

Eunice and Timothy Examples of Sincere Faith

by James Jennings

This sermon focuses on the importance of sincere faith, using 2 Timothy as a backdrop. It highlights the impact of sincere faith passed down through generations, the need for genuine faith in children, and the role of parents in imparting the Word of God. The sermon emphasizes the endurance, consistency, and genuine love that characterize sincere faith, urging children to embrace Christ and parents to diligently teach the Scriptures.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:5, Matthew 19:14, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:20, Hebrews 12:9, Psalm 78:4, 1 Timothy 4:12, James 1:22, 1 Peter 2:2

Topics: "Sincere Faith", "Generational Impact of Faith"

Description

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Transcript

Turn your Bibles to 2 Timothy. If you've got an ESV, it rightly says in the introduction that the editor has added, Paul wrote this letter as he awaited execution. This is Paul facing the end.

I want to focus on v. 5 of chapter 1. Let's read that and then I'll pray. And this sermon is kind of a Mother's Day sermon, and in another way, it's not. V. 5, I am reminded, Paul speaking to Timothy, of your sincere faith.

That's the message. Does sincere faith dwell in you? I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother, Lois, and your mother, Eunice. And now, I am sure, there's a lot of certainty there, dwells in you as well.

So does sincere faith dwell in you? That's what we're going to look at in the first part of my message. And then the next part is going to simply be this question, what instruments and means does the Lord use in some people coming to have sincere faith? And obviously, the answer here is His mother and grandmother were two of the instruments God used. And Paul makes that connection here in v. 5. The same faith that dwelt in them, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

And one of the greatest privileges parents have and mothers have is that could be said of us. Right? Could that be written? I'm reminded of your sincere faith, James. Do I have it? A faith that dwelt first in your grandmother, in your mother.

Could that be said of my kids? What's the greatest thing our kids can possess? What's the greatest possession I could pass on to my kids? I mean, you can't pass it on in one way or another way. There are responsibilities, but it's to have a sincere faith. Because to have a sincere faith is to be heaven-bound.

To not have a sincere faith is to be hell-bound. Well, let's pray. Father, Lord, thank You.

Thank You that we can gather here today. Thank You, Father, that You've given us Your Word. And Lord, I just ask, Lord, be with me in all of my weakness.

Would You be with my mind and give me clarity? Would You help me to say what is faithful to the text and faithful to Your Word? Would You guard my lips from saying something that might even be true, but saying it too strongly? Lord, I just ask for Your Holy Spirit. Lord, help me and help my hearers. Lord, would this be an encouragement to many? Lord, at the same time, would it be a challenge to all of us? And Lord, I pray, those here who don't know You, Lord, would You be merciful even in this hour to open their eyes that they would be able to have a sincere faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, Lord, we look to You in this hour. In Christ's name, Amen. Well, Paul, the apostle, had seen a lot.

If you just flip over to chapter 4 at the end of this letter, look at some of the things Paul had seen. He had seen people defect. Verse 10, "...For Demas, in love with the present world, has deserted me." Did Demas have a sincere faith? No, he chose love of the world.

Paul had seen people defect. Look at verse 16. Paul had seen people desert.

Verse 16, "...At my first defense, no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me." So Paul sees people defect. Paul sees people deserting. Did the Lord desert him? No.

Verse 18, "...The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom." And then verse 21, he's writing this letter saying to Timothy, do your best to come to me before winter. So Paul wants Timothy to come to him. Paul wants Timothy to come.

Why? Go back to our text. Chapter 1, verse 3. Look what he says to Timothy. You can see verse 2, to Timothy, my beloved child.

Verse 3, "...I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers, night and day, as I remember your tears." So Timothy had emotion. "...I long to see you." Why? "...That I may be filled with joy." That's one of Paul's requests. Nearing the end, he wants to see a fellow Christian and be full of joy.

And you can imagine that, right? If you're sitting there in that prison cell and Timothy comes in, Timothy who has a sincere faith, he's not a deserter. He's not like Demas in love with the world. He's the real deal.

He is genuine. And Paul wants him to come. He desires Timothy to come that he might be filled with joy.

And then verse 5, look what crosses Paul's mind here in prison. He remembers something. "...I am reminded..." Does he say of your powerful preaching? No.

He says, "...I'm reminded of your sincere faith." What's that faith look like? "...A faith that dwelt first in your grandmother." So Timothy's faith is a minister of the Gospel. Paul compares it to that of his grandmother. You can tend to think of preachers and ministers as having some superior faith.

Does Paul have that perspective? He does not. "...That dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and now, I'm sure, it dwells in you as well." So where's one place Paul is looking to encouragement at the end awaiting execution? You know what thought encouraged Paul? He thought about three generations of Christians. He thought about a grandmother who was saved, a mother who was saved, and he thought about that mother's son who was a Christian.

