

# "The Primary Parenting Responsibility"

## 2 Timothy 1

I'm going to assume most of us, at one time if not more, were listening to a sermon or someone's testimony or a missionary's report and whether there was a challenge or not, you felt guilty because you were not out there like them "changing the world"! Or you were reading a blog or a book about a soul-winning pastor/evangelist or missionary who God used in a mighty way and you felt bad about yourself (and maybe thought 'God must really be disappointed with me') because you weren't making "any difference" for the kingdom. We've all been there. We've all felt like we weren't doing our part.

And perhaps moms might identify with this more than others. You're "just" a mom. You're "just" at home trying to keep sane while you change diapers, make lunches, picking up, cleaning up (even when you're feeling like throwing up!) – and that's all before school!

But when you read your Bible and if you read carefully you realize that there really aren't that many prophets or apostles or missionary/evangelists out there making a difference but that most of ministry is accomplished through everyday people fulfilling their everyday responsibilities right where they live. And the testimony of Timothy, overseer of the churches in Ephesus, one of the largest cities of the Roman Empire with a population somewhere in the 50,000 range in the first century. So, Paul writes two letters to Timothy to encourage him to hang in there teaching the truth of the gospel to a very pagan culture.

When Paul begins to write his second letter to a discouraged Timothy, Paul reminds him of his faith background, how his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice taught him how to love God and follow Jesus. For almost every Timothy out there making a difference for the kingdom, there was a Lois or a Eunice that prepared him to be in the place God wanted him.

So, if you're a mom this morning, or a grandmother who has the opportunity to speak into your grandkid's lives, make sure you understand that your primary responsibility isn't to raise healthy and happy kids but your primary responsibility as a Christian parent is to ...

## **Make Disciples of Your Children** **(2 Tim. 1:3-9)**

When Jesus issued His great commission to

***19** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

The making of disciples still needs to happen in our own nation. The main command here is 'make disciples' and go is subordinate to make disciples, meaning 'while you are going'. Disciple making then, can happen with your children while you are going to put them to bed or going to the family room to play games. While you are going to soccer practice or school or to the park or walking the dog. Wherever and whenever you find yourself 'going' is an opportunity to help your child become a follower of Jesus.

How do you do that? From Timothy's example we learn the main things are,

### ***Getting the Word into them early (2 Tim. 1:3-5; 3:15)***

Paul says here in Ch. 1 that Timothy's mom and grandma had a sincere faith. Lois most likely a devout Jew like Simeon looking for the hope of Israel, the Messiah. She would have been alive when Jesus was on the earth. We don't know how she believed Jesus to be the Messiah but she did.

And then her daughter Eunice became a believer and when she had her child Timothy, we read in 2 Tim. 3:15 that

*from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Infancy implies before he could even talk and comprehend truths. It is never too early to read Scripture, sing Bible songs to your babies and toddlers so that they will grow up with this as their normal routine in life. Kids learn early to pray. They want to pray. They want to read board books. We have some good material in our library here. As they get a little older they want to look at picture books. Boys especially seem fascinated with dinosaurs. We have some good creation books about dinosaurs and a young age for the earth, good tools to have in kid's hands and minds early in life.

It may not seem productive at the time. They may not appear to be listening to parents or grandparents yet they do take it in. And they can memorize almost anything at a young age. Books of the Bible, verses, songs. Keep imparting biblical truths into their life from infancy and up and

### ***Pray that God convinces them of His truth (2 Tim. 3:14)***

It's not the parents' job to save their children, it's their job to lead them to the truth. Salvation is a work of God's Spirit in the mind of someone who confesses Jesus is Lord and believes Him in their heart so they are saved. Timothy's testimony is right here before us. He learned the Scriptures early and became convinced of it from those whom he had learned it. There's the advantage of being a mom or grandma/parent. Your child knows you and trusts you. They believe you when you tell them what the Bible says. But they have to become convinced of it themselves. They have to make their own decision for Christ. Listen to John 1:12-13,

*<sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

Someone else can't make that decision for you. That's why we are dependent on God and must pray for our children and grandchildren to become disciples. The word convinced is the word 'believe' or 'have faith'. Paul wrote that they have to have their own faith, to believe for themselves that Jesus died for their sins and rose from the dead in order to begin eternal life.

