



In the second letter that the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, we learn a little bit about Timothy's upbringing. Paul says in 2 Timothy 1:5, **"For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice."** If there is any doubt that we as women play a major role in the spiritual upbringing of our children and grandchildren, this should demolish that. And for you moms who are raising your children in the Lord without the help of their father, may this be a great encouragement to your hearts. Walking in faith before your children matters! Everyday your faith walk matters. Timothy's sincere faith first dwelt in his grandmother and mother. Lois and Eunice. He learned it from them.

How sweet it is to be known as a woman who has a sincere faith, and to see the fruition of that lived out in your son or grandson (daughters and granddaughters, alike). To have your faith so regarded that the Lord saw fit to write it down in scripture. I can testify that I know women like that even today, as I'm sure you can, also. Women with a sincere faith. May we, ourselves, be such women, always.

Paul continues to Timothy, **"For this reason (because of this sincere faith) I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."** Now, we have not had Paul lay hands on us, or ordain us into ministry the way he did for Timothy, but ladies, each of us who have accepted Christ's gift of salvation do have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and God has laid hold of us. We have gifts that are from God Himself, given to help us fulfill the plans He has prepared for each of us. What is it that He has called you to do? Do you need to kindle afresh that gift He's blessed you with?

This "sincere faith" of Lois, Eunice and Timothy intrigues me. The word for sincere in Koine` Greek is **"anupokritos"** and it's the direct opposite of hypocrisy. It essentially means, to live as we speak, to be genuine, true, without falsity, pretense or hypocrisy. Sincere. We skim over these words and think, okay, yeah, my faith is sincere. But let's not rush past what God might want to speak to our hearts in this regard. Let's read the definitions again and ask ourselves, how are we doing at this in every area of our life? Are we genuine and true in our relationships, in our business dealings, in our actions? What about falsity? Do we find ourselves exaggerating, or telling little white lies (which are still lies, by the way, and break our fellowship with the Spirit)? Are our words truth, or do we say things to benefit ourselves? Do we say one thing but do the other, whether in talking with others, or committing ourselves to do something that we don't follow through on? That's hypocrisy. Do we put on airs? That's pretense.

If our faith is to be sincere, to be genuine, it must come from a humble place in us that says, there is no good thing within me except for the grace of my God that works in me. Honest, integrity before the Lord and the world.

Of course, the flip-side of that is that we either forget, or just have no clue as to who we are, or what we have in Christ, and we live however we want with the excuse that it's just the way we are, we're only human after all, and since we want to be truthful and not be seen as a hypocrite, we live like the world, as if we belong. Ladies, if we belong to the Lord we shouldn't be looking like the world. If our faith is sincere it will mean we are

wholeheartedly, sold out, for the Lord. Anything short of that is hypocritical to the new nature He birthed in us at salvation. Our position in Christ has given us a new life, made us a new creature. If our faith is to be sincere, we must be mindful of the fact that in that transaction when Christ atoned for our sins, we exchanged our filthy rags (talked about in Isaiah 64:6) for His robes of righteousness.

I remember as a young girl that I got a new dress. Well, it was a hand-me-down, but it was new to me, and I loved it. It was pink, it had a full, chiffon skirt that stuck straight out when I twirled in it, and twirl I did! I loved it so much I didn't want to take it off, but on the other hand, I had to be very careful when I wore it. I didn't want it to get dirty, or soiled. I didn't want the chiffon to get snagged or torn. I was careful not to do things that would ruin its appearance. It's much the same with our walking with God. He has blessed us with Christ's robe of righteousness to put on. A robe that is pure, clean, spotless. Our desire should be to be careful with that. Alert, sober-minded, as the word says. Aware of what we're doing while wearing this precious garment.

I'm not saying it's easy, but as Paul explained to Timothy in the next verse, we see for ourselves, **"For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."** God provides the spirit we need, one that helps us live out that sincere faith in a way that helps us be bold to live our faith, and share our faith. He gives us the power to accomplish life, and provides the love to deal with others. Then there's that final word, "discipline". God gives us the ability to be disciplined to live a real faith, one that doesn't take His grace and run, but lives constantly behind Him, following closely.

The past few years, it seems the Lord gives me a word to think about and work for the year, and this year, "discipline" seems to be my word. I admit, I'm not jumping for joy over that one because I am not a very disciplined person (that would be why He wants me working on it!) But, I need to do to be a disciplined follower of Christ so that I can fulfill the plans He has for me. He's given me the discipline, I just need to apply it. Applying it means this is a joint project. He provides, I utilize. What about you? Has He prompted you to be more disciplined this year? Has He called you to love more this year? He supplies the power, but how will you use that power? In what way has He called you to walk boldly for Him? Is your faith sincere? Have you genuinely believed in the saving grace of Christ's death and resurrection, and if so, are you walking and talking and living like it? He never calls us to anything He isn't willing to supply the ability to accomplish. Living sincere faith is possible because of His work in our hearts and minds. May it be said of us that we are women with sincere faith. May our children and grandchildren see it in full bloom and grow to sincere faith for themselves.

*Father God, thank You for making it possible for us to be bold in our faith, to live powerfully rather than scared and unable. Thank You that by Your power we can love those around us, and Lord, thank You for supplying the discipline we need to accomplish the tasks of the day ahead of us. You are gracious, and You are slow to anger, for which I am so thankful since I so often live more like the hypocrite than one with sincere faith. Help each of us to live for you sincerely, from our hearts to Yours, which is only possible through Jesus Christ, in whose name we come. We submit today and live for You because Christ died for us.*