And there he is in that prison cell seeing people like Demas in love with the world, seeing people desert him, and here in that cell, he wants Timothy to come to be full of joy and he's being reminded of these people's sincere faith. And though they've not even made it to the end yet, it appears they're all still alive. Timothy was probably in his 30's.

Maybe his mother was in her 50's or 60's and the grandmother, 80's. Who knows? They haven't made it to the end yet and what does Paul say of them? Verse 5, "...I am sure, I'm certain, dwells in you as well." We sometimes could think, how do I know who's a true Christian? Can I really be dogmatic to say someone else is really a true Christian? Here Paul says he's sure. He's sure.

He sees true faith in them. As we see people fall away, sometimes people can get disillusioned as a new Christian. They get saved and they're in the church and then they see people go out from among us.

And they start to wonder, wait a minute, I thought that guy was the real deal. And now he's gone. Is anyone here really a true Christian? People could get disillusioned like that.

Maybe some of you had that as a new Christian. You start to really question things. Well, here we have three examples of people who have the real deal.

We've got a grandmother, a mother, and that mother's son. And Paul says, I'm sure, this sincere faith dwells in them. Sincere faith.

And you see what Paul says in v. 3. He says, I thank God whom I serve as did my ancestors with a clear conscience as I remember You constantly. Paul's point is faith in Christ is the true continuity of religion in the Old Testament. If you really believe the Old Testament, you're going to get to the point where you see Christ is the fulfillment of those prophecies.

And that's what happened to these three people. They had sincere, true faith in the Messiah, in the Lord Jesus Christ. So first, I want to consider what sincere faith is.

Then second, how does one obtain it? Or what are some instruments used in that person's life to bring them to a sincere faith? So you see, in v. 5, I'm reminded of your sincere faith. What's sincere? Genuine? Authentic? Not hypocritical? Doesn't have some pretense? It's not appearing to be something, but you come to find out it's not actually that thing? Right? If Paul says sincere faith, does that mean Paul assumes there's another type of faith? What would that other type be? A false faith. A faith that appears to be one thing, but it's not really real.

And I was thinking about this front line my wife and I watched called the Exodus. It was a documentary. And they spoke about all these people who were traveling from Syria to Germany.

And how did a lot of these people have to get to Germany? Did they go by land through Turkey? Or did they get on boats and go over to Greece and then go up to Germany? Right? They had to get across the Mediterranean there. Well, listen to what happened. This person in the documentary, he said, the saddest thing was that there were people who were liars on the way to people getting across the ocean and they sold fake life jackets that would cause people to sink and not to float.

And imagine that. Here you go up to some store and it looks like a life jacket. It's orange on the outside.

You don't really know what a life jacket might feel like and you shake it and you think it must work. And guess what? These people got on those boats and at some point, water got overtaken and some of their boats went down and these people, rather than float, they had a false life jacket. And what happened? They sunk.

They perished. In the same way that's how it is in the spiritual realm. There are many people who say, look, I've got my life jacket.

I've got my faith. I believe in Jesus Christ. Well, what's going to be the test? What's going to happen when you're thrown in that ocean? Will you sink? Will it be real? Jesus says in Luke 8, there are ones who hear, and the seeds, they fall on the rock, and those are those when they hear the Word, they receive it with joy, but they have no root.

They believe for a while and in a time of testing, what happens? They fall away. In a time of testing, like those people getting in the ocean there, they fall away. They sink down.

It proves their life jacket wasn't the real deal. So, Paul assumes there's a hypocritical faith and he gave that example of Demas in this very letter. Demas in love with the world.

Demas in a time of testing fell away. Okay, well, what does he mean by faith here? I'm reminded of your sincere faith. What's faith? You can think of faith in one way.

There is the faith, which is what? The doctrine and body of truth in the Scriptures, right? You've got the faith, which refers to doctrine. In another way, you've got faith, which means a personal belief in the truth. And so obviously, Paul here is reminded of Timothy's sincere faith, meaning Timothy sincerely was believing in taking God at His Word.

He not only had right doctrine, but he sincerely believed in that truth. He personally was believing in Jesus Christ. And the Scripture teaches there are many people who say they believe, but what's reality? Their life shows differently.

And if you've got your Bible, turn to James 2. We can look at a couple of those verses there. If you've never heard this idea that there's a true and a false faith, there's a person who says they have faith and it's real, and there's a person who says they have faith and it's false, James 2 is a very helpful place to look. Verse 14, What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith, but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, go in peace, be warmed and filled, without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

But some of you will say, you have faith and I have works. Well, show me your faith apart from your works. And I will show you my faith by my works.

Verse 19, you believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe and shudder.

Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? And then he goes on to talk about Abraham. He's not teaching there that we are saved by our works. He's teaching that works prove someone's got real faith.

