

2 Timothy 1:5-7 “How God Can Use a Mother’s Influence” **

Main Idea: On this Mother’s Day, we’re going to learn from God’s Word how God can use a mother’s influence. In 2 Timothy 1:5-7, Paul reminds timid Timothy of two experiences from his life, both of which were shaped by the God-given influence of his mother.

- I. God used Timothy’s mother to influence his salvation (5).
 - A. Timothy’s faith was personal.
 - B. Timothy’s faith was pure.
 - C. Timothy’s faith was patterned.
 1. We can’t give our children faith.
 2. We can, and must, model it.
 - D. Timothy’s faith was persuasive.
 1. The evidence of faith is fruit.
 2. The presence of fruit makes it clear to others that Christ lives in us.
- II. God used Timothy’s mother to influence his service (6-7).
 - A. Timothy needed to remember God’s gift (6).
 - B. Timothy needed to depend upon God’s provision (7).

Take Inventory: We’ve just seen the greatest thing a mother can give her child.

1. Am I saved?
2. Am I serving God with my life?
3. Am I influencing others as Timothy’s mother influenced him?

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 31:10-31 (read by college age young people)

When I think of moms, I think of the word *influence*. A mother exerts a tremendous influence on her children, and for that matter, her husband too, and grandchildren if she has them.

On a personal note, this is my first Mother’s Day without my mother, whom the Lord called to her heavenly home last May 27. I can certainly attest to my mother’s influence. I preached from Proverbs 31 for her memorial service.

The book of Proverbs is about wisdom. Proverbs begins with a father talking to his sons about wisdom. It ends with a mother talking to her son about the same subject.

In Proverbs 31, we’re introduced to King Lemuel. We don’t know who Lemuel is. But we do know what his mother taught him, for the Holy Spirit guided him to write it down. If we were to read verses 1-9, we would hear this mother talking frankly to her son about four areas of life. Lemuel says...

1. She talked to him about women (3).
2. She talked to him about integrity on the job (3b, 4a).
3. She talked to him about alcohol (4-7).
4. She talked to him about how to treat people (8-9).

My mother talked to me about those issues, too, as she did to my brother and sister, for sure, and to many others in whose life she functioned as a mom.

But there’s one more issue King Lemuel’s mom addressed with him. It’s the subject that occupies the rest of the chapter, the text our young people just read.

"Who can find a virtuous woman?"

We don’t know for sure who wrote verses 10-31. I can’t prove these words came from Lemuel’s mother. But I don’t think it’s too big of a jump to assume that if Lemuel’s mother warned him about the wrong kind of woman in verse 3, she also informed him of the right kind, which is what we find in verses 10-31.

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

As you may know, verses 10-31 are an acrostic poem in the Hebrew text. Each verse begins with a successive letter in the alphabet, from "aleph" in verse 10 to "tav" in verse 31—22 letters, 22 verses, 22 virtues of a godly woman. In plain terms, verses 10-31 tell us how to identify God's kind of woman, everything from A to Z!

Again, sounds like the kind of conversation my mother would have had with me growing up. I considered preaching from that text this morning.

But I'd like to go to another text, and address this question. What's the greatest thing a loving mother can give her children? We find the answer in the apostle Paul's last God-inspired letter. In 2 Timothy 1:5-7 Paul mentions by name Timothy's mother and grandmother, and reminds Timothy of two experiences from his life, both of which were shaped by the God-given influence of his mother and grandmother.

There's much for us in this very transparent text.

2 Timothy is a great letter! Humanly speaking, Paul's situation was bleak when he penned it. He was chained in a dingy Roman dungeon. On death row. He would soon be executed by the order of Nero because of his allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Yet Paul was content. In fact, instead of feeling sorry for himself, he thought only of two things. One, the future of the gospel, and two, the future of his closest associate in the gospel.

Paul knew his dear friend, Timothy, needed encouragement. Why? Because for over 15 years Timothy had been Paul's assistant. A second man. When he needed guidance, Paul was there. But soon, Paul knew, he would not be there. And Timothy would be thrust into a new position of leadership.

The future of the gospel advance, at least, in the Mediterranean region, rested on Timothy. And Tim had 3 strikes against him:

1. He was relatively young (I Tim 4:12; 2 Tim 2:22)--mid 30's.
2. He was prone to illness (I Tim 5:23).
3. He was timid by temperament (naturally shy; an introvert)

Which is why Paul wrote 2 Timothy. I like the outline of 2 Timothy provided by John Stott. He suggests that Paul gave Timothy (and us) four charges in this letter:

Chapter 1--The charge to guard the gospel (1:14).

