

THE MAKING OF A GOSPEL-CENTERED LEADER

2 Timothy 1:1-7

We've entitled our series "Healthy Church." It comes from two places. First, we desire to be a healthy church at IDC. Second, the books, 2 Timothy and Titus, speak about health in a variety of ways.

Here we have two pastors in two difficult settings called to lead a church to health.

Here are a few essentials for important matters for a healthy church:

1. **Healthy Doctrine**

- "Sound words" or "sound doctrine" is used in 2 Timothy and Titus (eg., 1:13; Titus 1:9). The word of "**sound**" is "healthy."
- When Paul speaks of false doctrine, he uses images of unhealthiness. "Their talk spreads like **gangrene**." (2:17); False teachers are also described as being men who are "**corrupted in mind**" (3:8).

We must have a proper view of Jesus, of the Scriptures, and what it means to live as a Christian. Ephesus and Crete was filled with those teaching other doctrines (**read: 1 Tim 1:4; Titus 1:9-11**). It was therefore necessary for them to fill the church with truth. Not much has changed today. In our pluralistic, relativistic culture, we need churches to declare God's truth.

More people today are concerned with a church's children's activities than a church's doctrine. That's upside down. Your first concern should be doctrine. Further, I continue to hear about churches who say "we like our pastor but he's **not much of a theologian**." While sound doctrine isn't the only thing that matters, it's one thing that a church must have. A pastor must "**be able to teach**" (1Tim 3) sound doctrine (Titus 1:9). It's one of the qualifications! Sadly, many have traded the faithful shepherd who can feed the flock for a CEO who can build an institution.

Titus and Timothy both call us back to this fundamental need:
Healthy Doctrine.

- We hope to raise up **theologians at IDC: pastors, moms, dads...**

My mentor often remarks about the difference in **my generation** and his. He says that my generation loves theology and mission and don't care about being at the famous mega churches. I think he's right. I love the new wave of evangelicals who are interested in sound doctrine and global mission. Why is it that young people are attracted to **Piper** and not some other older pastors? Because he says something. Why do they love **Lecrae, Flame, shai, Trip Lee**, and other rappers like them? Same answer. Their rap is like **catechism**. Some grow tired of music that sounds like we're taking Jesus to the prom.

- The need for pastors who teach sound doctrine is illustrated by the number of **high schoolers** who go to college and leave the church. They aren't prepared to handle objections. Or, some return to their churches after going to a good campus ministry and say, "Why was I never taught this?"

2. **Healthy Leaders**

- 1-2 Timothy, Titus are pastoral letters, meaning that spell out many of the marks of healthy leaders, in addition to their teaching: endurance, power, love, gentleness, self-control, and more.

3. **Healthy Multiplication**

- These pastorals show us how to build leaders; **2 Timothy 2:2** Paul tells Timothy to multiply; in **Titus 2**, the women are told to teach other women. Healthy churches multiply.

These are prayer requests for any church: healthy doctrine, healthy leaders, and healthy multiplication.

2 TIMOTHY

In 2 Timothy, the Apostle Paul charges his young disciple, Timothy, to preserve and pass on the gospel to the next generation. **Like a relay race, Paul is handing the baton to Timothy and urging him to run his leg of the race faithfully.**

How many of you like running? I've been in two races... feels good to finish. Let's talk about this gospel centered letter and the making of a gospel centered leader that finishes his race.

A GOSPEL-CENTERED LETTER

Paul wrote **1 Timothy** while traveling, hoping that he would soon be able to visit Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim. 3:14-15). He provided instruction on the nature and practice of the church, addressing matters such as ministerial offices, widows, and public worship.

In **2 Timothy**, Paul focused on the personal ministry of Timothy himself more than the ordering of the church. According to tradition, Paul wrote this second letter from **an underground chamber in Rome's Mammertine prison**. Based on the end of 2 Timothy, it seems Paul had already **received a court hearing** (2 Tim. 4:16-18) and **expected to be executed soon** (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Even though Paul mentioned that **Luke was with him** (2 Tim. 4:11), we still picture the war-torn **Apostle alone and cold. He wanted his cloak, his scrolls (especially the parchments!)**, and to see Timothy. In light of his writing context, the passion and personal tone of 2 Timothy is understandable.

