

Encouraging a Son in the Faith *1 Timothy 4:1-5, 12-16*

Good Morning...Happy Father's Day!

Mark Twain once said, *"When a boy turns 13, seal him in a barrel and feed him through a knot hole. When he turns 16, plug up the hole."*

Mark Twain also said, *"When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around.*

But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years."

Being a parent is the most rewarding, yet, painful tasks you can ever face in life.

I have four sons, and at times, I understand how Mr. Twain felt. Here are some dad-isms I have said to my sons

- *I brought you into this world and I can take you out just as quick.*
- *If all your friends jumped off a bridge, would you?*
- *If I told you once, I told you a thousand times.*
- *"Who said life was fair?"*
- *"When I was your age, we didn't have all the conveniences you have, we had to (whatever) and we were happy about it"*
- *"Because I said so." "And that's that."*
- *Stop complaining, "It will build character."*
- *"Do you think I'm talking just to hear my own voice?"*

Since today is Father's Day, I want to describe Paul and Timothy's spiritual father and son relationship.

Please open your Bibles to *1 Timothy 4*...

We are told that Timothy was a faithful servant of Christ, a grounded believer, a Pastor, and a missionary.

Where did Timothy learn to be a mature Christ-follower?

Three different times in his writings, the Apostle Paul calls Timothy, his son in the faith.

1 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, 2 To Timothy, a true son in the faith...NKJV

The awesome responsibility of being a parent is the most underestimated ministry in the universe.

Many Christians want to be in the lime light while serving Jesus; but, we will never have more responsibility or reward in serving the Lord, than raising children to **know** the Lord Jesus Christ.

I often wonder what impact I will have on my Grand Children, because of the faith that I taught my sons.

Timothy is mentioned in the *Book of Acts*, *Hebrews*, and several of Paul's letters; his name means "**God's Honor**"

If your Bibles are open to *1 Timothy 4*, let's hear a Spiritual Father's instruction to his son in the faith...

I. Take heed to your ministry.

Read *1 Timothy 4:1-5, 12-16*

After his conversion, Timothy grew quickly in the faith.

When Paul came to Lystra on his second journey, Timothy was a disciple there, who was well respected by other believers.

Paul must have seen something special in this young believer and decided to take him under his wing and mentor him.

Paul asked Timothy to go with him on his next missionary journey and Timothy was willing to leave behind family, personal plans, and ambitions, to go with Paul.

Timothy travelled with Paul and Silas through Asia Minor, and several other locations. It was on his 2nd missionary journey, Paul visited Ephesus and evidently planted the church there.

On Paul's third missionary journey, he spent three years teaching at the Church at Ephesus and then left for Macedonia; that is when Paul installed Timothy as the Pastor of Ephesus.

Paul wrote *1 Timothy* to advise his coworker Timothy about issues in the church in Ephesus. False teachers in Ephesus were one of the main reasons for this letter.

What can we learn from Timothy's example, which he learned from Paul?

God doesn't measure a follower by their **physical** age.

Notice *1 Timothy 4:12*, “*Let no one despise your youth*” i.e., don’t let anyone look down on you because of your age.

Timothy was a young man, so there were some people in the church who had difficulty accepting his leadership.

How could he overcome the uncertainty, to him being so young?

There was only one way: Timothy had to prove he was mature enough to fulfill the calling of God in his life and ministry.

Key: Maturity in Christ has nothing to do with the amount of years a person has been a Christian.

There are some people who have been Christians for years, who still behave like Children.

Some immature Christians insist on getting their own way, and when they don’t get their way; they rebel even further.

But on the flip side; there are some newer believers who live surrendered to Christ and His calling for their lives, immediately after their profession of faith in Christ.

So in order for Timothy’s leadership to be accepted; he had to live a mature life, as an example to other believers.

Although he was young in years, Timothy was not young in the Lord. He was a seasoned Christian! God can use us for the ministry, whether we are young or old, or in between.

You have heard the saying... “*Don’t judge a book by its cover*”; well, it is **wrong** to judge people by their age as well.

God's love gives young and old people value. Sometimes society says some people have nothing to offer because of age or a because of a so-called disability.

But Timothy wanted to be used by God. Now it is one thing to say God can use my life; it is another thing to actually be willing, to serve Him like Timothy did.

We need to be like Timothy and set aside our personal agendas and ambitions to allow God to make even more of our lives.

Since Timothy was faithful in the small matters; the Lord and the Apostle Paul entrusted him with larger things.

When we are faithful in small matters; the Lord will **entrust** us with larger responsibilities.

