



BIBLE TEXT | 1 TIMOTHY 1:12-17

12 I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, **13** though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, **14** and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. **15** The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. **16** But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. **17** To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL FOR 1 1 TIMOTHY 1:12-17

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Do you ever stop and marvel at the incredible sinless life of Jesus? It blows me away that though he was fully God, he was also fully human just like I am. He undoubtedly missed the nail with the hammer, smashing his finger just like I have. He stubbed his toes just like I do, yet never sinned. Never a moment lacking self-control. Never an ugly thought. He lived an entire human life without a single mistake. (Most days I can't even get out of bed before I fail...)

I get so discouraged by my many sins in light of His absolute perfection. How on earth am I supposed to compare with that? I've made so many mistakes. I thank God that Jesus's perfection was applied to me. In 1 Timothy 1, Paul (who was equipped by God to do some pretty incredible things) makes a really bold statement. He doesn't try to cling to his own righteousness, he admits that he was pretty much the worst of sinners (verse 15). Before Jesus completely transformed him, Paul violently persecuted Christians and tried to destroy the church. God chose Paul, not because of his "sinless record," but in order to showcase his patience and to model the grace and mercy that our God is capable of showing sinners.

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF 1 TIMOTHY

As I read 1 Timothy 1:15, I want to dance across the living room. It's so freeing! I don't have to work to be perfect. His grace is sufficient for me. His mercy and forgiveness for my sins and grace for my weaknesses will always be opportunities for him to highlight his own faithfulness in the lives of those around me.

First Corinthians 12:9 tells us, "But he said to me, 'My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' So then, I will boast most gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in me." Our faults, our struggles, our sinful pasts are just more opportunities for the power of Christ to reside in us. Our weaknesses demonstrate his strength to other sinners who may feel they're too far gone to receive his grace.

If we want to call ourselves Children of God, we have to first understand that Jesus did not die to save the perfect, but the sinners. (That's us.) When I look at Jesus and what he did for me, I have to admit that like Paul, I'm pretty much the worst. How incredible to serve a God who doesn't ask for our perfection, but who uses the very sin that should condemn us to showcase his faithfulness.

Questions:

1. What stories of past sin have you been hiding, that could be used as an example of God's faithfulness to others?
2. In light of 1 Timothy 1:15-16, how do you feel about your past? Should we be masking our past mistakes and pretending to be perfect?
3. Who in your life needs to hear your story this week? How can your openness highlight the faithfulness of our God?