Paul's words in 2 Timothy are not only deeply **personal**, but they are also deeply **theological**. This letter to Timothy is saturated with gospel-centered content. John Stott says, "**Paul's preoccupation in writing to Timothy was with the gospel**, the deposit of truth which had been revealed and committed to him by God" (Stott, 20). With this dominant theme in mind, Stott outlines 2 Timothy in four parts:

- Guard the Gospel (Chapter 1)
- Suffer for the Gospel (Chapter 2)
- Continue in the Gospel (Chapter 3)
- Proclaim the Gospel (Chapter 4)

Indeed, this letter is both **timely** and **timeless**. **For what can be more important today than to rightly guard and give the gospel to the next generation? It is often said that we are one generation away from losing the gospel. If the gospel is assumed in one generation, it will be neglected, ignored, and/or abandoned in the next.** As Stott notes, we must keep guarding, suffering for, continuing in, and proclaiming the gospel.

This gospel-centered focus speaks loudly to us, teaching us to fix our eyes on the issues in ministry that are most important. **At the end of life, what's he most passionate about?** The gospel. It was, after all, of “first importance” (1 Cor. 15:1-3, ESV). Carson often says your students will remember what you're most passionate about.

So what's the gospel? From this letter, we could describe the good news of Jesus with six shorthand descriptions.

First, the gospel is *Christological*. It is about Christ. **There's no gospel apart from Jesus. He is the hero of the gospel (2 Tim. 2:8).**

Second, the gospel is *biblical*. God has presented the saving work of Christ in Holy Scripture. Paul says that the Scriptures “are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 3:15).

Third, the gospel is *historical*. Christ has appeared in human history (2 Tim. 1:10) and will come again to usher in his heavenly kingdom (2 Tim. 4:18). This grand narrative begins in Genesis and ends in Revelation, as the **themes of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation unfold**. And all of it points to the Savior who appeared in the incarnation and will soon appear again to complete the final stage of the redemptive drama.

Fourth, the gospel is *doctrinal*. Christians treasure the wonderful truths of the gospel. 2 Timothy speaks of many important doctrines that Ephesus needed to hear (and so do we today):

- **the promise of life (1:1),**
- **Salvation by grace alone (1:9),**
- **Christ's victory over death (1:10),**
- **the Spirit's indwelling (1:14),**
- **the person and work of Christ (2:8),**
- **election (2:10, 19),**
- **glorification (2:10),**
- **union with Christ (2:11)**
- **repentance (2:25) and**
- **future rewards (4:8).**

Fifth, the gospel is *personal*. It must be received personally by faith, just as Timothy, his mother, and his grandmother received it (2 Tim. 1:4-5).

Finally, the gospel is *practical*. It tells us not only about eternal life, but it has to do with all of life, from our **families** to our **finances**, from our **schooling** to our **retirement**. Our **relationships**, our **politics**, our **affections**, and our **fears**—the gospel has practical implications for all of these things.

A GOSPEL-CENTERED LEADER (1:1-7)

In these initial verses, we are introduced to **the key figures** of the letter: Paul and Timothy. **We gain important insight as to how God builds a gospel-centered leader.**

1. Paul: Called by the Will of God (1:1)

Paul says that he is “**an apostle of Christ Jesus**” (1a). By claiming this title, Paul places himself in the same camp as the Twelve who were selected by Jesus as apostles (Luke 6:13). Like these, **Paul had the privilege of learning directly from Jesus. He was sent by the Master with unique apostolic authority to teach in Jesus’ name.** Of course, Paul’s apostleship was a bit different than the others because he was somewhat of a **late addition**. On the **Damascus Road** the risen Lord commissioned him with a particular call to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15-16; 26:12-18). Even though Paul humbly called himself the “**least of the apostles**” (1 Cor. 15:9), he was indeed part of this select group.

Therefore, **this letter comes to us with divine authority** because it comes from a divinely inspired apostle. **It is a letter not just for Timothy in the first century, but for Christians of all times in all places.** May the Lord “give [us] understanding in everything” regarding this book of sacred Scripture (2 Tim. 2:7).

A. The Origin of Paul’s Apostleship (1b)

Paul’s apostleship was **not owing to anything in and of himself.** He states that his position was established “by God’s will” (1). **Paul did not volunteer for it. He was summoned to it!** He did not make a career move. He was “**appointed**” (1:11). Paul describes his calling with pronounced awareness of God’s sovereign grace and divine will elsewhere:

“

- Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus *by command* of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope....I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he has judged me faithful, *appointing me to his service*” (1 Tim. 1:1, 12, emphasis added)
- “Paul, an apostle – *not from men* or through man, but through Jesus Christ.... But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who *called me by his grace ...*” (Gal. 1:1a, 15, emphasis added).
- “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus *by the will of God*.... Of this gospel I was made a minister according to *the gift of God’s grace*” (Eph. 1:1a, 3:7a).

