

2 Timothy 1:1-7 & 3:14-17 – “Timothy’s Gifts”

(Pew Bible Page: 995 & 996)

Intro: Timothy was a young man of many gifts, passed down to him through godly parents, both biological and spiritual. Tonight, we want to look at the gifts God gave Timothy for carrying out His ministry, and we want to especially take note of the role played by parents and grandparents, both physical and spiritual, in passing down to children the blessings of the Christian faith.

Proposition: God is at work through spiritual fathers and mothers, growing gifts of grace in His children. Who are your spiritual parents? Who are your spiritual children?

Billboard:	(vv.1:1-4)	The Gift of Grace
	(v.5)	The Gift of Faith
	(vv.6-7)	The Gift of God’s Spirit
	(vv.3:14-17)	The Gift of God’s Word

(vv.1:1-4) The Gift of Grace – God had given to Timothy the gift of saving grace through the ministry of Paul, Timothy’s spiritual father in the faith. Paul, knowing that his earthly journey would soon come to an end, wrote to encourage Timothy: **2 Timothy 1:1–2** - **1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, **2** To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. As we read Paul’s letter to Timothy, it is evident that Paul knows that his death is quickly approaching. Timothy knows this as well, and it is safe to assume that the sensitive soul of Timothy is already grieving the anticipated loss of his father in the faith. Doubtless Paul was especially precious to Timothy because Paul was responsible for Timothy’s conversion. Timothy is first mentioned in **Acts 16:1–4** - **1** Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. **2** He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. **3** Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. **4** As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. Acts 16 deals with Paul’s second visit to Timothy’s city, and Timothy’s call to ministry through Paul. Apparently, Timothy had been converted during the first visit of Paul and Barnabas to Lystra, and in the intervening years Timothy had grown in his faith, so much so that Paul wanted Timothy to join him in ministry. We are given enough contextual information in the text to surmise something of Timothy’s backstory. Timothy’s mother and grandmother were Jewish and during Paul’s ministry in Lystra had put their faith in Christ. This must be so, for there was literally no other source available from which they could have heard the gospel before Paul and Barnabas’ arrival. Timothy’s father was not Jewish but was Greek and there is no mention of his putting his faith in Christ. Timothy also must have put his faith in Christ at this time, and Paul became Timothy’s father in the faith, a substitute spiritual “dad” if you will, filling the role Timothy’s actual father was unable to assume. On Paul’s second visit, described in these verses from Acts 16, Paul called Timothy to join his missionary team and Timothy became Paul’s most trusted associate. It’s easy to understand why Paul’s letter to Timothy is so tender given the special relationship that had developed between these two Christian workers. Paul, the older man, considered Timothy his child in the faith, and indeed Paul was Timothy’s spiritual father, in the same way that Paul called the runaway slave, Onesimus, his spiritual child in **Philemon 10** - **10** I appeal to you for

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my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. Paul assumed the role of spiritual father to Timothy with joy as is shown in **2 Timothy 1:3-4** - **3** *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.* **4** *As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.* A good father passes on to his son the blessings that he himself has received. Notice the fatherly gifts that Paul passed on to Timothy, his *“beloved child in the faith.”* First, he passed on to Timothy a godly heritage. Like Timothy, Paul had benefited from godly parents who, to the best of their knowledge, served the Lord with a clear conscience. Paul spoke for and modeled this same behavior in mentoring Timothy. Secondly, Paul prayed “constantly” for Timothy – “night and day” he said. The prayers of godly parents can accomplish more in a child’s life than can be spoken. Finally, note that Paul did not hide his affection for Timothy – he connected with him emotionally. Paul loved Timothy, understood Timothy, took joy in Timothy’s presence, and longed to see Timothy once more before Rome carried out its sentence on Paul. Paul was God’s means of bringing saving grace to Timothy.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] God imparts His gift of grace for salvation through spiritual fathers.

[ILLUSTRATION] One of the great tragedies of our day is that the collapse of families has become an epidemic in our society. We hear story after story of the damage that results from fathers walking away from families; of mothers abandoning husbands and kids for supposedly “greener pastures.” We’re living in a terribly self-centered age and the results are causing untold social and personal devastation to so many lives.