Chapter 2--The charge to suffer for the gospel (2:3, 8, 9).

Chapter 3--The charge to continue in the gospel (3:13, 14).

Chapter 4--The charge to proclaim the gospel (4:1-2).

Paul began the letter on a very tender note. Verse 2, "To Timothy, my dear son." In verses 3-4, Paul bore his soul. He says he thanked God for Timothy, longed to see Timothy, and prayed for Timothy, remembering Timothy's tears.

And as he thought of Timothy, Paul couldn't forget two experiences. And he didn't want Timothy to forget them either.

And this is critical to see. Timothy's mother played a great role in these two experiences, and we can learn from her, whether we're a mother, or father, or friend, or anyone seeking to have a godly influence on those God places in our lives.

What were these two areas? According to verse 5, Timothy's salvation. And according to verses 6-7, Timothy's service.

So many here today could say the same. God has used your mother's influence to bring you to salvation in Christ, and God has used your mother to launch you into joyful service to Christ.

I. God used Timothy's mother to influence his salvation (5).

Notice verse 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."

What was the first thing that came to Paul's mind when he thought of Timothy? One word--"faith." Verse 5, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned *faith* that is in thee..."

What is faith? By definition--to have faith means to believe, to trust, to have confidence in, to be persuaded of something. In what?

See: 2 Timothy 1:12 "... for I know whom I have *believed* (same Greek word)..."

Faith is a commitment I make, by God's grace, to put my total trust in the Person, Word, and Work of God in Jesus Christ.

What was true of Timothy's faith? I want us to see four marks of Timothy's faith which came to Paul's mind.

A. Timothy's faith was personal. "I have been reminded of *your* sincere faith." In the KJV, "the unfeigned faith that is IN THEE."

Faith is personal. Faith is not hereditary. It's not in your genes, dad and mom. You don't pass it on genetically to your children.

To the contrary, we've passed on something very different to them.

Psalms 51:5 "Behold I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Romans 5:12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned."

Ephesians 2:3 "...we all...were by nature the children of wrath."

That's the first thing we give our children. A sin nature. Every one of us is born separated from God, alienated. Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you..."

Timothy was born that way too. Separated from God.

But what happened to him? He acknowledged his sin and put his faith in the One who came to rescue us from sin. Timothy placed the confidence of his life in Jesus Christ. He experienced what Paul wrote about in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

So Timothy's faith was personal.

B. Timothy's faith was pure. Verse 5 again, "I have been reminded of your *sincere* faith." KJV, "the UNFEIGNED faith."

That's an interesting word. In the Greek, the same root word appears in Romans 12:9, "Let love be without hypocrisy."

"sincere/unfeigned" = unhypocritical, genuine

True faith is pure. We have a tendency to contaminate faith, to try and mix it with other things. Paul warned Timothy of this problem in his first letter.

1 Timothy 1:5-6 "The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a *sincere faith*. Some have *wandered away from these* and turned to *meaningless talk*."

Genuine faith is pure. Yet Paul announced the solemn truth that a church can have people in it who possess corrupt hearts. One evidence is *meaningless talk*.

Swindoll points out the all too prevalent conception of repentance, "Repentance is what a man does on Sunday for what he did on Saturday and intends to do on Monday."

That's not the mindset of pure faith. And Paul says, Timothy's was pure, sincere. And where did it come from? Yes, from the sovereign Lord. But what did the sovereign Lord use to bring it about?

C. Timothy's faith was patterned. Verse 5 says, "...which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."

Listen carefully dads and moms.

1. *We can't give our children faith.* We can't inject it into their blood. We can't force them to put their trust in Jesus Christ. What can we do?

2. *We can, and must, model it.* We can give our children a pattern of faith. And that's exactly what Timothy's mother and grandmother did for him.

Let's look back at Acts 14 & 16 and see the pattern...

In Acts 14 we read about Paul's first missionary journey.

Notice particularly the mention of *Lystra*. That's Timothy's hometown.

14:6-7 (after fleeing Iconium) "They fled to *Lystra* and Derbe... where they continued to preach."

14:19 [while at *Lystra*] "...They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city..."

14:21-23 "Then they returned to *Lystra*, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith... Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church..."

In Acts 16 we read about Paul's second missionary journey.

During Paul's second missionary trip he retraced his steps. Notice...

16:1 "Then came he to Derbe and *Lystra*..." [that's in Asia Minor, modern Turkey]

Who did Paul find there?