Of course, God did not shape Paul into a gospel-centered leader apart from Paul’s own **spiritual sweat**. The apostle was a worker; he writes that he “**worked more than any of them.**” But Paul’s work was preceded by God’s work of calling him, and Paul’s work was made possible by the enabling grace of God: “**yet not I, but God’s grace that was with me**” (1 Cor. 15:10).

God shaped Paul into a mighty leader by first **calling him by grace and then empowering him with divine strength**.

While we are not apostles in the same sense as Paul and the Twelve were, we do **share some common experiences with them as those who trust in Christ**. Like Paul, God **calls us to himself by his own will and pleasure, and by his power he enables us to live faithfully before him for his glory** (1 Pet 2:9)

B. The Purpose of Paul’s Apostleship (1c)

Paul says that this calling was according to “**the promise of life in Christ Jesus**” (1:1c). Paul was commissioned to **communicate the gospel**, which he describes as “the promise of life.” As Paul awaited death, **he knew that there was the promise of life for those who are in Christ Jesus**.

The gospel gives life because at the heart of our message is a person, Jesus Christ, who is in himself “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). John said, “**The one who has the Son has life**” (1 John 5:12). Paul also wrote that Jesus “**abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel**” (2 Tim. 1:10b).

Indeed, this theme runs throughout the Bible, for in Genesis and later in Revelation we read of people eating of the **tree of life**, and drinking from the **water of life**.

The gospel is like water: man did not invent it and man cannot live without it. We aren't offering a set of rules to people, we're offering life!

Therefore, faithful servants of Jesus will take the water to thirsty men and women. Are you showing the thirsty where you found everlasting water?

2. Timothy: Shaped by the Grace of God (1:2-7)

Next, let's note three shaping influences in Timothy's life. Like us, Timothy was still a work in progress! **Paul mentions three means of grace that God used to transform this servant:** (1) a personal mentor, (2) a godly mother, and (3) the Spirit and the gifts.

A. A Personal Mentor (2-4)

It is possible that **Timothy met Paul** and embraced the gospel on Paul's initial visit to Lystra (**Acts 14**). By the time Paul visited Lystra a second time, we know that Timothy was "well spoken of by the brothers," referring to his spiritual growth and maturity. Paul then took Timothy with him on his mission (**Acts 16:1-5, ESV**). He also had him circumcised. Timothy's father was a Greek, Timothy had not previously been circumcised. Paul's practice of circumcision reflected his policy of "**becoming all things to all men**" (1 Cor 9:19-23).

"It was serious.... bring a helmet ... I'm going to need to circumcise you..."

We see several snapshots of Timothy's ministry leading up to the writing of 2 Timothy. Consider the following timeline provided by Ray Van Neste (*HCSB Study Bible*, 2083-2084):

- Timothy ministers with Paul and Silas in Philippi (AD 50)
- Paul flees Berea; Timothy and Silas continue the work (AD 51)
- Timothy rejoins Paul in Athens and brings word of the work to Macedonia (AD 51)
- Timothy returns to Thessalonica to encourage the new believers (AD 51-52)

- Timothy joins Paul in his ministry in Corinth, bringing word of progress in Thessalonica (AD 52)
- Timothy comes to Ephesus to work with Paul during Paul's three-year ministry (AD 54-56)
- Paul sends Timothy with the 1 Corinthians letter to the disordered church in Corinth (AD 56)
- Paul comes to Corinth in person and from there he and Timothy write Romans (AD 57)
- Timothy is with Paul during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (AD 60-62)
- Upon his release from his first imprisonment, Paul goes to Ephesus and appoints Timothy as pastor (AD 62)
- Paul writes 1 Timothy and Titus (AD 62-64)
- Major persecutions of the Christians in Rome begin following the great fire (AD 64)
- Paul returns to Rome, is arrested, and writes 2 Timothy from the Mammertine Prison (AD 67?)
- Paul's martyrdom in Rome (AD 67?)

a) Paul saw Timothy as **his own spiritual child** (cf. **1 Cor. 4:14-17**). He introduced Timothy in **verse 2** as his "dearly loved son" and said many other wonderful things about his loyal disciple. Commending Timothy to the Philippians, Paul confessed, "For I have no one else like-minded who will genuinely care about your interests.... You know his proven character, because he has served with me in the gospel ministry like a son with a father" (**Phil 2:20, 22**).

