

Paul's Advice to Timothy 2 Timothy 1:1-7-3:14-17

by J.R. Miller

Paul's letter to Timothy emphasizes the importance of faithful living, prayer, and the role of Scripture in our lives.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:1

Topics: "Faith", "The Importance of Scripture"

Description

J.R. Miller reflects on Paul's deep affection for Timothy, emphasizing the importance of Christian companionship and the impact of a godly upbringing. Paul, writing from prison, expresses his longing for Timothy and his gratitude for the young man's sincere faith, which was nurtured by his mother and grandmother. He encourages Timothy to stir up the gifts within him and to stand firm in his faith despite challenges. Miller highlights the significance of Scripture in guiding believers towards salvation and equipping them for good works, reminding us that true wisdom comes from living out God's Word. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a commitment to faith and the active practice of biblical teachings.

Transcript

It is very interesting to study Paul's friendships. Evidently he was a man of very warm and tender heart, with deep sympathies. He needed Christian companionship and his heart hungered for love. In the Acts and Epistles we can trace the story of many of his friendships. None of them is more beautiful than that with Timothy. Timothy was a young man who had been brought to Christ by the apostle, and who was his companion and helper during many years. In this passage, we have glimpses of the strong affection that bound this young man to the old apostle's heart.

"Paul. . . to Timothy, my dearly beloved son." We all like to get letters from our friends. Letters are so common now, that they are not prized as they used to be when they were rare. We can imagine Timothy receiving this letter from his old friend in Rome. It was written from a prison. It is full of loving counsel. It contained the last words of Paul that have been preserved to us.

"I thank God. . . as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers." It is a noble thing to live so that people thank God for us. Parents are very happy when they can thank God for their children. Sometimes they cannot do so--sometimes children live so as to bring great sorrow to the hearts of their parents. It is beautiful, too, to find that Paul prayed so earnestly for his young friend Timothy. It is a great

privilege to be remembered in prayer by godly people.

"Greatly desiring to see you." Paul was very lonely in his prison. In the closing part of his letter--he says he was almost entirely alone. "Only Luke is with me." He mentioned different friends who had been with him--but who had gone away, some of them having forsaken him. He begged Timothy to come to him as soon as possible.

There is something very pathetic about this picture of Paul's aloneness. He speaks of his first trial, and says that no one took his part then, but that all forsook him. It is not hard to be faithful to God--when other people stand beside us. It is not hard to be a Christian in a Christian home, in a Christian church, in a Christian school, or when one's companions are in full sympathy with one's religion. But it is very hard to be a Christian, when one must stand alone, when no one sympathizes. Every young person should learn to stand so firmly for Christ, that even if left entirely alone in the midst of ungodly people--he may still be able to stand faithful to Christ. Paul longed to see Timothy. We are reminded of Jesus himself in Gethsemane, when he craved the presence and sympathy of his closest friends in his great sorrow.

"The sincere faith. . . which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in you also." Here is a glimpse of a beautiful home of the olden time. We can picture to ourselves the old grandmother with gentle heart and softened speech, who took delight in teaching the boy the words of God and in praying with him and for him. Then we can think of the mother, amid her household cares supported by the promise of God and the hopes of true religion, also teaching her child the truths which gave so much joy and comfort to the Jewish mothers in those days. No wonder, with such training, amid such influences, Timothy grew to be such a godly man. It is a great privilege to be born and reared amid such holy influences.

"Stir up the gift of God, which is in you." Evidently Timothy was not doing the best possible with his life. He was not making the most of the grace of God that was in him. The fire needs to be stirred up that it may blaze and flame and send out heat and light. In Timothy's heart, the blessings of God's grace were smouldering too quietly, and needed to be stirred up. Many young Christians need the same counsel. They are good, honest, truthful, faithful, in many ways--but they are not doing their best. They must live much more earnestly, and be much more useful to their fellow men.

"God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." It seems as if Timothy was fearful, shy, and almost cowardly. The times were hard for consistent Christian living. Those who followed Christ, were sure to meet persecution, and oftentimes death was the certain consequence of faithful confession of Christ. In our days it much easier to follow Christ. No danger is involved in it. We need have no fear of persecution. Yet even in these times there are those who are in danger of suffering from shyness and fearfulness. God wants us to be brave and loyal, wherever we are called upon to stand.

"Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you--guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us." A follower of Christ never should be swerved from the things which are true and right.

A great many people know plenty of Scripture truth--but do not live it out. The test of knowing--is doing. It is not enough to learn. "If you know these things--happy are you if you do them." John 13:17. We really know only so much truth--as we get into our experience and conduct. All of the Bible we can truly call our own--is what we have learned to live. It is a beautiful thing when a person has been well-taught; it is still more beautiful when he abides in the things which he has been taught, living out the lessons in daily life.

"From a child you have known the holy Scriptures." It is a great privilege to grow up in an atmosphere of Bible teaching, to have for first teacher a godly mother, who whispers into the ear sweet things of God's love and the counsels of heavenly wisdom. Such influences affect the life to its very close.

"The holy Scriptures. . . are able to make you wise unto salvation." There are other kinds of wisdom in this world which do not make one wise to salvation. A man may know a great deal about science or literature or history--and be very wise in this world's learning, and yet not be saved. The bible gives the true wisdom. It tells us that we are lost sinners--but it does not stop there. It answers our questions about duty, about God, about the future life and how to live so as to gain the heavenly blessedness. It makes us wise unto salvation!

"Through faith which is in Christ Jesus." The Bible itself does not save anyone--it only shows the way to be saved. One might know all the Bible--and yet be lost. We are saved only when we lay hold upon Christ by faith, when we receive him as our Lord and Savior. We see Christ as he is offered to sinners. When we take him as our Savior, appropriating the blessings of his cross and resurrection, we are saved. Faith means the acceptance of Christ--and the committing of our life to him.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, reproof, correcting and instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The Bible is the Word of God. Holy men wrote it as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. When therefore we open the Scriptures--we know that it was God who wrote, through holy men, the words we read. There are other good books in the world--but none like the Bible. We ought to read it reverently, since it is God who speaks to us in its pages. We ought to believe it, for God's Word must be absolutely true. We ought to obey it, since what God commands must be right and the best for us. We ought to yield our whole life to its influence, to be molded by it, since it will fashion us into the divine likeness.

It is profitable for teaching--telling us things we could never learn anywhere else. It is profitable for reproof. We often need reproof, and the Word of God is faithful in telling us when we sin. It is profitable for correction. It would set us right when we are going wrong; it shows us the faults in our life or character, that we may put them away. It is profitable for instruction in righteousness--that is, in right things and right ways.

"So that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." The object of the Word of God--is to make godly men out of us. It we follow it in everything, that is what it will do. It will draw out every feature of Christly beauty. It will correct the faults and blemishes. It will develop our life at the points of weakness and incompleteness. It will prune off our sins--and strengthen our Christian graces and virtues. It will thoroughly equip us for every good work, preparing us for every duty.

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