

Paul Encourages Timothy

Key Verse:
***“Wherefore I
put thee in
remembrance that
thou stir up the
gift of God, which
is in thee by the
putting on of
my hands.”***
—II Timothy 1:6

Selected Scriptures:
***II Timothy 1:1-14;
3:14,15***

Though the Apostle Paul apparently had no natural children, his tender address to Timothy as “my own son in the faith” shows the depth of his affection. (I Tim. 1:2) He regarded all believers as his spiritual children, and this feeling was especially strong toward Timothy, who had long and faithfully served beside him.

Paul’s words of today’s lesson are sound advice to all Christians and especially to those young in the Truth. They hold even greater impact on those who have consecrated their lives to the Lord and his service and are seeking to be useful as his ministers or servants according to their talents and opportunities.

These words were addressed to Timothy when Paul was a prisoner in Rome, shortly before his death. Timothy was no longer a child, but perhaps about forty years of age, having labored with the apostle for many years. At the time of this letter, Timothy was serving the church at Ephesus and received there the epistles that bear his name.

Paul introduces himself by reminding Timothy of

his apostleship. He was made a witness of the Lord's resurrection by having been granted a glimpse of his glorious person while on the road to Damascus. Thereafter, Paul was commissioned to declare the conditions of God's promise of life provided in Christ Jesus.—Acts 9:3-20; 22:14,15

Paul mentions his clear conscience before God, his constant prayers for Timothy, and his desire to see him again after their parting at Ephesus. (II Tim. 1:3,4) Knowing the dangers that accompany a prominent position, Paul encouraged Timothy to remain humble, faithful, and grounded in the Scriptures. (vs. 13) He needed to stand firmly in the strength God provides through his Word.

Paul also reminded Timothy of the sincere faith and piety he had received from his mother and grandmother, affirming that this heritage had laid a solid foundation in his heart. (vs. 5) Other Scriptures emphasize that godly parents can lay a foundation of character in their children upon which lives of usefulness may be built.—Deut. 6:6,7; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4

The apostle encouraged Timothy to “stir up the gift of God” within him—to rekindle it with renewed energy. He also warned Timothy not to give way to fear, reminding him that God's spirit is not one of fear, “but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (II Tim. 1:6,7) Such a spirit produces courage, loving devotion to God and his people, and wise judgment in the use of zeal. It was Paul's desire that all of God's children might increasingly gain this spirit, so that their talents would be used both fearlessly and wisely in the Master's service.

In II Tim. 3:14,15, the Apostle reminded Timothy that he had been taught of God, and this teaching had come to him through the “holy scriptures” of the Old Testament and through the words of Jesus and his inspired apostles. Just as Timothy was encouraged by Paul, let us also be fortified by these words from the beloved Apostle. ■