

## 2 Timothy 2:5-7

### Timothy's Faith and Heritage (NKJV)

3I 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, 4greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy,

5when 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.

**6Therefore** I remind you to **stir up the gift of God which is in you** through the laying on of my hands.

7For God has not given us **a spirit of fear**, but of **power** and of **love** and of **a sound mind**.

This is a beautiful, pregnant passage because it reminds us of 1) who we are in Christ, 2) what we have received from him, and 3) how we are expected to act in the light of this.

Paul begins by Expressing his affection for Timothy. He tells him he's encouraged by his conduct in the faith.

Then he expresses his admiration for his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, who were great women of faith. Paul reminds Timothy that he comes from a

distinguished spiritual lineage and that this imposes upon Timothy a certain kind of behavior, a certain kind of walk in the Christian faith.

This is an important point in the passage.

We always leave a legacy for our children and loved ones. They will be watching the way we live. We will inevitably influence them. At the same time, we should try to imitate their good behavior and honor their example.

I thought about it during this time. Even as we acknowledge the pressure that we are under, we should also remember that our children are watching us to see how we handle the trials and pressures of this moment.

There's a great opportunity to teach them about resiliency. They will take their cue from us we can teach them great lessons about faith and resiliency and trust in God. As they see us standing firm in our faith and demonstrating spiritual courage, they will learn how to behave accordingly when they experience their own types of pressure in adulthood.

I know how influenced I was by the example of my parents are when I was young. They were both people of great resiliency, and I always observed the way they overcame obstacles and losses, and how they always retained their positivity a good healer in the midst of many pressures. That image has guided me throughout my own life, and it

has inspired me to retain hope and optimism when I'm experiencing my own pressures.

We always have a great cloud of witnesses around us. We are influencers whether we want to or not. Therefore we need to behave in a way that inspires others.

On the other hand, Paul tells Timothy that he needs to honor the example of his mother and grandmother. His behavior as a Christian should reflect the excellence of their character. As a minister and pastor, he should exhibit the same strong Christian character that they showed throughout their life.

Spiritually we are of royal lineage. In the spirit God has made us kings and priests. We cannot act the way the world acts. In the light of what we are talking about, the crises and difficulties of life such as the one we are experiencing now, we need to act in a way that is different from those that don't know the Lord.

We have to honor our lineage. We have to make sure we carry ourselves a certain way. We have to exhibit the fortitude, the courage of someone who knows that our redeemer lives, that God is with us in every situation of life, and that in all things we are more than conquerors.

The people around us will be inspired and encouraged by our genuine faith in the Lord. If we don't feel that courage or that faith, then we need to examine ourselves, And

inquire how we can draw closer to him and grow in our faith.

So in verse 6 “for this reason” Paul reminds Timothy that he must fan into flame the gift of God.

This is a call to Christian effort and diligence. God has given to me at the powerful ministerial gift. But that gift needs to be developed.

Explain the image behind “fan into flame“.

Timothy has to make sure that he does his part in becoming the man that God wants him to become. God won't do it all for him.

He is responsible, to a certain degree, for his own Christian growth and development.

God has given him the spirit, but the effort has to come from him. God takes us seriously.

We can pray all we want, but if we don't do our part then we will remain small and undeveloped.

Paul tells Timothy that the gift of God is already in him. But he has to bring it into full manifestation through his efforts and his hard work. A certain level of investment is expected from him in order for God to honor him.

Again, this royal stock that we come from spiritually, The spiritual gifting that we have received, imposes upon us a life of effort and diligence.

I am reminded of the words of God to Joshua before leading the people of Israel into the promised land: “Be strong and courageous, for I have given you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.”

Joshua was already pregnant with the blessing and success of God, but then he had to make every effort, he had to be strong and courageous, in order to bring the blessing into fruition, and to make it effective.

Let me connect this to something I said last Sunday: I said that God takes us seriously only when we stick to our goals and make every effort to fulfill them. He expects us to show commitment.