- **The church is a family**, not a business. Paul says "this is my son." ... **1 Tim 5:1-2**: "older men like fathers, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity." It is the church that's the real family.... *I was so lonely last week....*

b) Paul **extends a greeting to his son**: "Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord" (**2 Tim. 1:2b**). In this triad, Paul highlights the indescribable love of God. **God gives grace to the desperate, mercy to the guilty, and peace to the restless – all of it through Christ.**

c) In **verse 3**, Paul **expresses his love** for his disciple by **thanking God for him. Paul mentions that he thanks God like his "ancestors."** Paul was not being disloyal to his Jewish ancestors by

believing in Jesus. **His faith was the fulfillment of their faith and hope.** When a Jew comes to Christ, they are, in a sense, coming home – all the way home.

d) Not only does Paul thank God for Timothy, **but he also intercedes on his behalf:** “I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.” We know that Paul urges believers to “pray constantly,” (1 Thess. 5:17) that is, in a continuous state of prayer, but perhaps he is referring here to **periodic times of prayer.**

I draw this from the fact that Paul says “**prayers**” (plural). Paul’s other references to his “prayers” (e.g., Rom. 1:10; Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 1:2) suggest that he **set aside designated times for prayer, apparently as Jesus did (Luke 5:16).**

App: Should we pray without ceasing? Absolutely! Live in communion with God! **But setting aside specific times for intercession is both wise and beneficial, as well.** Jesus and Paul did not make their prayer life a matter of **multi-tasking.**

Paul was locked in a prison, but his heart was free to seek the living God in prayer. These prison prayers remind me of Arnold Dallimore’s description of the **First Great Awakening, a movement that swept across Britain and the Americas in the 1730s and ‘40s.** He notes how the prayers of imprisoned English believers preceded this revival:

Legislation was enacted which distressed the Puritan conscience, and in 1662, on one of the darkest days in all British history, nearly two thousand ministers – all those who would not submit to the Act of Uniformity – were ejected from their livings. Hundreds of these men suffered throughout the rest of their lives, and a number died in prison. Yet these terrible conditions became the occasion of a great volume of prayer; forbidden to preach under threat of severe penalties – as John Bunyan’s Bedford imprisonment bore witness – they yet could pray, and only eternity will reveal the relationship between this burden of supplication and the revival that followed (Dallimore, 19-20).

Paul was not finished yet. Though imprisoned in harsh conditions, he still had **important work to do: praying for his disciple, Timothy.** Oh, the privilege of having faithful saints praying for us!

e) Paul's **thankfulness, thoughtfulness, and prayerfulness** were driven by two dynamics: (1) his *peaceful conscious* before God, and (2) his *personal love* for Timothy.

Conscious. Paul's condition before God is noted with the phrase "a clear conscious" (3b). Paul was **not sinless**, but he was **guiltless**. **That is because Jesus had taken Paul's guilt through his substitutionary death on the cross. God cleansed Paul's guilty heart from an evil conscious through the work of Christ** (cf. **Heb. 10:22**).

Paul experienced the wonderful blessing that every true believer shares: **peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ**. As we approach our deaths, Paul shows us that **there is nothing greater than knowing that our sins are forgiven. Is there anything more important than having a "clear conscious" before dying?** The hymn writer says:

*My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

That's the song of one who possesses a clear conscious. Is it well with your soul?

He also speaks of a "good conscious" in **1 Tim 1:5**. As those who now leave without condemnation in Christ, we are to live in accordance to God's truth in all holiness.

Next, **Paul's love for Timothy** in particular is expressed beautifully in verse 4: "Remembering your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy." **Evidently, the last time Paul and Timothy were together there were tears** – maybe before Paul was taken off to the Roman prison. Now he wants to see Timothy **that he might be filled "with joy."** This is the picture of a faithful believer's confidence before death, and a loving mentor's attitude toward his disciple.

