

I remember when my daughter was in Israel for a semester. My heart was so torn the whole time. I couldn't wait for our first FaceTime call... and while it filled me with so much joy, it also filled me with tears because we were so far apart. Then when I saw her tears, my heart just broke!!! I wanted so badly to comfort her and hold her.

I remember when we went over there and got to see her. We met at a location where our bus was stopping... I was so focused on seeing my girl that I can't even remember where we were meeting. We were texting constantly for about an hour until we finally arrived. I saw her from a distance and I just couldn't wait. The moment we stopped, I RAN off that bus and threw my arms around her and held her, and she held me. Oh my goodness. Tears even now as I think of it.

If Paul had that kind of love for Timothy... the distance must have been excruciating. But he was a servant of the Most High, and he knew that God's will was more important than his own. Though the miles brought a longing for reunion, doing the will of God brought more joy even than the longing. (I'm not gonna lie, though. I'm really thankful that God's will has kept my daughters and their families close to home.)

Vs. 5 ~ "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well."

Paul remembered Timothy in his prayers. He remembered Timothy's tears. And now, he remembered Timothy's faith. His faith was a sincere, genuine faith. Here's where the "contribution" to his faith came. Timothy's grandmother and mom (or Nana and Mama) both had a sincere faith in Jesus. The thing about sincere faith is, you can't help but share it. Nana and Mama loved Timothy so much that they modeled their faith and taught him about Jesus... and Timothy embraced the same genuine faith.

PRINCIPLE #4: Children will learn more from what we model than what we say. If my faith is not genuine, they will know it. But they will be inspired by genuine faith. The hope and prayer is that they will be so inspired that they'll turn to the Lord.

I see here that the fact that Timothy's dad was not a believer did not stop God from saving Timothy. The faithfulness even of a single believing parent and/or grandparent can be used by

God to draw a child to Jesus even if the other parent doesn't love the Lord.

I also see what a privilege I have as a Nana. From Tim's football analogy on Sunday, I am glad that I don't have to be much of a referee, calling penalties. But if I do, I want to do it according to the boundaries of the parents and never assume I know better than them... or the Lord. As long as they don't ask me to sin, I need to respect my kids' parenting wishes. I do get to be a coach when I'm with them... training them and sharing with them the excitement of following Jesus. What a huge privilege. I also get to be their teammate... playing with them as much as possible. And I get to be their cheerleader. What better way to encourage them than to tell them how much I love them and how much Jesus loves them. I praise God that He has a role for me in their lives. The most important role I have is to pray for them!!! O Lord, I praise You for the privilege of praying for my kids, their husbands, and their kids!!!

Vs. 6-7 ~ "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

Paul said, "I remember you... I remember your tears... I am reminded of your sincere faith." And now, Paul wants to remind Timothy of something. What? Fan into flame the gift of God. What is the gift of God? The Holy Spirit. Paul himself laid hands on Timothy to receive the Spirit. It must have been one of those descriptive situations in the Book of Acts where people had put their faith in Christ but didn't receive the Spirit until an apostle came to them and laid hands on them. Today, we don't have apostles, and the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us and seal us the moment we confess Christ as Lord. But that's just a side point. The main point is that Paul REMINDED Timothy, a missionary and pastor, to fan into flame that gift from God... and not fan into flame the agony of fear. John tells us in 1 John 4 that fear has to do with punishment. No... that's not what God wants us to fan into flame. God does not want us to fan ourselves with shame and fear. He wants us to fan into flame the fire of the Spirit of power, love, and self-control.

Wow. The Greek word for fear also means cowardice. Yikes. Fear and shame make us cowards. We need to be reminded of that because we will naturally drift to fear if we don't keep fanning the flame of the Spirit in our lives.

When we fan the Spirit into flame, we have His power, His strength pouring into our lives. We have His love, His tender affection flowing in us and through us. We have His self control, soundness of mind protecting our thoughts which impact our hearts.

How do I fan into flame the gift of God, the Holy Spirit??? I stay surrendered to Him. I give Him control of my life. Galatians 5 says I walk by the Spirit, live by the Spirit, keep in step with the Spirit. That means that I DON'T walk according to the desires of my flesh. I don't live according to the desires of my flesh. I don't give a voice to my flesh. My flesh is hostile to God. I cannot fan this flame of the Spirit in my own strength. I must have His help!!! He is so willing to be that help!!!

So... PRINCIPLE #5: Don't ever think I've arrived. No matter who I am or how devoted to the Lord I am, I always need to be reminded and encouraged to pursue the Lord for strength, love, and discipline.

PRINCIPLE #6: I need to remind and encourage others to fan the flame of their relationship with the Lord. No one is beyond the need of being encouraged in their faith.

PRINCIPLE #7: We will always drift into fear if we rely on our own strength. We need the Holy Spirit to do the work in us. Maturity in Christ is not that I have the ability to overcome fear or sin. Maturity in Christ is that I am more surrendered to the Spirit so that He can help me overcome fear and sin.

When my oldest daughter was in 1st grade, I remember going to help out at her Christian school (we later homeschooled, then our kids went to public high school... so they got to experience everything 😊). Their math curriculum included speed math tests every day. They would be given 1 - 3 minutes to take the math test. It was to help the teacher see how the student was progressing in math skills, and it would help the student get the math rules solidified in their minds through lots of repetition. It was then that I realized, I can't just tell my kids what the rule is and then expect them to know it. I have to remind them and train them... and not be annoyed by that.

Father, I pray that You'll help my faith to be sincere and then use me to encourage others in their faith and to remind them how wonderful You are and how worthy You are of our worship. Paul wrote this letter 2000 years ago, a very short time before he was executed for his faith. I praise You for keeping his reminders safe all these years so that You could remind me to fan into flame the power, love, and self-control of the Holy Spirit working in my life. I pray that I will never ignore those reminders. I can't wait for the day when I get to run into YOUR arms and stay there forever. Amen.