

The Faith Files

The Second Letter to Timothy and the Letters to Titus and Philemon

1. 2 Timothy 1:5

I have been reminded of your sincere **faith**, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. (NIV)

- Timothy had sincere faith, so there must be insincere faith. What would insincere faith act like? It would probably be someone talking about faith but not doing anything with their words. Faith without action is dead. Faith without works would also be insincere. Do you agree or not?
- Timothy's faith was alive; it lived in him as it did in his mother and grandmother. What does living faith look like? It is not just celebrating an event that happened 2,000 years ago—the resurrection. It is bringing resurrection life into everyday life.
- Living things grow, mature, increase in learning and life experience, and respond to other living things. Is that what living faith does? Is your faith living in that sense?
- Paul was persuaded that Timothy's faith was alive. If Paul knew you, would he be as sure? What persuades someone that what you say is true? Sincerity and consistency are two great persuaders. Is your faith sincere and consistent?

2. 2 Timothy 1:13

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with **faith** and love in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

- Paul gave Timothy sound teaching, but he wanted that teaching to partner with faith and love. Without faith and love, sound teaching can be legalistic and dogmatic. Teaching can be a lifeless thing, but it comes alive with sincere and living faith that engages in loving acts.
- If there is sound teaching, there must be unsound teaching. I have seen some of it on Christian television along with some sound teaching. Be careful what you watch or listen to. There are some things that sound so spiritual, but I always ask myself when I hear it: So what? What difference does that teaching make in my love or faith? If it doesn't increase one or the other, then I treat it as unsound teaching.

3. 2 Timothy 2:17-18

Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the **faith** of some. (NIV)

- Here is another effect of unsound teaching. There are teachers that speak so confidently of what the Lord is doing and has done. But bad teaching spreads like rotten flesh. It produces death and smells.
- If teaching doesn't increase trust in Jesus, then it is unsound teaching. Don't look for all kinds of "hidden" meanings in the Bible to impress people. That isn't what you need to do to be an effective Bible teacher.
- I sought the Lord for a theme in my teaching several years ago. He told me, "Tell My people to trust me." When I did the same thing the following year, the Lord said, "Tell my people to trust me more." That is what I am trying to do with The Faith Files.
- I don't feel I have to have insight on everything in the Bible. When anyone tries to make that happen, unsound teaching is possible. Stick to what you know. Let the Bible interpret itself (one verse helping explain another). Be careful of special revelations that start out "I think this means . . ." or "The Lord showed me."

4. 2 Timothy 2:22

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, **faith**, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (NIV)

- Faith must be pursued. "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it" (Matthew 11:12).
- Faith is active not passive. Sometimes you must be aggressive in pursuing a faith goal. Sometimes you must pray out loud, regularly and "call in" the object of your faith. Sometimes you must stand and fight the good fight. Refer to 2 Samuel 23:9-10. In that passage, one of David's mighty men fought until his hand "froze" to his sword. Sometimes your spiritual hands must fight so long and hard that they "freeze" to the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

5. 2 Timothy 3:8

Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth-- men of depraved minds, who, as far as the **faith** is concerned, are rejected. (NIV)

- We either accept the faith or the faith rejects us. Faith is alive, if not in us, then around us. If faith is not in us, then we become its enemy.

- The story referred to of Jannes and Jambres is in Exodus 7:11. They imitated Aaron's sign of his staff becoming a snake through magic arts. Instead of being open to the truth, they imitated it so that others would not embrace the truth.
- Their minds were "depraved." This literally means "totally corrupted." They were so given over to falsehood that they could not accept any truth.
- It is interesting that Aaron's snake from his rod ate up the snakes from the magicians' rods. Real faith works will expose and consume the works of rival teachings.

6. 2 Timothy 3:10-11

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, **faith**, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings-- what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. (NIV)

- Timothy was well acquainted with Paul's way of life, which of course included faith.
- Notice that Paul endured persecutions; he wasn't able to avoid them. When you go through difficulties, it doesn't mean you don't have faith. Persecution comes to prove that your faith in God is real.
- Problems give us a chance to prove the reality of our faith to other people, to ourselves and even to principalities and powers we can't see.

7. 2 Timothy 3:14-15

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through **faith** in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

- Timothy learned life principles from Paul and was convinced they were correct. He was intimately acquainted with Paul who taught those to him, so he knew that they weren't just platitudes—Paul lived them himself.
- The Scriptures are able to add to your faith. That is why we are studying these faith verses. The goal of faith is salvation in Jesus.
- Timothy had been exposed to the Scriptures since infancy. You can't start exposing a child too soon to the word of God.