But its not just about making that decision. A decision for Christ is the beginning of a walk with Christ. Pray that God would not only convince them of the truth but also to pray

### ***For their continued faithfulness (2 Tim. 1:6-9)***

This is what a disciple of Jesus is, one who continues to walk with Jesus, accepting His Word as truth and seeking to live by it. Back in Ch. 1 Paul reminded Timothy to remain faithful to his decision to follow Jesus:

<sup>5</sup> I am 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. <sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. <sup>8</sup> So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. <sup>9</sup> He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

“He has saved us and called us to a holy life” not a one-time decision. Paul was persuaded that Timothy had sincere faith and needed a reminder to hang in there especially in the persecution he was experiencing because Paul challenges him not to be ashamed to suffer for the gospel.

We shouldn't take for granted that a child's decision for Christ was done with full understanding at the time and to keep praying that they would grow in their faith, producing small fruit and prove their commitment to Christ over time. The New Testament shows us that the test of salvation is not a one-time decision but a long-term commitment, the visible fruit of invisible growth.

Timothy is a great encouragement for parents and grandparents whose testimony was one where they spent the bulk of their life in their own communities raising their kids and grandkids. Just because they couldn't go and serve God among larger groups of people or different geographical locations or in full time ministry, one of their kids might and they might be used of God to reach more. So, the primary parenting responsibility to make disciples of your own children ...

## **So They Can Make Disciples of Others** **(1:2)**

Back in 1 Tim. 1:1-2, Paul introduced his letter with these words,

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, <sup>2</sup> To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Paul became Timothy's discipler, his mentor. How did that come about? Let's go to Acts 16. Paul had three separate church planting/missionary terms where he travelled to various regions sharing the gospel and starting local churches. And then he would select or be involved in the selection of choosing elders who would take over the church after he left. In Acts 16 Paul had just left on his second missionary journey where he wanted to return to the churches he had started earlier and encourage them. He and Barnabas disagreed overtaking Mark (the one who would write the gospel) because Mark didn't finish the first journey with them. Paul didn't want him so Barnabas and Mark went in one direction while Paul and Silas another.

In Ch. 16:1 we read,

*Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. <sup>2</sup> The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. <sup>3</sup> Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.*

Timothy grew up with a Greek, unbelieving father, whose influence was strong because Timothy was not circumcised even though his mother's side were all Jewish. But Timothy was a believer and was involved in the local church in Lystra where the church family all spoke well of him.

And when you think about it from the point of view of Paul, who just rejected Mark from his ministry team but was willing to take Timothy, it meant Timothy had grown spiritually mature. But the point I want to make here is that the church family spoke well of Timothy which means he had developed strong spiritual relationships other than family members.

As moms (and parents) we have to realize that our roll in our children and grandchildren's life is foundational and that we have to let go of them and trust God for their lives and be praying for them in at least these 3 ways which will help them grow as disciples.

### ***Pray they have strong spiritual relationships***

Timothy had developed some strong spiritual relationships within the Christian community in Lystra. Then the apostle Paul saw God's hand on his life and poured his life into Timothy's. He asked Timothy basically to be his apprentice, helping him grow stronger. Paul became his spiritual father, his mentor.

Timothy is mentioned in 10 of Paul's epistles, in Acts and in Hebrews. In 1 Cor. 16:10-11 Paul said this of Timothy,

*<sup>10</sup> When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. <sup>11</sup> No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers.*

Paul saw Timothy as an equal partner in the gospel. He gave Timothy high credentials when he told the Corinthians to treat him well because he was carrying on the Lord's work just as Paul was. In Phil. 2:19-22 Paul said this of Timothy;

*<sup>19</sup> I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. <sup>20</sup> I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. <sup>21</sup> For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. <sup>22</sup> But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.*

"No one else like him". "Shows genuine concern for your welfare". He had proved himself. I show you those verses because as parents we want and need to pray for our kids to have strong spiritual relationships with other believers, who like Paul, see godly potential and want to invest their life in them and want to help them grow spiritually. Maybe you've been consistent in praying for your child and adult son/daughter to have good friends but make sure you're praying that they have strong Christian friends who will help them stay close to God and be used for His purposes.