Look, if I've got my life vest and I'm trying to sell it to you, this is the real deal. You know what I would maybe say to that person knowing the scam was going on? I would say, go hop in the ocean and I want to see it float on you first. I want to see that it's real.

So there's many, they profess, they have an inward reality. No outward works. There's others.

They've got a ton of outward works. But they're trusting in those works to be right before the living God. And they're going to perish like the man in Luke 18 who fasted, he tithed, he was very outwardly religious, but he did not know Jesus Christ.

So what makes sincere faith? Sincere and genuine faith is believing all the Bible says is true about you, that you're a sinner condemned before God, and it's believing all the Bible says about Christ, that He is God, and that He died as a substitute on the cross to bear God's wrath for us in our place. In order to believe, you've got to know the truth, right? You can't be ignorant. Faith comes by hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ.

People need to be exposed to the Gospel. Many refuse the Gospel. Ultimately, what makes sincere faith? We find out in 1 Peter 1 that He causes us to be born again to a living hope.

Everyone here who's ultimately been saved, guess what? It was a supernatural work of God to cause us to be born again. We could have tried to pry the eyes open of a dead person and it doesn't work. You need the Lord to give life.

And again, there's no greater possession to have than sincere faith. To actually have genuine faith where it's not just I say I believe that Christ died for me, but the life proves it. And in all the works the Christian does, that's not their boast.

Their boast is in Christ and His strength working through them to do those good works. So what are you believing? What am I believing? Let's look at this very letter, different things that Paul expresses. Look at v. 8. Paul is believing.

Genuine faith believes you're going to have to share in suffering. It says it in v. 8 in 2 Timothy 1. And you're going to do it by what? The power of God. So genuine faith believes God gives power.

V. 9, we see what Paul believed. What sincere faith believes. We believe He saved us and He called us to do what? To be holy.

To have a holy calling. Set apart. And He saved us not because of works.

Our works. So we're not saved by works that we have done, but it's according to His mercy. And then v. 9, what's sincere faith believing? I'm believing that He saved me because of His own purpose and grace.

It was His purpose. It was His grace. It wasn't something that I had done.

It was before I had done good or bad. It was before the ages began. That's what it says at the end of v. 9. Yeah, amen.

I mean, to have sincere faith to be saved. There's no greater blessing. V. 10, what am I believing? I'm believing that Christ abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

So the Gospel is the place where I can get life. And here Paul says he's been appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher. There's many other things Paul says here.

V. 14, what am I believing? By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. What's sincere faith believe? That I've got the Spirit. I don't have to do this Christian life in my own strength.

I've got God Himself dwelling in me and my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. And v. 2-8, look what he believes. Paul's sincere faith is commanded to remember Jesus Christ.

That He's risen from the dead, that He's the offspring of David, is preached in my Gospel. You see, a Christian is constantly remembering Christ. Our brother Jeff Thomas was recently with us.

He said this about the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what sincere faith is believing. Sincere faith is believing no man ever spoke like Christ.

I mean, you read the claims of Christ that He was God, that He's the only way, that He's the truth, He's the resurrection, He's the life. No one else spoke like that. To believe in Jesus Christ, Jeff Thomas says, is to believe that no man ever lived like Christ.

His life perfectly backed up His words. To believe in Jesus Christ is to believe that no man ever died like Jesus Christ. In the agony of the crucifixion, He breathed nothing but love and kindness to His enemies.

Such dying, such love. No one ever died like Jesus. The last thing Jeff mentioned was this.

To believe in Christ is to believe that no man ever blessed the human race like Jesus Christ. I mean, the greatest blessing in existence is sins forgiven. And there is nothing that beats that out.

You can't get close. A billion years from now in eternity, no one will have any closer idea of something greater than your sins forgiven and being right with God. So, I want to now look from the little we have written about Timothy's mother and his grandmother, what their sincere faith looked like.

And we don't have a lot, so I don't have a long list on them. But I want to look at them, and part of what I want to look at them is the fact that their faith that Paul commends, there's a connection there in that verse to the very faith that Timothy has. Verse 5, I'm reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother.

So that makes you wonder, what did that look like? If anything's written on her, what does it look like? Because if Paul attributes that was a means the Lord used to bring about faith in Timothy's life, every mother should want to imitate these two women that we find here. Let me pray again. Lord, I need Your help.

Father, just ask that You would quicken my dull mind for Your name's sake in Christ's name. Amen. So what did Timothy's grandmother and his mother's faith look like? I guess the first thing that's implied here, what happened at some point in both of their lives? How did they get their sincere faith? They didn't reject

the Word, right? I mean, the first thing this mother and grandmother had to do was receive the Word and then believe it as being true.

But it's not enough to receive the Word and believe it as being true, is it? There's lost people who receive the Word and believe it is true. I was talking to a guy from China last night. He called.