16:1 "...where a disciple named Timothy lived"

That's important. Timothy was a disciple of Jesus Christ. Apparently Paul had led this young man to Christ on his first trip.

What else does Luke tell us about Timothy? Notice the end of 16:1, "whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek."

--Timothy's mother was a Jew. (named Eunice acc to 2 Timothy 1:5).

--Timothy's father was an unsaved Greek man.

--Timothy's mother had become a believer in Jesus the Messiah.

So apparently Eunice and her mother Lois were converted to Christ under Paul's first time of ministry in *Lystra*. But here's the question.

Did they really believe? Was their faith just talk, or did they really mean business about their commitment to Jesus Christ? Did they truly surrender their all to their Lord?

The test came when Paul arrived the second time. What happened? Notice...

Acts 16:2-3 "The brothers at *Lystra* and Iconium spoke well of him. 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."

Moms, I want you to put yourself in the position of Eunice. Grandmothers, in Lois's shoes. Would you encourage your son (or grandson) to go tramping off with a man like Paul? Remember, this woman had an unbelieving husband. She could have said, "I need Timothy here with me. He's my source of spiritual strength." And remember that this was the same Paul who'd been stoned in Iconium the last time he came to their region!

So... would you be willing to send your son off with company like that?

Eunice was. And do you know why? Because her faith *was* unfeigned! She was willing to give up her own son, so he could do what God wanted him to do. She was willing to send her son into the unknown, to serve her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let me say a word to parents here today that have unbelieving spouses. If you're trying to raise your children to love and live for Christ without spiritual support from your mate, be encouraged. You can do it, by God's help! Don't give up! Look at the great impact made by Lois and Eunice!

And notice an important fact. These two women weren't the only sources of spiritual influence in Timothy's life. Acts 16:2 says, "*The brothers* at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him." Don't miss that. *The brothers*. There were other men in Timothy's life, men who did love Jesus, and loved Timothy. They spoke well of him because they knew him. And they knew him because they were involved in his life, and he in theirs.

You see, when you become a follower of Jesus, you become part of a forever family called the local church. So you may be alone for Christ in your biological family, but you're not alone. God has placed in your life, and in this case, your *son's* life, all kinds of spiritual dads to help shape him to become the kind of man God wants him to be.

So moms, and dads, and grandmas, and grandpas, are you willing to surrender your children and grandchildren to God for His service, like Eunice and Lois did?

You say, "Well Timothy wasn't a little boy. He was around 20 when he first met Paul." That's right. But there are dads and moms today who have children in their 20's and 30's and older, who still hold the emotional reigns on their children, who refuse to support them in whole-hearted obedience to God's will.

About the same time God was calling me to be a pastor, He was working in the heart of a young man I new, Gary, who was in his late 20's. Gary too sensed God's call to be a pastor. But his dad, who had a lucrative business, opposed him. In fact, Gary was an associate in his business, which would be his someday, and already making plenty of money.

"I don't want my child to go off to a Christian college and prepare for ministry. I want him to get into a career where there's security and prestige."

Moms and dads, let's ask ourselves an important question. When was the last time we prayed this prayer? "Almighty God, thank You for the privilege of being a parent. I'm grateful. And I also recognize that these are your children, not ours. Please have *Your* way with them, whatever it is."

You say, "I want to be able to pray that kind of prayer. And I want my kids to want that, too. What does it take?"

I think Eunice can help us. How could Eunice surrender her son for the Lord's service with Paul? And why was Timothy so ready to go on this venture, certainly knowing danger would follow?

We find a clue in 2 Timothy 3:14-15, which I'll preach an entire message from this evening. But for now, I want us to see one significant point.

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."

There's our clue. Long before she ever heard of Jesus the Messiah, this Jewish woman named Lois taught her daughter Eunice the OT Scriptures. And Eunice did the

same with Timothy. She gave her son a great respect for God and His Word. She taught Timothy that obeying God should be his greatest priority in life, as it was in her life.

That's why, when Paul offered the invitation to Timothy, both Timothy and his mother could echo these words...

All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give.

I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live.

I surrender all. I surrender all.

All to thee my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

I want you to notice a critical word in our text, 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."

Don't miss that word *first*. Parents, it's pretty tough to pass on to our children and grandchildren what we ourselves lack.

I hear young couples say all the time, "I want a church that offers good things for my kids." Great! The best church for kids is a church that reaches moms and dads, and challenges and equips them to have a genuine, contagious faith that their kids will see and want to emulate. So if you really want to influence your children's faith, make sure your faith is sincere and unfeigned, a pattern for them to follow.