To be used for God's purposes means to use their spiritual gifts. So let's be

### ***Praying they use their spiritual gifts***

Paul saw Timothy's spiritual giftedness. When he first met him in Lystra we read in Acts 16:3 that "he wanted to take him along on the journey" and that part of that journey was sharing what the apostles had decided in Acts 15 at the Jerusalem Council. On the one hand it may not seem that big a deal to read a report that the church leaders had made, but on the other hand it was somewhat controversial and some very traditional Jewish believers may not have felt good about letting Gentiles into the church. Paul was smart enough to encourage Timothy a descendent of a Jew and a Gentile, to become circumcised as an example that he was open to however God would use him. Paul could see how Timothy was going to be invaluable to ministry.

In 1 Thes. 3 Paul explains how he was so concerned for the Thessalonian church – whom he had not heard from for quite a period of time – sent Timothy to find out if they were okay. He said of Timothy in 1 Thes. 3:2,

*<sup>2</sup> We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, and (v.8) he brought good news about their faith and love.*

But Paul trusted Timothy for that task, believing he was responsible and capable of ministry. And in 1 Cor. 4:17 he said of him,

*<sup>17</sup> For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.*

Paul was confident Timothy could use his gift of teaching to share what Paul had taught elsewhere. Paul saw that Timothy had similar gifts to him and could do the same ministry as he did.

These are the things Lois and Eunice may not have seen in Timothy originally but they saw his potential. As parents we want to see other Christians invest in our children's lives as they grow older and move away from home. We need to pray that other godly men and women would come alongside our kids/grandkids and see their giftedness and encourage them in ministry and life. Pray for that early in their life and all their life.

But if our kids and grandkids become involved in ministry it's a guarantee they will hit rough patches and experience trials and spiritual warfare. So let's be

### ***Praying for them to have persevering faith***

Paul was worried about Timothy because false teachers had crept into the Ephesian church and teaching strange doctrine. Paul encouraged Timothy to remember the sincere faith of your mom and grandma, to fan into flame his spiritual gifts and not to be ashamed of the testimony of Jesus and join with him in suffering for the gospel. It's here in ch.3:12 where Paul says to Timothy "*Anyone who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*". In 1 Tim. 4:15 he instructed him to '*watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them because if you do you will save both yourself and your hearers.*'"

Timothy would get arrested for his faith. Was mom praying for him to remain strong? To not be ashamed of Jesus Christ? If she was alive most certainly, but if she wasn't at that time she certainly would have been praying for him at every step of his ministry. What happened to Timothy? We read in Heb. 13:23,

*<sup>23</sup> I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.*

He knew Timothy was returning to the church to continue his ministry. He persevered even when jailed for his faith. These are the kinds of things we need to be praying for our children no matter how old they are.

In the book of Zechariah, ch. 4:10, God tells the leader of the returned Israelites from Babylon who are rebuilding a smaller and less spectacular temple not to '*Do not despise the day of small*

*things.* Perhaps mom, you think you've mistakenly despised your smallness because you're not "out there" involved in ministry like you think you should. Your ministry is to make disciples of your children. That is no small thing. And that ministry never ends because praying for them to have strong spiritual relationships, to use their spiritual gifts and to have a faith that hangs in there when things get tough is essential for them to grow as disciples. Perhaps they will become the next Timothys or not. Doesn't matter. All that matters is you did your part in making disciples of all the nations; of which your children and grandchildren are part of that.

\* \* \* \* \*  
If you have any comments or questions about this message please contact us  
at [olivet@rideau.net](mailto:olivet@rideau.net)