He knows he's lost. He believes the Word is true. You know what his problem is? He doesn't believe it's true personally for him.

He's not believing it on Christ for himself. So these women at some point, they personally believe. Christ claims for them.

Believe these prophecies from the Old Testament that pointed to the Messiah. And look, many Jews rejected Christ. It's a merciful thing that they even believed on the Lord.

Now we can ask this question, which one of these women was saved first? One version, yeah, it makes it seem more like the grandmother. We could assume that would be the progression. A faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice.

So the order Paul gives it, it doesn't necessarily mean one after another. But one of the versions it does add and then your mother. So we would generally take it to be that way.

You can imagine the grandmother at some point gets confronted with the truth and believes. And then this grandmother takes the truth. And what does a saved mother tend to do? If you've got the words of life, who are some of the first people you want to take that to? You! Your children.

Right? You take it to your kids. And yes, some of us, we took it too zealously. We took it too harshly.

And we were offensive, not for the sake of the truth, we were offensive because of our zeal, though it was done in love. Parents thought we were crazy. They thought, what do you mean? You've always been a Christian.

And you're sitting there thinking, no, mom, I wasn't always a Christian. I've just been now saved. There's a genuine faith, and there's a false faith, and I had the false faith.

And how many of our parents, they didn't understand that. They thought that was foreign, but it's not foreign to the Bible. And so it won't be foreign to God on Judgment Day when He judges all mankind.

People will find out then there was such a thing as false faith. It's hypocritical. They'll find out like those Syrians on that ocean when that boat sunk.

They'll find out the life vest they had wasn't the real deal. And you don't want them to find that out in this life. You want them to get the real thing.

So, here, another thing, we're looking at what did their lives look like. Here's something to think about. He says here, I'm reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother and then your mother.

Okay, they had a sincere faith. What's something true of someone who has a sincere faith? What type of life do they live? As a whole, not perfectly, is their life full of consistency? Or is it full of all sorts of

inconsistency? Consistency. Right? And so we don't have a letter written on them to see that consistency to its fullest, but we can assume that Paul here says they had a sincere faith, therefore, consistency.

And I want to read something on the importance of consistency. And we've got to take this to heart as parents. This is from James Cameron's Three Lectures to Christian Mothers.

He lived in the 1800s. He says this, In all your conduct, manifest the most steady consistency. Children, even at a very early age, are eagle-eyed to observe the inconsistencies of a parent.

And the slightest inconsistency, though it is manifested only in a word or a look, lowers your influence over them in an inconceivable degree. When a child learns to distrust its mother, all her warnings, admonitions, and protests, however earnest and unremitting, they fall powerless. This is the chief reason it is to be feared.

Why so frequently we see the children of godly parents grow up not feeling shame or regret about their sinful actions or attitudes. The example of their parents has not been uniformly consistent with their instructions, and therefore, have these instructions been useless? Mothers, watch your conduct. Your child is watching.

Every expression of your countenance, every word you utter, every action they see you perform is scanned and scrutinized by them. If they perceive that you act inconsistently, they will in their hearts despise you. And you cannot long deceive a child with regard to character.

The only sure way to appear consistent is to be so. So, I would assume these mothers were striving to be pretty consistent. They had a sincere faith.

And I was thinking of an example of someone in the church recently. They were mentioning a lesson they were teaching their kids about not taking something that's someone else's property. They were at someone else's house and their kid saw a penny and they took the penny out.

And the parents obviously said, well, that's not our penny. You can't take that penny home. It belongs to the person who owns the yard.

Right? Well, later on, this parent accidentally took a pencil from somewhere, and later they had that pencil and it dawned on them the very thing they told their kids not to do, take the penny, they had taken the pencil. They were stealing a pencil from someone else. Now imagine if the kids, I don't think this happened in this situation, but imagine if the kids would have observed that inconsistency.

The parent then loses the power of their words. What this parent did was they went to the person who they had gotten the pencil from their property and they took their kids with them and confessed that to the person with their kids there watching them. So now even if the kids did know what their parent did, guess what they see? My parent is consistent.

They're living out what they say. So in all of our failures, one of the most important things we can show as parents is humility. The worst thing a parent can do is not admit where they've gone wrong.

And you're sitting there at the dinner table and everyone knows Dad was just impatient and angry and he's not acknowledging that. It's one of the worst things. And then you tell the kids not to be angry and you've not had the humility to acknowledge your own anger.

You lose your power of authority. So, a third thing about these women, and again, a lot of that was kind of assumption based on them living a sincere life. How that looked in their lives, we don't have all the specifics.

But now, flip over to Acts. Keep your hand here and go to Acts 16. Acts 16.

His mother, it seems, lived out this sincere faith while married to who? A godly man or an unbeliever? Acts 16, Juan Paul also came to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman. And then look how he describes her.