God doesn't respect us as much if we go from one resolution to another without fulfilling anything. He won't honor our prayers if we are double minded, and we don't really believe that he is faithful to fulfill them.

James says that the double minded man is inconsistent in all his ways, and that such a person should never expect to receive anything from God.

In that same way, when God puts his gift in us, he expects us to be purposeful and determined in developing that gift. Otherwise the gift remains small and undeveloped.

This sounds harsh but that's the way God is. He takes us seriously and he definitely takes himself seriously.

Actually, instead of being discouraged, I find the fact that God takes me so seriously energizing. I know that if I do my part God will certainly fulfill his. My work will not be in vain.

So, Paul tells Timothy: "work hard. Develop your gift. Do your part to bring it into full maturity." God has invested in you. Now, live in the light of your gift, And do your best to honor his investment.

The next part of the text is the best. Paul establishes a contrast. He adds emphasis to his point by saying that God has not given him a Spirit, a "gift", of cowardice or fear, or timidity.

Whenever I'm tempted to become conservative in the use of my energies or to become negative when I have a task before me, I'm reminded of these words of Paul to Timothy. What I have inside of me, my true identity, is not that of a fearful, or lazy, or indecisive individual.

I cannot be like the fearful servant of the parable, that took his talent and buried it because he was afraid of his

master's reaction if he failed when he invested it. Rather, God calls us to be enterprising, to take risks and to be diligent in life.

Paul describes the true spirit that we have received by using three images that balance each other out and provide a full picture of the true identity we have received from God.

He says we have received a spirit of power (*dunamis*), love (*agape*) and a sound mind (*sophronismos*). It is the very opposite of a spirit of fear or timidity.

The identity that God has given us provides us with power to undertake and accomplish things. It enables us to overcome challenges and difficulties in life. It empowers us to become better each day, and to go beyond the limitations of our environment, or our family, or our past. We can be like that light of the dawn that keeps ascending until it becomes as bright as the noon day sun.

Whenever I hear that negative voice that says that I can't, I remember that God has given me a spirit of power, of a person who can do all things in Christ, who strengthens me. All those declarations of power and authority in the Bible are related to this verse of 2 Timothy 1:7.

The second component of that identity is love, Agape, which balances power. Power without love is demonic, controlling and oppressive. It can even become cruel. I

believe this is why the Holy Spirit lead to Paul to add it as the second component of the Christian's true identity. Love tempers power. Actually it makes us stronger. Jesus was the perfect example of love and power living within one person. When we have love, even when we are strong we are capable of identifying with those who are weak or struggling. We can encourage them and be patient with them. We can put ourselves in their place. Love and power living within a single human being is a beautiful thing to watch. The Bible says,

**Psalm 85:10**

**10**

Mercy and truth have met together;  
Righteousness and peace have kissed.

A person who has love and power within their personal repertoire is a truly admirable human being. Paul is telling us that we have that capacity within ourselves already. God has given it to us through his Spirit that indwells us. We simply need to accept it by faith and begin to live as if we have it. We need to begin to take small steps of faith and put these virtues of power and love into practice. They will grow increasingly stronger as we fan into flame through our efforts their presence within us.

Finally, Paul says that we have received from God a sound mind. The Greek word *sophronismos* He's one of my favorite words in the entire Bible. It refers to a mind that thinks straight. A clear and lucid mind. A mind that sees

reality for what it is. It is not a mind persecuted by the ghosts of the past or the fears that dwell within us from childhood or past traumas or failures. It is the mind of Christ. We could almost say that it is a scientific mind, a realistic mind. It's suggest soberness, self control and self mastery. It has no place for fear or self condemnation. There's another place for that same word is used. It is where the apostle says that we should not think of ourselves more highly than we should, but that we should think of ourselves soberly, only according to the measure of faith that we have received. No more and no less. This is *sophronismos*, a sound mind in some translations.

If we have power and we have love, and then we balance this with a mind that thinks well in that computes reality with precision, then we are truly "little gods." We can approach life with God's balanced perspective.

This is what we have received from God. This is our true identity. Let us live accordingly.