Luke 16:10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

Luke 16:11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, how will you commit to your trust the true riches? NKJV

Fathers, this is a good principle to teach our children...

God looks at our hearts to see who can be trusted with spiritual responsibilities. God is looking for willing, surrendered hearts!

Jesus recognized in Timothy, a person whom He could use for His church and His kingdom; even though he was young.

Timothy demonstrates how important loyalty and faithfulness are, when it comes to being a servant for Christ's kingdom.

When God looks at our hearts what does He see?

Parents, are we teaching our children to have a heart's desire for loyalty towards Christ and His people?

While Timothy was the pastor at Ephesus, the believers soon forgot about his youth, **by recognizing** his spiritual experience, which he learned this from his spiritual father Paul.

Note the word "**example**" in *verse 12* means "*a pattern; a model; or something to be copied or followed*".

Everyone is living as an **example**; some are good some are bad.

Paul made a comment to the Corinthian church which fits well

2 Corinthians 3:1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?

2 Corinthians 3:2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

2 Corinthians 3:3 clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. NKJV

I have often taught about the Positional and Practical sides of our walk with Christ.

The legalist says we have to work and keep rules, in order to earn God's favor. The sloppy Grace person says, "*We are God's chosen perfect child; so I can live and act anyway I want.*"

To cheapen God's grace to the point where we say, "*I can live and act anyway I want*" discounts the very costly gift, the Father has given us, in His Son Jesus.

1 Corinthians 6:19 do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

1 Corinthians 6:20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.
NKJV

Positionally... I AM...

- Complete in Him ***Colossians 2:10***
- Free forever from sin's power ***Romans 6:14***
- Sanctified ***1 Corinthians 6:11***
- Loved eternally ***1 Peter 1:5***
- Eternally kept in the palm of his hand ***John 10:29***
- No longer condemned ***Romans 8:1-2***
- On my way to heaven ***John 14:6***
- Seated in heavenly places ***Ephesians 1:3***
- Holy, perfect, righteous

Now practically, we are to die to ourselves and live for Christ!

Fathers we should live in such a way that our children will be pleasing to Christ, if they copy our example!

II. Paul told Timothy to be an example.

Re- Read *1 Timothy 4:12*

1. ... *be an example in Word.*

There is a two-fold admonition here:

Christians should be an example with what we say and the way we say it. Paul told Timothy to control his **tongue** at all times!

The *Book of James* has a lot to say about the tongue; in fact, controlling our tongues is one of the main themes of the Book.

In *Chapter 3*, James uses two analogies to show how the tongue can control the whole person.

James also uses the examples of a horse and a ship which are much larger and faster than human beings; but are controlled by a very small part.

James then uses a negative example of a spark, which can set the whole forest on fire. In the same way, an untamed tongue can create havoc for the whole body.

James 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. NKJV

It has been said that most people speak between 18,000 and 25,000 words a day.

That's a lot of words, which have a lot of potential for good and harm, because the tongue is the revealer of the heart.

Jesus said in, *Matthew 12:34 out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. NKJV*

J.C. Ryle said; “*Our words are the evidence of the state of our hearts as surely as the taste of the water is an evidence of the state of the spring.*”

We should be striving to be more like Jesus and to give Him control of every part of our lives, which includes our words.

Scripture describes the tongue as a piercing sword, a weapon of ruin, a scorching fire, an instrument of harmful gossip, an agent of false teachings, and a device for lies and complaining.

There are many other examples of how our words can be harmful, putting others down, pride, manipulation, exaggeration, flattery, ridicule and sarcasm.

Paul said to the Colossian church in *Colossians 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. NKJV*

So here, Paul told Timothy to be an example with his speech. Parents, our words will influence our children.

The second part of this admonition; we are to use the Word of God as our **example** for life.

Paul told Timothy in *2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

2 Timothy 3:17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. NKJV

2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, NKJV

2. ... be an example in conduct.

Not only do our words matter; our behavior demonstrates what we truly believe. We are to demonstrate that we are true followers of the Lord Jesus, and we are living for Him!

Ephesians 4:20 But you have not so learned Christ,

Ephesians 4: 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:

Ephesians 4:22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

Ephesians 4:23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

Ephesians 4:24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

The only way I can show you I love Jesus is through my conduct and behavior.

Fathers we need to demonstrate Jesus through our **actions**.

3. ...be an example in love.

I don't know of anything more powerful than love! Love is the strongest power in the world.

