

The Faith Files

The First Letter to Timothy

October 6, 2001

1. 1 Timothy 1:2-5

To Timothy my true son in the **faith**: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work-- which is by **faith**. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere **faith**. (NIV)

- Many believe First and Second Timothy were the last letters Paul wrote. It is interesting that he would write his son in the Lord and not another church with his last words. Why? Because he was looking to connect with an individual in his last days.
- Paul created a spiritual son and follower not by establishing a network of churches, but through a relationship focused on faith in God.
- It's of note that Paul wrote so much about faith in this letter to his spiritual son. Our relationships in ministry should be directed toward building faith in God and not on the follower's ability to serve our vision.
- There were weird teachings and doctrines in Paul's day and there are in our day as well. How can you judge a doctrine? Does it promote God's work, which is by faith? If a doctrine doesn't help you trust God more, then **leave it alone**. It is irrelevant.

2. 1 Timothy 1:14

The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the **faith** and love that are in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

- Faith and love are mentioned again in the same context. Faith is so practical that it must always lead to actions that are motivated by love.
- Paul says that faith and love were poured out on him in the environment of grace. So faith and love are gifts, and they are decisions. Does that make sense to you?

3. 1 Timothy 1:18-19

Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to **faith** and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their **faith**. (NIV)

- You must hold onto faith and fight the good fight. That is spoken in the context of prophetic words given to Timothy.
- I believe in prophets and the prophetic word. But once the word comes, you must fight to see it happen and to hold onto your faith because very often circumstances seem to be contrary to the word God has given you. Do you have any prophecies that have been given to you that seem far, far off at this point in your life? Then it's time to refocus on their message and fight to see them happen. I always write my prophetic words down so I can remember them and fight for them when things get rough.
- If you don't do that, then you can become cynical and your faith can be shipwrecked, torn apart on the rocks that fill the ocean ways of life. God seldom delivers His timetable in a prophecy. A prophecy is like a picture negative that must be "developed" for it to occur.

4. 1 Timothy 2:7

And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle-- I am telling the truth, I am not lying-- and a teacher of the true **faith** to the Gentiles. (NIV)

- If there is true faith, can there be false faith? If there is sincere faith, can there be insincere faith? I think the answer is "yes" to both.
- You cannot choose to be an apostle or herald. You can only be appointed.
- Paul was a herald, apostle and teacher of what? True faith. His only focus was to bring the Gentiles to faith in Christ. That should be our focus, too. I should not be after converts to my church or particular doctrine. I am after disciples of Jesus, not after disciples following me.

5. 1 Timothy 2:15

But women will be saved through childbearing-- if they continue in **faith**, love and holiness with propriety. (NIV)

- Uh oh. What does this mean? Is childbearing what leads a woman to salvation? Absolutely not! What about single women or women who cannot conceive a child? That isn't what this passage means.

- What does it mean? I don't know! I have read some of the commentaries that point out how the customs of the times related to women in church and synagogue, but I'm not sure still how they relate to this passage. I know that Paul endorsed women who were deacons and prophets and also allowed women to speak and pray with heads covered. So this seems totally out of sync with those instructions.
- But let's look at what we do know. Women will distinguish themselves if they have faith, love and holiness. So sisters, whatever you do, have faith! Be the woman God wants you to be. Don't focus on ministry as your identify; rather focus on faith.

6. 1 Timothy 3:9-13

They must keep hold of the deep truths of the **faith** with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their **faith** in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

- What are the “deep truths” of the faith? The King James Version refers to these deep truths as the mysteries of the faith. What is the mystery of the faith? That anyone, even Gentiles, can have faith in God and that relates them to God directly!
- Here we see faith in action: deacons serving other people and their families.
- Notice that Paul always refers to faith as faith in Christ Jesus. That is everything where faith is concerned. Is your faith in Christ Jesus? It should be.