- Notice **Paul's tears**. In all the talk about **sound doctrine this doesn't mean there should be no emotion or passion**. The opposite is true. Paul was a deeply emotional person (cf **Acts 20:37; 2 Cor 6:4-10**)

Application: How important is *life-on-life* discipleship to you? As a pastor, it is often easy to overlook or neglect this Pauline model. In 2

Timothy 2:2, Paul instructs Timothy to invest in other men the way Paul invested in him. **Do you have a Paul in your life? Do you have a Timothy in your life? Who is your spiritual son or your spiritual father? ... Mark Matlock statistics**

What exactly do you do in a mentoring relationship? Verses 3-4 show us **two essentials** behind the act of mentoring: *love and prayer*. A true mentor must **start here**.

From this starting point, I see some lessons for us who desire to mentor others. Paul helps Timothy in three areas: (1) *calling*, (2) *character*, and (3) *competency*.

- In terms of **calling**, Paul encourages Timothy **to use the gifts God has given him to live out his calling** (2 Tim. 1:6).
- As for **character**, Paul urges Timothy to pursue godliness, endurance, love, and other Christ-like qualities (**3:10-12**).
- As for ministerial **competency**, Paul coaches Timothy on how he (1) should **respond to people appropriately** (2:16, 23-26; 3:5), (2) **study the Word diligently** (2:15), (3) **preach the Word faithfully** (3:16-4:2), and (4) **do the work of an evangelist constantly** (4:5).

Invest in a Timothy if you are an older leader. Help him fan the flame of his calling, develop Christ-like character, and grow in his competency. **Another note: No mentor can teach you everything, so I think it's wise and good to have multiple mentors.**

B. A Godly Mother (5)

Timothy not only had the privilege of a mentor, but he also had the gift of a godly mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois). In verse 5 Paul mentions the "faith" of all three individuals. He says that Timothy, like these ladies, had a **"sincere" faith**, the genuine article. By Paul's statement, "I am convinced [this faith] is in you also," **we are reminded of how every child must do their own believing**. Timothy had the blessing of having a Christian mother and grandmother, but he still had to believe for *himself*.

While it seems that Timothy's father was **an unbelieving Greek**, these **two ladies were vibrant Christians**. Who knows? **Maybe all three were converted from Judaism to Christianity through Paul's**

visit to Lystra. What we do know is that these godly ladies' **faith was observable to Paul.** Probably before they were believers, they taught Timothy the Old Testament (2 Tim. 3:15), but **now their understanding of these Scriptures was Christ-centered.** Timothy and these godly mothers came to know and love the fact that the Scriptures make us wise for salvation because they point us to the Savior himself, who is the fulfillment of the Scriptures (cf. Luke 24:44).

From a parental perspective, having children is a **wonderful gift.** But with the gift **comes responsibility.**

- **Are you teaching your kids the Scriptures? (Deut. 6)**
- **Are you praying for them? -Wesley, Augustine**

- **Do they see in you, mom or dad, a "sincere faith" in Christ?**
One cannot overstate the importance of living out the Christian life before the watching children.

"Being a parent in today's society is a **difficult task, especially when there is no father to act as a role model** as was true in Timothy's case. **But God gives a special grace** for the task as is evident from the good job Lois and Eunice did in bringing up Timothy who was to become a powerful advocate of the gospel and the pastor of the church at Ephesus."

C. The Spirit and the Gifts (6-7)

Finally, and most significantly, God shaped Timothy into a leader through **the presence and gifting of the indwelling Holy Spirit.** Paul says, "Therefore, I remind you to keep ablaze the gift of God that is in you" (6a).

Because Timothy had genuine faith, he's urged to fan his gift into an **open flame.** (Remember last week: Exodus 35-36 "spirit stirred them")

Notice four applications for us:

i. Rely on the Spirit Desperately

Judged by the surrounding context of 1-2 Timothy, **Timothy was not a spiritual rock.** He appears to be

- **physically weak** (1 Tim. 5:23),
- **personally timid** (2 Tim. 1:7), and
- **relatively young** (1 Tim. 4:12).

But God delights in using the weak and the ordinary by his mighty power. Thankfully, God uses “clay jars” so that only he can get the glory (2 Cor. 4:7)!