It has been said that hate can motivate people into doing all sorts of different things...wars, revenge, strife, etc. True love is the only thing stronger than **hate**.

“Corrie” ten Boom wrote a book called, “*The Hiding Place*”, where she tells some of the stories of her and her sister in a German concentration camp.

In an article from 1972, Corrie told how she came face to face with one of the concentration camp guards where her sister died.

“It was in a church in Munich that I saw him in a room where I had just spoken, with the message that God forgives.”

She had just said to the audience, “*When we confess our sins, God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever.*”

Corrie recalled her shock when this former German guard approached her and asked for her forgiveness.

She said, “*I stood there—I whose sins had every day to be forgiven—and could not. Betsie had died in that place—could the guard erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?*”

“Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars.

Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids.”

“Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart,” (Corrie Ten Boom)

Corrie prayed, *“Jesus, help me!”*. *“I can lift my hand. I can do that much. **You supply the feeling**”*.

True Love is what causes people to forgive atrocities like Corrie Ten Boom did, for the concentration camp she endured.

True love is how Jesus Christ forgave us for our sin and rebellion. Love provided our Salvation! **For God so loved us.**

All believers should be living examples of pure, fervent Christian love! Our hearts should be filled with love, because every believer possesses the Holy Spirit,

The Holy Spirit causes love to overflow in our hearts, because God is love.

Jesus Himself said...***John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” NKJV***

1 Corinthians 13 says we can have all gifts and understanding; but if we do not have love, we are simply a noise maker!

Fathers we need to teach our children by being an example of Christ’s Love.

4. ...be an example in Spirit.

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” NKJV

Here again is a dual practical lesson: Every true believer has the Holy Spirit in their heart! **However...**

In the original language, “*in Spirit*”, describes the inner enthusiasm and **excitement** of a child of God.

Our hearts are filled with enthusiasm because we love Jesus and want the whole world to know it!

We should be the most enthusiastic people on this earth!

We have been set free and forgiven! If you are not excited about Christ great love for you; it is time to do a heart evaluation!

We need to let Jesus stir us up and be excited for the fact that He is on the throne working out His plan of redemption; and He has chosen us to be a part of His plan!

Fathers get excited about hunting, fishing, sports, money, and NASCAR; but, *Do your children see you excited about Christ?*

If we are lethargic towards Christ and things of His kingdom; then we need to look to what the Psalmist has said...

Psalm 34:8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. NIV

Get a taste of the Real thing and you'll never want a counterfeit

5. ...*be an example in faith.*

Of course we know a relationship with the Lord always starts with Faith; because ***without faith it is impossible to please God.***

But: The Greek word for *faith* here is actually “**faithfulness**”

In Faith implies that we trust God and are to be faithful to Him, because genuine Faith always leads to faithfulness.

Faith and Love often go together.

This means to be loyal to Jesus Christ and His church!

No matter what the circumstance, Timothy was to be faithful! If you are loyal to Jesus, you will be known as faithful.

You **may not** be able to do a lot of things; but you can be faithful, because faithfulness is a choice! God honors our faithfulness and service to Him.

So parents, we need to be an example of faithful Christian living; which leads to the last point there in *vs.12*

6. ...be an example in purity.

The way we live in this evil, immoral world is so important. We are to practice holy and pure living!

Paul is not speaking of sinless perfection; but being **surrendered** to the prompting of the Holy Spirit of God.

Ephesus was a center of sexual impurity, and you can bet that young Timothy was faced with a lot of temptation.

In *1 Timothy 5:2*, Paul tells Timothy to treat the women of the church with all purity. Godly behavior not only helps believers; but it also has an influence on non-believers as well.

If non-believers hear of sexual immorality in the church and in the lives of Christians; this gives Christianity a black eye.

By living pure lives; it proves we have the **hope** of the Holy Spirit living in us that the world so desperately desires.

Re-Read *1 Timothy 4:15-16*

First we should get saved ourselves and then influence others. Our children and other people will see our example!

People are watching our lives, and we should present a good testimony for God!

Romans 14:7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. NKJV

Paul lived as a contagious example to Timothy as a Christian Father.

On my death bed, I doubt I will worry about all the things I have accumulated on this earth; instead, I am sure I will think about the time I wasted and did not invest into my family.

Once I am in heaven; the thought of what legacy I left behind for my family will be all that matters.

I often wonder what impact I will have on my Grand Children, because of the faith that I taught my sons.

Fathers we will never have more responsibility or reward than raising children to Know the Lord Jesus Christ. May we seek to be our children's spiritual fathers and teach them to serve Him!