7. 1 Timothy 4:1

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the **faith** and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. (NIV)

- There are teaching demons that promote certain doctrines. That's scary.
- To follow one of these, you must abandon faith. Faith in what? Faith in Jesus. Anything that takes you away from having faith in Christ is a demonic doctrine, no matter how good it sounds.
- I don't want to sit under the teaching of any demon! I want to keep my faith simple and focused—on Christ!

8. 1 Timothy 4:6

If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the **faith** and of the good teaching that you have followed. (NIV)

- There must be teaching for people to have faith. In number 7 above, demons were teaching false doctrines through men. Now truths and good teaching are mentioned in the context of faith. You and I have faith in Christ for salvation, but then must be taught how to have faith for the rest of life.
- I want to devote my teaching ministry to helping people have faith in Christ, to trust Him in any and all circumstances. If you teach at any level, that should be your objective as well.

9. 1 Timothy 4:12

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in **faith** and in purity. (NIV)

- It doesn't matter how old or young you are. You can and need to have faith. But the older you are in the Lord, the more faith you should have because God has proved Himself faithful.
- Often the young have more faith, however, because they are less hung up on details and have less to lose by trusting God. If you are "older" in the Lord, do you have more faith today than you had at the beginning, or more? Why or why not?
- God may have you set an example of faith for others to follow. Don't be a bad example that others can learn from; be a good one.
- It is possible that God will put you through something that others do not go through so you can teach through example and then through your testimony.

10. 1 Timothy 5:8

If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the **faith** and is worse than an **unbeliever**. (NIV)

- Wow, that is a strong statement. The basic tenet of faith is to provide for your immediate family. To not do that is to deny faith! That makes me want to do something for my family right away!
- To say you have faith and not act it out with your family makes you worse than an unbeliever and an unbeliever isn't pleasing God. And a "believer" who neglects family is worse than that!

- I have known weird Christians who have neglected their family's needs to do other things. They have faith for many things but never apply it where their family is concerned. I guess Paul is saying that faith begins at home. Are you taking care of your family the way God wants you to?
- Don't *ever* use ministry as an excuse to not give your family what they need, whether the need be spiritual, emotional or physical.

11. 1 Timothy 6:10-12

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the **faith** and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, **faith**, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the **faith**. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (NIV)

- Love of money can cause you to abandon faith! Here it uses the word “wander” from the faith. The pursuit of money leads to much grief. Do you trust the Lord for money? Or are you pursuing it to the exclusion of faith?
- You may ask, “How can I know?” We work to establish the kingdom of God, not to make money. That is the means that God uses to provide for us, because often that is the only channel we give him or faith for.
- Most of the people I know work hard, but some get paid a lot more than others for their hard work. How can you explain this? The grace of God! It is not my intelligence or skill that earns money, it is God who provides the money. I never take a ministry opportunity based on what I can get in the way of money. I take the opportunity because I sense God wants me to. The money follows that obedience, and many times I have been surprised by what the Lord has given me.
- There are some who have done less than I have in a certain situation and got paid in ministry a lot more. How can I explain this? God has chosen to be good to them and I rejoice. Hard work is not my source of money; God is.
- There is only one aid in avoiding the love of money and it isn't being poor. It's giving things away! Do you own your “stuff” or does your “stuff” own you? If it is the latter, then you had better give some things away to break the hold.
- Ask God right now to show you if the love of money has infected your faith in any way.
- There are some aspects of faith that requires a fight. We must fight to maintain our faith level against all the things that may work against having faith. The love of

money is one of those enemies that must be fought, especially in today's materialistic world. We must also "fight" discouragement, cynicism and idealism.

- There is a militant, aggressive nature to walking in faith. A passive nature will not inherit the promises of God.

12. 1 Timothy 6:20-21

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the **faith**. Grace be with you. (NIV)

- Here is another factor that may cause us to wander from faith. Godless chatter and false knowledge both work against faith. Here we see once again the need for a aggressive front to guard what we have. I must fight at times to keep my mouth from speaking un-faith or to keep my mind from adopting ideas—the world's wisdom—that are opposed to faith.
- Let's ask God another question right now: Do you have any false ideas that you are calling knowledge, that are actually working against your faith?
- What is an example of false knowledge: save your money for a rainy day. I am not against savings at all, but my hope is not in any savings account. It's in God. Another such idea would be to withhold what I should give so I don't run out. Faith says give it away and God will provide.