Who was a believer. So he doesn't just mention she's a Jew, because obviously a lot of Jews are lost that weren't believing in Christ. Who was a believer.

A Christian. But Timothy's father was a Greek. Nothing is said here that Timothy's father was a believer.

Nothing is ultimately said whether he was alive at this point. We don't know that. We can only speculate.

And here, verse 2, it says Timothy was well-spoken of by the brothers at these cities. And verse 3, Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him. But here the point is, Timothy's mother, it seems, lived out this sincere faith while married to an unbelieving husband.

And look, the fact is that's the case with a lot of you different sisters here today, right? There are different sisters who get saved. You start coming to the church. Your husband is not a true Christian.

And you're in a similar spot as Timothy's mother was. And how do you live a sincere faith before an unbelieving husband? What's one of the first verses that comes to your mind? 1 Peter 3.1 Likewise, wise, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the Word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives. So the wife, no doubt she was seeking to live this way.

If her husband was alive, she was seeking to be subject to her own husband, even if he does not obey the Word. But think of it, this mother's son, not only he got saved, but look how useful he was for the kingdom of Christ. Timothy.

And he didn't come from the stock of two really godly parents. So that's an encouragement to you mothers here who have a lost husband. But it doesn't lower the bar of the possibilities of what might happen to your very kids.

We could have many Timothys raised up from single mothers here. Now obviously, our hope, our prayer is that your husbands will be saved and that you both can have an impact. And look, one of the reasons you could ask this question in verse 5, he leaves out his father and grandfather.

And some might say, well, that's because women have the most opportunity to instruct the kids. Do women generally have a lot of opportunity to instruct the kids compared to the husbands? That's true, but I think the reason he left out the father here is because the father wasn't a believer. And you get other situations where there's no mom.

And who in the Bible was a godly woman who just had a father? And that father really reproved her and exhorted her in a very trying time. He wasn't her biological dad in order to do something big by faith. Who? Esther.

Yeah, Mordecai. Esther's parents had died and Mordecai takes her in. And here she's in this situation where she's got to go before the king and she's not overly inclined.

And Mordecai comes in with this incredible exhortation. Like, you're born for this, and if you don't do this, God's going to raise someone else up. And she went to prayer and fasting and asked others to pray and fast and she went before the king.

So parents, mothers, fathers, we all should be having an impact on our children. So, Eunice lived out this faith while married to an unbeliever. What's the fourth thing they did? Turn to 2 Timothy 3. Turn one page over.

They poured the Scriptures into Timothy. Verse 14, "...but as for you, Timothy, continue in what you've learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it..." You know, from Paul, from his grandmother and his mother is implied. Verse 15, "...and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." And how from childhood, you have been acquainted with the sacred writings.

Can we say that about our kids? A lot of kids, if you go into the world and you ask a kid what they've been acquainted with since they were a young child, is one of the first things they're going to say is the Bible? No, it's going to be some TV show that their parents watch more TV show than anything else, and that's their babysitter. And they live their life consumed with that show. That's what they're acquainted with is the characters in that TV show, not the Word of God.

Timothy, that was not the case. The Bible was being poured into him as a little child. I was thinking about grandmothers.

Grandmothers often pour out gifts upon their grandkids. And nothing's wrong with that, right? I appreciate when my kids have a birthday and Grandma and Grandpa send something down or give the kids something. I appreciate that.

But you know what's the greatest gift a grandparent can give to that child? It's the Word of God. It's the truth. It's living a consistent, sincere life of faith.

It's no physical gift. It's pointing them to the one true gift in Christ. And if you look at v. 15 in that chapter, how from childhood, you have been acquainted with the sacred writing.

So here, Timothy had the knowledge. He was not ignorant like some Gentile out there. And then it says, "...which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." So Timothy had the knowledge.

Now he had to believe in it personally for himself. And he did. And we don't know specifically the hour or the day or the year when he was converted, but he took Christ at His Word.

His parents, his mother, put the truth before him. At what age should truth be spoken to our kids? If you look in v. 15 and how from childhood, that word there is infancy. Since they're small, they're hearing the words.

They're being acquainted with the Word of God. It's amazing to me how Paul does not emphasize his grandmother and mother's prayer life for their grandson, for their son. Should we be praying for our

children? Yes.

But I could pray for my kids for the next ten years, but if I don't speak forth the Word, when faith comes by hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ, something's not going to work out there. I need to be preaching the truth to them which is able to make them wise for salvation through faith in Christ. They're going to have the true Gospel.

They know who Christ is. They know about the doctrine of regeneration. I remember one of the young kids in the church when he was in a sports team, one of the coaches was trying to lead all of the kids in a sinner's prayer to be saved.