It *first* lived in Lois's life, then Eunice's, then Timothy's.

You say, "My pattern is far from perfect." Who said it had to be perfect? There is no perfect parent. But by the grace of God, He uses parents who exhibit a *pure* faith to give their kids a pattern to emulate.

Paul mentions one more component to Timothy's faith. Timothy's faith was personal, pure, patterned, and fourthly...

D. Timothy's faith was persuasive. "And I am persuaded now lives in your also," says Paul at the end of verse 5.

In verse 5 Paul has been saying that he has been "reminded of" [KJV "remembered"] Lois's faith, Eunice's faith, and Timothy's faith. How do you remember faith?! Isn't faith strictly a personal matter? Isn't it something inside of me?

No. Here we learn that genuine faith persuades. Persuades whom? Other people. Faith ought to be seen. And genuine faith will be seen.

We read in James 2:14, "What does it profit if a man say he has faith, and have not works? Can faith (THAT KIND OF FAITH) save him?"

Paul had seen the evidence of Timothy's faith for the fifteen years he'd known him. So here he says, "I am persuaded of your faith Timothy. I've seen the evidence of it."

So what is the evidence of faith? Simply put...

1. The evidence of faith is fruit.

If I see an apple hanging on a tree, there's a good chance that it's what kind of tree? An apple tree! The fruit reveals the inherent qualities of the tree.

What reveals whether my faith has indeed plugged me into Christ and He now lives within me? Fruit does.

What kind of fruit? One, Christlike character. And two, Christlike conduct.

Christlike character—that's Galatians 5:22-23, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering..."

And Christlike conduct—that's Matthew 7:16, 20, where Jesus said, "You shall know them by their fruit (16, 20)."

So if we have genuine faith in Christ, what will it produce in our lives? The fruit of Christlike character and conduct. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..."

And here's where the persuasion comes in.

2. *The presence of fruit makes it clear to others that Christ lives in us.*

Take inventory, for a moment.

Do you have genuine faith? If I say, "I believe in Jesus," but that belief fails to produce visible evidence, it is a deficient faith, a non-saving faith.

"So you're saying that faith is not enough? You mean I can believe and not be saved?"

Fill in the blank of James 2:19, "The demons believe, and tremble."

So saving faith is not merely believing in God in a general sense. Nor is it merely believing some things about Jesus Christ in an academic sense. When there is genuine saving faith, which is a gift of God enabled by the grace of God, it means that I place the confidence of my life in the person and work and word of Jesus Christ the Savior.

When Paul thought of Timothy, that's what came to mind. A faith that is personal, pure, patterned, and persuasive.

The Lord used several things in Timothy's life to produce that faith, one of which was the influence of his mother and grandmother. Moms, there's nothing more significant you'll ever do for your children than to influence them to put their total trust in Christ.

But the influence doesn't stop there.

II. God used Timothy's mother to influence his service (6-7).

Of course, this is where Timothy was presently struggling, and this is why Paul was writing this letter. Paul was on death-row. His days numbered. Who was qualified and needed to care for the churches after his departure?

Timothy was. But there was a problem. Timothy was hesitant, even down right afraid. He was still a fairly young man and unsure of himself, apparently shy, and intimidated by the hostile situation.

He needed some help. So Paul gave it to him by reminding him of his call to service in verses 6-7.

Verse 6, "For this reason." For what reason? For the reason that God has made an investment in Timothy's life. He has a genuine faith that's been nurtured by various influences, including his mother and grandmother.

"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." So what did Paul want Timothy to do?

A. Timothy needed to remember God's gift (6). "Stir up the gift of God," says the KJV.

What gift is Paul talking about? What had God given to Timothy? The word lit. is "grace-gift." It's a broad word in the NT. Sometimes it refers to general gifts God gives us. Here it has a special sense.

Timothy received it, says Paul, "through the laying on of my hands." Paul said something similar back in 1 Timothy 4:14, "Do not neglect your gift which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you."

Paul has in mind Timothy's commissioning/ordination service in his home church.

So what gift had God given Timothy? A special call to serve in the ministry of the Gospel. Paul says, "Timothy, remember what God did 15 years ago? He called you into His service! And He gave you a special gift, a special enablement so you could do the task He'd given you to do."

Granted, God doesn't give every believer the same gift He gave Timothy, the shepherding gift. But He does gift every believer (see 1 Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:4ff).

What did Paul want Timothy to do with this gift? Stir it up. Fan it into flame.