13. 1 Timothy 4:3

They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who **believe** and who know the truth. (NIV)

- If you have faith, you are free. Don't submit to ridiculous teachings that have the appearance of spirituality. Eat your food with thankfulness. Live normal lives. Marry and do business. In everything you do, have faith and don't forget God.
- Don't be afraid to enjoy God's creation, trusting God that He wants you to.
- God is not an ogre or tyrant. He is a loving God. Some people make Him out to be a mean, old man. He isn't. I trust God that He has my best interests in mind and wants me to enjoy His good gifts.
- Faith is the anecdote for guilt, fear, and false teachings. Meditate on that statement.

14. 1 Timothy 1:16

But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would **believe** on him and receive eternal life. (NIV)

- Paul was not exaggerating, for he *was* the worst of sinners. He was condemning people to death and thinking he was doing it for God!
- God saved Saul as a sign to others that no one is beyond the grace of God for salvation. But many rejected this sign and became Saul's enemies, having been his allies prior to Jesus.
- The byproduct of faith is eternal life. I had a seminary professor that defined eternal life as a quality of life so good that nothing could end it, not even death. In that sense, we have eternal life now, for nothing will stop our relationship with God that produces this quality of life we enjoy. It will only get better.

15. 1 Timothy 4:8-10

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who **believe**.

- Hope and faith are also mentioned together quite often. We have not talked about those two objects and their connection. If I don't have faith for a particular thing, I can still have hope for it although I lack a definite word from God that it will take place. But I know God's faithfulness and I can hope that He will do *something*.
- I hope that my books will sell well but I don't pretend to have any promise from God concerning that. I hope to have a bestseller one day.
- When I don't have faith, the next best thing is hope!

16. 1 Timothy 6:2

Those who have **believing** masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are **believers**, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them. (NIV)

- We are to keep our faith and our work with other believers in separate categories. As an employee of a believer, I'm not to take advantage of my employer's kindness and do less than I can in any work situation, counting on his or her forgiveness for my bad behavior or attitude.

- I have found it best to keep our business dealings strictly business with other believers. I have seen a lot of hurt feelings over the years because the employer, employee or business partner did not live up to the expectations of the other party. I have also seen customers disappointed by the service given by those who say they are believers.
- In fact, I am to work harder if my supervisor is a believer since the benefit is going to a brother or sister.
- Isn't it interesting that Paul never refers to another believer as a Christian. He only identifies a follower of Jesus in terms of their faith, as *believers*. For Paul, it seems there are only two categories of people in the world: believers and unbelievers.

17. 1 Timothy 5:16

If any woman who is a **believer** has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need. (NIV)

- Paul is only outlining conduct for believers, for those are his field for ministry. Paul spent his life educating and laying out *the* faith for those who followed Jesus.
- Faith should have its practical expressions at home first and foremost. When my daughter asked what school she should go to for college (being concerned for finances), I told her to go to whatever university she felt the Lord directing her to. I felt God would provide. She is in her fourth year. He has and she will graduate with no student loans.

18. 1 Timothy 1:12

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me **faithful**, appointing me to his service. (NIV)

- Oh Lord, may you consider me faithful and appoint me to service. Then Lord, I want to serve in the strength that you provide.
- God uses those who are full of faith in His service, for there is no way to please God outside of faith. Giftedness and talent aren't issues considered in service, but rather faithfulness.
- When people ask me how to prepare for service, I tell them to have faith. I was an associate pastor 11 years and only spoke twice publicly during that time. But I had faith, and was faithful and prepared diligently for the day when I would speak. When I was released to speak, I was ready because I was full of faith and prepared for the day, not knowing when it would occur but knowing in faith that it would occur.