And that kid was wise with truth from the church and he's thinking, I'm not going to do that. I know that's not the real deal. You see, we want our kids able to distinguish these things.

Even if they're yet still rejecting them, do they have that knowledge of Christ that they might believe? Do they have a knowledge of how wicked and sinful they are? The Bible does not say our kids are little angels. The Bible says they're children of the devil. We've got to be gracious to them, but be faithful.

My grandmother growing up would always tell me, James, you're such a good little kid. And even as a kid when she said that, I thought she doesn't know how wicked I am. My wickedness was mainly inward.

It would have helped if she would have reproved me rather than flattered me with how good I supposedly was. Spoke the Word to me. So mothers, grandparents, you can make a big impact on imparting truth to your children.

You can have a massive impact. A massive impact on them. Timothy, he became a man who not only did he receive the Word, he was well spoken of.

Well spoken of. What does Paul say in Philippians 2? Timothy was a man of what? Proven worth. Paul says in Philippians 2, there's no one like Timothy who has genuine concern.

So Timothy had genuine love. Where do you think he saw that being modeled? Maybe his mom? He didn't have hypocritical love. He had genuine love.

He genuinely cared about others' interests. You think about Timothy and his sincere faith. You know what we find in Acts 16? Timothy gets circumcised.

His father was a Greek. Paul believes it's best to get him circumcised. Does Timothy fight that? Say, well, I don't need to do that.

I'm not under the law. I don't need to do that. Timothy's willing to get circumcised in order to become all things to all people that he might win some and not be a stumbling block before the Jews.

Is that the type of faith you've got? Are you fighting for your liberties rather than willing to die for them? Even to have something like circumcision happen. Do I really need this to happen? But Timothy, his faith, he had a bigger mission in life than himself. He was wanting to win souls to Christ.

We're thinking about Timothy and his faith. Timothy had a sincere faith that needed to be stirred up. Verse 6 in this letter, chapter 1, he says, I remind you to fan into the flame the gift of God.

So Paul's exhorting him, stirring him up. Even us with sincere faith, we've got to be stirred up. Timothy had sincere faith.

It says in verse 4, Paul remembers his tears. Tears. Don't you just love it when someone genuinely cries? Maybe some of you don't see it that much.

I mean, genuinely cries. I mean, some of the older Christians, when we'd pray with them up in Missouri, it's like they were genuinely hit with such a reality in that time of prayer, they're genuinely weeping. Not some fake show to appear a certain way.

Timothy had tears. There's a heart there. As I've said, I wish I could cry more.

And I'm just not that near to Christ yet to where there's just more reality that would cause me to flood over with tears. Maybe I've not suffered enough yet. But Timothy there, Paul remembered his tears.

Maybe he's referring to Acts when Paul was leaving. There were crying tears seeing Paul leave. What's sincere faith in Timothy look like? It looks like you've got to endure.

Hebrews 13, you should know that our brother Timothy has been released from prison, with whom I shall see if he comes soon. Did Timothy go to prison and come out renouncing the Lord? Did he renounce the Lord in prison? He didn't. He had sincere faith.

Paul is calling Timothy throughout this whole letter of 2 Timothy to endure. In v. 8, chapter 1, he says to share, continue on in suffering. Don't quit.

In chapter 3, v. 14, he says, but as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believe. Chapter 2, v. 10, Paul says, I endure everything. V. 12, if we endure, we will also reign.

Chapter 4, v. 3, he says, the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching. V. 5, as for you, always be sober-minded. Endure suffering.

True, sincere faith endures. And how did his mother and grandmother die? We don't know. But we do know this, sincere faith endures and he who began a good work in someone, Christ, will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

He gets people to the end. So, some thoughts to parents. And it's not even just to parents, I guess.

You could look at it like this. Anyone who has an impact on a child, anyone who has an impact on a child, and you know what, some of you, it's you siblings who are professing and you've got lost siblings. You have an opportunity to impact your younger siblings.

Sometimes there's an older child who is professing and a younger child professes and they want to join the church and we'll ask them, what do you think about your other sibling who professes? What type of life do they live in the home? We want to know. Is it sincere? Is it genuine? No, is it not some perfect reality, but like that one parent, when you sin, is there grief and you're wanting to make it right no matter how small it is? Even if it's taking a pencil. I'm showing my kids I always want to have a clear conscience before God and man.

So, let's think for a moment a couple of things. I already mentioned this, but many of you mothers, or some of you, your husbands are lost. Do you realize you can have such an impact on your children that even if

your husband never gets saved, your kids could turn out like people like Timothy? Do you even realize that? It's a defeated, wrong thought to assume that that family that had two really godly parents, all their kids are going to turn out better than mine.

Look, are we ultimately caught up to who? The grace of God? You better believe it. But are we hyper-Calvinistic? No. We don't just say what will be, what will be.