8. 2 Timothy 4:7

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the **faith**. (NIV)

- This verse speaks of a battle to keep faith, to keep believing. A life of faith isn't a short sprint, it's a marathon through an obstacle.
- You must fight if you want to keep faith. You must run if you want to keep faith. These both tell us that we must exert energy and effort if we want to finish in faith.
- A fight tells us that we have adversaries as we live faith. A race tells us that there is a set course for us to run, predetermined by God Himself.
- I want to say, like Paul, that I kept faith—I never stopped believing the Lord not only for salvation, but for deliverance from troubles, provision, and health.
- Is your faith as active as it once was, or has it become a passive thing? What is your giving like? What projects have you begun that can only be completed with God's help and intervention? Are you cautious so you won't lose something instead of trusting God to win something?

9. 2 Timothy 2:13

if we are **faithless**, he will remain **faithful**, for he cannot disown himself. (NIV)

- Praise the Lord! Jesus is faithful not because we are good or worthy, but because it is His nature.
- In addition, we belong to Him. We are actually in Christ. Jesus cannot be unfaithful to us because of our standing with Him. I have seen God bless me when I wasn't worthy and it is because of Jesus and my right standing with God through Him that the blessings came. They weren't due to my faithfulness.
- Yet obviously, this isn't the ideal situation. If we are faithful to Jesus, He will be even more faithful to us. I can't earn God's grace, but I can work to be worthy of the grace that will undoubtedly come in Jesus.

10. Titus 1:1-4

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the **faith** of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness--a **faith** and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior, To Titus, my true son in our common **faith**: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (NIV)

- Faith leads to godliness. When we exercise faith, we are like God, who also exercises faith.

- Titus is another son in the faith. Paul calls this a common faith, for we share in the means that brings us close to God.
- If we can believe that God will preserve us now for an eternal relationship with Him, then we can believe Him for anything. Think of how magnificent an act salvation is. What God does to bring us home to Him and what it is to spend eternity in the presence of God. If God can do that, and we know He can, then I can believe Him for great things now. Can you? If so, what?

11. Titus 1:13

This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the **faith** (NIV)

- Paul ordered Titus to rebuke them because they were unsound in a matter of having faith. The people rebuked were lazy and liars, not good examples of those who have faith. They weren't rebuked because they did something the leader didn't like. Paul understood that the goal was faith, not pleasing him or honoring his authority.
- Is there anyone who can rebuke you for lack of faith in your life? That is why we need overseers, not to lord it over us, but to make sure we stay on course in our faith walk; to make sure love of money hasn't distracted us; to insure that we are doing deeds consistent with a life of faith.

12. Titus 2:2

Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in **faith**, in love and in endurance. (NIV)

- Being "sound in faith" is an important aspect of the Christian life for Paul. (Remember, Paul never referred to us as Christians, always as believers. He defined our relationship with God in terms of our faith).
- Faith isn't weird. It is how we live our day-to-day lives. It doesn't mean we sell everything, or go live in a cave. If it does, then only a few can achieve a life of faith. God wants us to have faith for our everyday life, families, jobs, businesses, and purpose for our lives. Anything that takes away from that is, well, it's weird.
- The directives for older men in this verse are sensible and sane.

13. Titus 3:15

Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the **faith**. Grace be with you all. (NIV)

- Often I take out the article “the” prior to the word faith, for in Greek it isn’t always there. So Paul wrote, “Greet those who love us in faith.” I love some people in faith that I will change to love them from the heart.
- Some people are harder for me to love than others, so I love them in faith.

14. Titus 1:6

An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children **believe** and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. (NIV)

- Leaders have a duty to instill faith in their followers, including fathers and mothers in their children. If children have seen the results of faith, and if it isn’t weird faith, then they should have a desire to believe for themselves. If the children beheld faith firsthand and reject it, then you must at least ask what kind of faith they were exposed to.
- What kind of faith are you exposing your children to? Is it legalistic and narrow, or life-giving and fun?

15. Titus 1:15

To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not **believe**, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. (NIV)

- Lack of faith corrupts the mind and makes one cynical and self-serving.
- Lack of faith corrupts the conscience, excusing bad behavior, lack of giving, and poor job performance.
- I am not sure only nonbelievers are addressed here. I have known some so-called Christians to have corrupted minds and consciences.

16. Philemon 1:4-6

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your **faith** in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. I pray that you may be active in sharing your **faith**, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. (NIV)

- Paul prayed that Philemon would be active in sharing faith. That is an interesting prayer for it seems a bit elementary. But we should pray for one another that our faith is stirred and shared.

- When we share our faith testimonies, it gives us more understanding of the good things we have in Christ.
- Make this week a week of testimonies. Whether at the dinner table, in church services, at Bible studies, or with as many unbelievers as possible, share your faith testimonies.
- How old are your faith testimonies? Are they relics or recent? What can you do to obtain a more up-to-date faith testimony?