[APPLICATION] Just as children need fathers in their lives so they can grow to maturity, so Christians need a spiritual father’s involvement to grow to spiritual maturity. You don’t have to be a biological father to raise spiritual offspring. The gift of grace can be passed along to souls who need examples of a godly heritage, relentless prayer support, and genuine Christian love by anyone willing to get involved in their lives. Someone did that for you, didn’t they? What is hindering you from giving those same gifts of grace to someone else?

(v.5) The Gift of Faith – It is important to take note of the fact that Timothy’s grandmother Lois, and mother, Eunice had played a significant role in Timothy’s conversion as well. **2 Timothy 1:5** - **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.* Like Paul, Timothy enjoyed a godly heritage that prepared his heart to hear and receive the good news about Jesus. It was the practice of faithful Jews in those days to teach their children *“their letters”* – how to read, in other words – by teaching them Scripture. Even young children memorized large portions of Scripture in the normal course of being raised by godly parents. This training could not bring the good news about Jesus yet, but it could prepare the heart to receive that good news when it finally arrived. *“The Old Testament Scriptures Timothy memorized were able to make him wise for salvation – to prepare his heart for salvation. They disciplined him in obedience to God and also pointed forward to the coming Messiah.”*¹ The result of this training was that when the gospel was preached by Paul in Timothy’s hearing, faith sprang to life in Timothy’s heart. It’s

¹ Expositor’s Bible Commentary.

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the Word that does this work, but the groundwork was laid through many years of faithful preparation by Lois and Eunice.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] God imparts His gift of faith for salvation through godly mothers.

[ILLUSTRATION] If you come to our Wednesday night Gopher Buddies / Olympians program, you’ll be able to see spiritual grandmothers and mothers at work in the lives of a hundred-twenty or so children on a typical evening. A big part of what goes on in those programs is helping children memorize Scripture verses. The Bible is taught for sure, but memorization is central to what we’re trying to accomplish. Why? Because we know that getting God’s Word into those little hearts and minds prepares the way for the good news about Jesus. It could be the case, and doubtless often is, that the ground being prepared today won’t receive the needed spiritual seed of salvation for many years. That’s what happened to both Paul and Timothy. Faithfulness in preparing heart soil today promises germination and harvest tomorrow.

[APPLICATION] We are always looking for more help in our Children and Youth ministries, but the reality is that even the hearts of adults need preparation to receive the gospel fruitfully. If you can get involved with Children through CEF Good News Clubs, or your church’s Children’s program, what’s keeping you from doing it? Everyone can’t work with kids – I get it. But Choices Pregnancy Center, Little Lambs Prison Ministry, Butterfly Arising Human Trafficking Ministry, or your local church’s adult ministries can always use your help and are right here in our community. How could you prepare a heart for the coming of the King?

(vv.6-7) The Gift of God’s Spirit – Timothy received the gift of the Spirit for special service to the Lord through the hands of Paul, his spiritual father. **2 Timothy 1:6–7 - 6** *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, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.* Every believer receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion (cf. Ephesians 1:13-14), but there is a special unction that is granted to those called to gospel ministry. In the Book of Acts, we find several examples of this principle: **Acts 13:1–3 - 1** *Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2* *While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3* *Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.* This is the record of Paul and Barnabas’ ordination for Christian ministry. In Acts 19 we find Paul practicing this same service for twelve believers in Ephesus: **Acts 19:6–7 - 6** *And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. 7* *There were about twelve men in all.* It is apparent in verses 6 & 7 of our present study that Paul had practiced this same ministry with Timothy because in those verses Paul reminded Timothy to “*fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*” As with the gift of the Spirit received at conversion, so is the gift of the Spirit imparted for ministry: there is one baptism but many fillings. The flame of the Spirit is given to us as a gift, but it is our responsibility to fan the gift into flame whenever we sense ourselves lagging in “*power, love and self-control.*” Effective Christian service is impossible without the Spirit’s power (cf. John 15:5). The unction of the Spirit is essential for Christian ministry.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] God imparts the Spirit’s unction for service through spiritual fathers.