Like one of my old co-workers who was a Dutch hyper-Calvinist guy, he said he didn't even evangelize his kid and if God's going to save his kid, God's going to do it. And I'm thinking, are you kidding me? If my kid's going to know the Bible, guess what's going to be a big part of them knowing the Bible? It's going to be me as a parent. Not just reading the Bible, explaining the Bible, and living it out in my own life.

But mothers, even a single father like Mordecai who might have his daughter's child, do you see your opportunity to have an impact on that child? The greatest possession you can pass on to your children is sincere faith. Sincere faith. People will say, little Johnny has a nice heart inside.

That doesn't matter as a parent. I want to hear someone say to me, your son has a sincere faith that reminds me of your faith. And not just your faith, your son's more zealous than you were.

That'd be a nice add-on, right? You know, you kids with Christian parents, you don't want to live up to the standard of your parents. You want to go beyond it. You'd be wrong to look at your dad and mom and say, well, that's the standard.

No, Christ is the standard. And your parents fail. And they have blind spots that you don't want to imitate.

And you want to go far beyond that. And God forbid you drop the bar lower than your parents. Obviously, in parenting, we're balanced.

Passing on the knowledge of the truth does not mean we ignore everything else in life. It doesn't mean you don't go play sports with your kids and you're just always beating the Bible into their heads. That would be more damaging than good.

But are we teaching our children? Are we acquainting them with the sacred writings? With the Scriptures? Proverbs 31, it says, the words of King Lemuel, an oracle that his who taught him. His mother taught him that. Deuteronomy 6, these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

You shall teach them diligently to your children. And obviously for us, these ultimate words is the New Testament revelation. You shall teach them diligently to your children.

You shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. I think one of the biggest failures, and one thing that's helpful even with the pastoral visitations and getting people's homes is really even asking one question to parents. Are you able to take time every day where you sit down and talk about the Scriptures to your children? A lot of people right before the kids go to bed, they sit down and they have that, whether you call it a family devotional or whatever you call it, if you're not taking advantage of that opportunity, you're missing seven days every week where you can speak truth into your kids for ten minutes or however long it is that will impact them for eternity.

Some of the best discussions I've had with my kids is just sitting down and we start discussing something from the Word right there before they're headed to bed. D.E. Host, missionary in China, who took over the work of China Inland Mission after Hudson Taylor died, he said of his mom, the mother in particular was a born teacher. And as one of her sons wrote of her many years later, to have passed through her hand was to have a knowledge of the Bible from end to end implanted on the mind for life.

Whatever the special lessons, the main ideas were of God's love to us revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our own sins and shortcomings together with our need of a personal repentance and renewal. While the thought that we had been sent into the world to do some work for God and man was never far away.

J.C. Ryle said, I train your child to a knowledge of the Bible. You cannot make your child love the Bible, I allow. None but the Holy Ghost can give us a heart to delight in the Word.

But you can make your children, as the text says, acquainted with the Bible. Be sure they cannot be acquainted with that blessed Book too soon or too well. You know, our digital age, even in my own parenting when I find inconsistencies in reading the Word to the kids in the evening, you know one of the big factors is technology.

It's so much easier to get consumed and have all these things on and you don't get to it. You don't make it a priority. We want to make it a priority.

It's not already in your life. You know, the Bible gives examples of the ability that parents can have on their children, good or bad. Are there bad examples in the Bible of parenting? Yeah, there's many bad examples.

The daughter of Herodias was prompted by her mother to do what? Ask for John the Baptist's head on a platter. Think about it, in Ezekiel, he's speaking to Jerusalem as a city. Okay, but you could take this reality and there's truth to be had.

He says, behold, everyone who uses Proverbs will use this proverb. What proverb was used? Like mother, like daughter. Was it a good thing that the daughter, like mother, like daughter, was a good in that context? It was bad.

It was horrible. You are the daughter of your mother who loathed her husband and her children, and you are the sister of your sisters who loathed their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite, your father an Amorite, and your elder sister is Samaria who lived with her daughters north of you.

Not only did you walk in their ways and do according to their abominations, within a very little time, you were more corrupt than they in all your ways. Think about Ahaziah. When he was 22 years old, he began to reign.

He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor in doing wickedly. You could have a mother who's your counselor in doing wickedly. And it says all of this led to his undoing.

His undoing. You see, parents can have a massive impact. Now look, that's not our issue here.

I don't think we have mothers in the church who are counseling their children to do wickedly or trying to get someone's head on a platter. That's pretty extreme, right? But as we try to wrestle with parenting, you know, there's this balance there. You want to impart truth to your kids.

And then we're all learning as we do this, and it's not like the Bible has all these exact, specific things. And one of the things many wrestle with, especially in this family-integrated type of era where a lot of people have went through a great emphasis on homeschooling, people fall into parenting that is too mechanical. This is kind of a warning I read in Martin Lloyd-Jones in one of his sermons.