- **Most guys don't want to admit weakness. If we go to a chiropractor, or get a shot, “does it hurt.... sweat coming off our head...”** We don't like asking for directions either.
- **But we are to live out of our weakness and into his strength! Jehoshaphat - 2 Chron 20:12. They had a better army and he still recognizes that its not by horses or chariots nut God's power! God answered and won the battle for them. Jehoshaphat admitted his physical weakness and his ignorance. Will you?**
- **Paul even revels in his human inability. Now, he is reminding Timothy of this principle. Weak? Yes. Useless? No. Actually, it makes you the right candidate for usefulness.**
- **Timothy probably wouldn't been hired by the pastor search committee if there looking for outer appearance!**

Knowing the reality of God's power in the life of Timothy, Paul urges him to “fan into flame” his gift (ESV).

What is “the gift of God?”

We do not know for certain. **It seems connected to the phrase, “through the laying on of my hands”** (6b; cf. 1 Tim. 4:14). This phrase seems to refer to an **ordination or commissioning**, in which Paul affirmed God's call in Timothy's life.

If so, then this **“gift” is probably related to the spiritual endowment necessary for the work of ministry.** Paul is reminding Timothy that God equips his servants to fulfill their ministry by granting them spiritual power and gifting.

How encouraging it is to remember that **God gives his people the authority and enablement to carry out their assignments! Not everyone will have a personal mentor or a godly mother, but God does invest spiritual gifts in every believer** (1 Cor. 12:7). The second

line of Martin Luther's stanza captures the wonder of the Spirit and the gifts:

*That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.*

Praise God, for the Spirit and the gifts are ours through him who is for us!

ii. Use Your Gifts Passionately

The gifting of the Spirit not only encourages us and **inspires worship**, but **it also inspires hard work**. Paul reminds Timothy of his personal responsibility in becoming a gospel-centered leader. He tells him to **develop and use his gifts** passionately (v. 6)

First, we see that the gift is like *fire*. This Greek verb *anazopureo* ("fan into flame" or "rekindle") is in the **present tense**, emphasizing ongoing action. Paul is urging Timothy to keep the fire alive, indeed, **ablaze by making full use of it!** He is to do this, then, by ***exercising his gift passionately***. God gave Timothy gifts to **be used and developed**.

Don't quit. Don't throw in the towel. Don't let the fire go out. "Don't go be a **bull pen catcher**." Hang in there!

There is no room for sluggishness in the Christian life. Rest? Yes. But laziness, passiveness, and timidity should not characterize the believer.

Jim Elliot's prayer captures the spirit of this verse,
*God, I pray Thee, light these idle sticks of my life and may I burn
for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine.
I seek not a long life, but a full one,
like you, Lord Jesus.*

Are you using your gifts passionately? Often I talk to Christians who are "waiting on a church to call so they can preach" or for

some other ministry job to open up before they begin serving. **While I understand their thought, we need to be careful not to over-professionalize the ministry.** (Nate: Crossfit ministry)

If God has gifted you for gospel proclamation, then go proclaim! Maybe you do not have a brick church building to preach in, but there are people everywhere! Go preach to one, or two, or three. As Martin Lloyd-Jones says, go “gossip the gospel” – go share it with one person in a coffee shop, in a park, or in your neighborhood (Lloyd-Jones, 24). **Better yet, go overseas and gather up some kids in Africa and tell them the good news.** You need to be developing and using your gifts, even if it is not in a very glorious setting. Fan it into flame! **That requires work, effort, and intentionality.**

Here Are Two Games People Play

#1: Time Game – “I’ll serve Christ one day”; or “I used to serve Christ back in the day”

- **One Day. “He’s got potential.”** That’s okay if you are 10 years old, but when you are 30 or 40 or beyond we call that embarrassing or a wasted life.
 1. **Like UK Football – “One day we will win.”** This year would be great.
 2. **20 year olds blogging in star wars footy pajamas,** playing video games 5 hours a day.
- **“Back in the Day I Served.”** We’ve heard about all you’ve done in the past several times. Every sermon is always for someone else.
 - Let me ask you, does the time game...
 1. **Glorify God?**
 2. **Does half-hearted service please Jesus?**
 3. **Are you hiding laziness and self-centeredness behind pious talk.**
 4. **Is this really loving towards others?**
 5. **Is this good stewardship?**
 6. **Are those in need today being helped by this attitude?**

- We don't want this in anything else...
 - **"My Doctor. has potential. "One day he will learn how to perform a surgery."**
 - **"My pilot will be good one day."**
 - No, we want them to serve well; do their work hard – how much more for the King of Kings!