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[ILLUSTRATION] In the coming months, the Elders of BFC will be laying hands on a couple of men, ordaining them to Christian ministry. You’ll learn the details of who and when later, but the point I want to make is that the Elders alone will not be the spiritual fathers of those men, for the Elders are simply your representatives. In a very real sense, it is the congregation that through the Elders lays hands on men for service in Ministry.

[APPLICATION] Let me encourage you to be in prayer for the men who will be ordained, and for your Elders who will do the work of ordaining these men. Ordination isn’t just a quaint ceremony carried out so that ministry professionals can get a tax break from the government. Ordination is a matter God takes very seriously. The Elders lay their hands on the man, but if God’s hand isn’t previously laid on him there will be no power for ministry, no hand of blessing. You can join your Elders in prayer now for God’s unction to be poured out on those who will be ordained in just a few months at BFC. God imparts the Spirit’s unction for service through spiritual fathers.

(vv.3:14-17) The Gift of the God’s Word – Another essential gift for life, godliness, and effective ministry is the gift of God’s Word. This is probably obvious to most of us, but notice that Paul’s exhortation was not for Timothy to *get* the Word, but to *keep* the Word he had received: **2 Timothy 3:14–15 - 14** *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it* **15** *and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* The precious gift of “the sacred writings” Timothy had received through Lois and Eunice had made him “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” – all well and good, but here Paul urges Timothy to “continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed.” The danger being warned against is neglect of the precious gift of the Word. Like the gift of the Spirit, Christians in general, to say nothing of those in ministry, must constantly “fan into flame the gift of God” in this area as well. It is far too easy to become bored, saturated, or neglectful of the marvelous gift of God’s Word. “Familiarity breeds contempt,” unfortunately, so we must remind ourselves regularly of the wonderful gift God has given us in His Word. And it is a wonderful gift! Paul went on to enumerate the glory of the Scripture in the famous verses that follow: **2 Timothy 3:16–17 - 16** *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* The Scripture is wonderful because it is not man’s creation but God’s – it is “breathed out by God” – inspired, in other words. Peter, in his second epistle explains to us fully what this means: **2 Peter 1:20–21 - 20** *knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. 21* *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.* Warren Wiersbe helpfully says: “The Bible is different from every other book – even books about the Bible – because it has been set apart by God for special purposes.” Because the Bible is inspired – in other words, is “a dependable record of God’s thoughts”² – we can always count on the fact that it is true and dependable. That is why Paul goes on to tell us that the Scriptures are “profitable for teaching” (what is right); “for reproof” (what is not right); “for correction” (how to get right); “for training in righteousness” (how to stay right).³ The Scriptures are a marvel. How did Timothy receive the Scriptures? “Knowing from whom you learned it **15** and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings.” Through godly parents, but biological and spiritual.

² Warren Wiersbe.

³ Warren Wiersbe.

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[DOCTRINAL POINT] God imparts the gift of His Word through godly parents, both biological and spiritual.

[ILLUSTRATION] Christian ministry is not complex. Someone has noted that it is simply a matter of “*one beggar showing another beggar where to find bread.*” Simple it may be, but God has not sent His angels to do this work among men. The work is entrusted to you and me. We are his agents – we are the spiritual parents charged with the privilege and responsibility to pass the Word of God on to the next generation.

[APPLICATION] We dare not take this matter lightly. The external destiny of souls’ rests on this matter. The health of Christ’s Church rests on this matter. The health of our society rests on this matter. I’ve recently been reading a book that has challenged me to realize that the moral decline we see around us today is the result of our society rejecting the glue that for so long held it together – when we rejected the God’s Word, we rejected our “*agreed upon origin story*” – the story of who we are, where we came from, where we’re going. Having rejected the only thing that stuck us together as a society, we are now shattering into a thousand different fragments, each one with a sharp edge turned toward the other. Unless we have revival in the church, and an awakening in society, things will only get worse. We as God’s people must make passing on God’s Word central to our purpose, first because we are commanded to “*make disciples.*” Secondly we do it because the nation we live in will certainly crash and burn if we don’t. God uses people to pass the truth of His Word on to a needy world and we are the people called to fulfill that task in our generation.

Conclusion: God is at work through spiritual fathers and mothers, growing gifts of grace in His children. Who are your spiritual parents? Who are your spiritual children? What is our part to do in our generation? Much depends on how we answer these questions.