So a gift can lose its power, if it's not used. This is the only NT use of this word--literally means to "rekindle a fire". It's as if Timothy's gift was like a fire that was capable of dying out through neglect. Timothy's fire had not gone out, yet, but his flame needed some oxygen.

Some Christians in the Body of Christ are like that. They're spiritually gifted. But through inactivity, the flame has gone down. They need to do what Paul exhorted Timothy to do.

"Timothy, look back. Look back to those God used to bring you to salvation. Remember the faith of your mother and grandmother, and your own faith which God gave you. And then remember how God used my hands and the other elders' hands to set you apart for the ministry of the gospel. We recognized that God had gifted you. You have been called to serve! Don't shrink back. Do what God has called you to do! Fan that gift back into flame."

But that's not all. According to Paul, Timothy needed to remember God's gift.

B. Timothy needed to depend upon God's provision (7). Verse 7, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

What has God NOT given us? "fear" = an unusual word (only used here in the NT). It speaks of "cowardice; timidity"; in the verb form, "to be afraid."

What has God given us? Either "a spirit," or *the* "Spirit," that is, the Holy Spirit who generates three things in those He saves and then gifts for service.

Power, love, and self-discipline [KJV says, a sound mind]. The point is, Timothy had what he needed. He didn't need any new spiritual ingredients in his life. All he had to do was stir up what he already had.

That goes for every Christian, including you and me.

Take Inventory: We've just seen the greatest thing a mother can give her child.

Timothy had a mother that contributed to two great experiences in his life, his salvation, and his service to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

These verses compel us to ask personal questions.

1. Am I saved?

Do I have genuine faith? God continues to bring new people to WBC, for which we thank Him! Some have church backgrounds. Some don't. Some have had religious experiences before. Some have been told by others that your religious experience insures that you are going to heaven.

I want to ask everyone to honestly consider this question. Do I have saving faith like Timothy did? Do I have a faith that is personal, pure, patterned, and persuasive?

I'd like to share again about my mother, in fact, something I shared in her memorial service.

My mom was raised in a Christian home. Her father was a preacher in his early years, and her mother was one of the most loving people I've ever known. But that's not why mom's in heaven.

Mom herself lived an amazing life and touched so many people. But that's not why she's in heaven.

Merely good people don't go to heaven. Only *saved* people do. That's the word the Bible uses. "For by grace are you saved through faith."

Mom was in her early 30s when she and dad went to a Billy Graham evangelist crusade in Columbus. And there she heard the good news again. God sent His Son into the world. Why? Because all men, women, and children, no matter how they might perceive themselves, are sinners. Condemned. Lost. His Son did for them what they cannot do for themselves. He lived a perfect life, and then sacrificed His life on a cross, dying as a substitute for the sins of every person who would ever believe on Him. And God accepted His Son's payment, proving it by raising Him from the dead. Jesus returned to heaven, where He now rules over heaven and earth. And He hears the simple cry of the sinner who asks Him to save them.

And by the miraculous working of His Spirit, not just one, but two Brandt sinners cried out to Him that night in Columbus so many years ago, as both my mom and dad asked Jesus Christ to become their Savior.

That was in the 1960s. In the 70s the Lord moved our family to a small farm community in west-central Ohio, and to a Bible-teaching church called Grace Chapel. They were spiritual babies. Mom later told me she selected this church because of the steeple. But it was the teaching of this Book that changed her, them, us, *me*.

I cannot make it any clearer. If my mother needed a Savior, and she's one of the most remarkable people I've ever met, you and I do too. Every one of us. God's Word says, "He who has the Son has life, and He who does not have the Son does not have eternal life."

Have you been saved? Do you know Jesus Christ personally? Have you put your total trust in Him and in His saving work on the cross? If not, I invite you today to repent and believe in the Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. No one is too good to need Jesus, and no one is too far gone for Him. Call on Him, and He will save you.

2. *Am I serving God with my life?*

If you've been saved, you've also been gifted to serve. Are you? Have you joined a local church where you are using your spiritual gifts for the edification of your brothers and sisters, and the making known of Christ to the lost community and world around you?

Some of you had mothers that prayed fervently for you that you would be saved and then serve the One who saved you. Remember their faith. Fan into flame what God used their influence to give you.

3. *Am I influencing others as Timothy's mother influenced him.* I think of our moms now, and grandmothers, and dads and grandpas too. What a tremendous opportunity we've been given, to influence some people He's placed in our lives in the areas that matter most, their salvation and their service to Christ and others.

May God bless your influence.