Burn for Christ! "Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord." (Rom 12:11)

- Make your life count – not for your glory but for the good of others and Jesus' glory.

#2: Comparison Game

- "I've done more than Bill." You see you can always find someone to compare yourself with. **"I'm not as self-serving as Hitler.**
- Here's what comparison does to you:
 - Pride – I'm greater
 -
 - Despair – I'm less
- Both are man-centered and narcissistic.

You will stand before God and give an account. Will it matter what Bill did when you stand before the king? No.

- iii. **Use Your Gifts Courageously**, "for God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment [or self-discipline]" (1:7).

Paul addresses Timothy's timidity. (**Darius Miller: Shoot the ball!**)....

Have you ever been timid? First day of high school? First basketball tryout? Going off diving board? Bating against a side-armor? Asking Kim's dad for his blessing..

Who has not experienced timidity and fear in ministry?

- If you have ever been a part of a church plant, you understand the fear of the unknowns.
- If you have ever shared your faith w a stranger, perhaps you know this feeling.
- If you have ever been in a tense meeting where people oppose you (even gang up on you), perhaps you have experienced timidity.

He reminds him that his **fear does not come from God**. The **most repeated command in the Bible** is “do not fear”

Timidity is a form of idolatry. Do not fear him who can kill the body...

What comes from God is a “spirit” of power and love and discipline. (see 1 Thess 1:4-5)

There is a discussion on whether or not “spirit” should be translated as “Spirit” with a **capital “S”** (Holy Spirit) or as “spirit” with a lower case “s” (referring to an **attitude**). While Paul may have referred to “a spirit” (not the “Holy Spirit”), that does not mean that the Holy Spirit is not in view here. The word **“for” in verse 7 alludes back to verse 6, where the reference is to the Spirit’s gifting in Timothy** (Paul also makes a connection with the Spirit and gifts elsewhere, like **1 Cor. 12:4**). Additionally, the words **“love” and “power” are used especially for the work of the Spirit elsewhere in Scripture.**

Boldness, not cowardice is a mark of the Spirit’s work in believers (Acts 4:31).

What was he afraid of?

The object of Timothy’s fear remains unclear. Perhaps it was **evangelism, proclamation, or pastoral leadership**. Perhaps "Timothy’s **youthfulness** (1 Tim 4:12) may have caused some of the intense opponents whom he encountered to attempt to take advantage of him. Whatever its cause, we know that this fear did not have to be paralyzing to Timothy." (Lea and Griffin)

In the **next verse**, he tells him to “**not be ashamed** of the testimony of our Lord” (1:8)... Then he adds “**share in suffering by the power of God**” (1:9).

Interestingly, **even Paul faced fear**. When he planted the church in Corinth, the Lord appeared to him in a vision and said:

Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.

Acts 18:9-10

Do you see this? **The Lord told Paul to fight fear with his promises.**

- **A lot of people are timid**, and that’s understandable. But it's what you do with your timidity that matters. Rely on the Spirit, and act courageously.
- Maybe this week you would consider having coffee or inviting a neighbor over to dinner. Invite them to corporate worship. Let’s use our meals as opportunities for mission.

Remember: fight fear with the promises of God.

The Spirit of God empowering the people of God is sufficient to accomplish the mission of God.

No Excuses

Therefore, there is no excuse for not performing our mission with diligence. **God has given us everything we need. The Spirit and the gifts are ours!** God has given us **Spiritual gifts** to execute our ministries, and **Spiritual power** to enable our ministry.

God’s Provision and Our Responsibility

How then is a gospel-centered leader formed? From this passage, we see **the mysterious combination of God’s provision and man’s humble responsibility.**

For Paul, clearly it was **God who appointed him and enabled him, but his appointment did not mean that Paul was to be passive.** No! He was to proclaim the promise of life actively!

In the life of Timothy, **God provided a mentor, mothers, and (most of all) the Spirit and the gifts to make him into an instrument for noble purposes. But Timothy had the responsibility of using these gifts.** What about you?

Do you recognize the gifts that God has given you? Are you resting in his promises, relying on his power, and serving him with passion?

The ultimate provision was made for us in Christ. By his torn flesh and poured out blood, we can be reconciled to God and have a **good conscious.** Through him, we receive the Spirit and the gifts, and become part of the household of God.

Turn to him today if you're a young person like Timothy did, or as an adult like his mother and grandmother did.