He wrote this in the 1950s. This is not in 2000. This is 1950.

Listen to Lloyd-Jones here. He commented on this matter of parenting that there's not heart there. It's so mechanical.

Do this and you'll get this result. He says this. He said, I spoke to a friend who was in distress after hearing a lady speak.

He said a certain lady had been lecturing that very week. Her theme was how to bring up all your children in your family as good Christians. You ever heard a theme like that? This is what you do and all your kids become Christians.

It was wonderful, the lady said. She had five or six kids and they were so organized in her home and her life. And she was finished with all her domestic work by 9 a.m. in the morning.

And then she gave herself to various Christian activities. And that's not to mock being in order, but the mother talking to me, she says all her children were fine Christians and it was so easy, so wonderful. The mother talking to me who had two children was in a state of real distress, Lloyd-Jones said.

She felt that she was a complete and utter failure. What had I to say to her? This I said, wait a moment. How old are the children of this lady? I happened to know the answer and my friend knew also.

None of them at that time were above the age of 16 or thereabouts. I went on. Wait and see.

This lady tells you that they're all Christians and that all you need is a scheme that you carry out regularly. Wait a minute. The story may be different in a few years.

And alas, it turned out to be very different. It's doubtful whether more than one of those children is a Christian. Several of them are openly anti-Christian and have turned their backs upon it all.

And then Lloyd-Jones says this, you cannot bring up children to be Christians in that way. It is not a mechanical process. And in any case, it was also cold and clinical.

A child is not a machine. And so you cannot do this work mechanically. Every one of us wants all of our kids to know Christ.

The thought of one of our kids being in hell and rejecting Christ is horrific. But many fall into this too mechanical, it can flush itself out in different ways or can appear different ways in different people's lives, but we need to watch out for that. Whatever that looks like, just take it as a warning.

In all this, we see the blessing of children. What a blessing children are. I was telling someone earlier today, when I was single, I had the carnal thought of if I get married, I don't want to have kids.

My wife might gain weight. Different reasons. To be satisfied in her, she's got to look a certain way.

That was how I was when I was lost. I got saved, and I thought if I get married, I don't want kids, they'll slow me down. But now I've got four of them, and they've done nothing but helped me and given me an incredible opportunity to love and to be sanctified and to grow.

Children are such a blessing. The fact you can have such an impact on children. I was thinking about Jim Elliot.

As many of you know, his dad Bert got married. And a year into the marriage, their first child was born. And when the baby came, the mother and baby both died.

And so Bert lost his wife, he lost his child. And he really wrestled with spiritual things for maybe two or three years, and then he got remarried. And in that marriage came Jim Elliot, who died as a martyr in Ecuador.

And another child came, Bert. And Bert Elliot had visited Jim right before they got martyred. And Bert was married to his wife Colleen.

And they could not have children. And he took that as the Lord, as he should have, he took it. This is God not allowing us to have kids because of physical issues.

And so they served in Peru for 60 years. Sixty years they went up and down a boat. Even into the 2000s, they were still there.

He died in 2012. So some of us, that's our legacy. We can have spiritual children.

We can have spiritual kids who come to Christ. I know it's getting late. Ultimately, we're cast on God.

We've got this week of prayer and fasting coming up. One of the biggest things to be praying for is your kids. Fasting for your kids.

Seeking God that they might come to know the Lord. Let me give a warning to children. So if your kids, listen up for a moment.

Here, the first question is, what dwells in you? Right? What dwells in you? Timothy had sincere faith dwelling in Him. What dwells in you? Is it a hard attitude of taking God at His Word and I want to be pleasing and follow the Lord and I'm trusting Christ? Or is it an attitude of I'm just going to live for myself? I'm just going to live for me. You have greater accountability to grow up with godly parents who are not hypocrites.

Look, if your parents are hypocrites and they come here and they act one way and they go home and they act a different way and they sin against you and there's never any sort of apology and they're like that, I'm sorry. But don't let your parents' hypocrisy turn you away from Christ because He really is true. And there are those who are truly following Him.

And He is the only way to heaven. Charles Spurgeon's mother said this, I've trained you in righteousness. Your father and I have set you right examples.

We have taught you the Gospel. We have shown you the way of peace. My son, if you don't live a godly life, I will stand before God in the day of judgment and bear witness against you.

His mother said that. Because it would be unrighteous for her if she would not agree to stand and bear judgment against her own son. You see? It's not an unloving thing.

It's just reality. God will be just on that day. Children, you should be thankful to have a godly mother and a godly father or whatever your situation is.

You should be so thankful to have parents who want to speak the truth to you. And this week and these upcoming weeks, kids, if your parents are trying to sit you down to read the Bible, and you're tempted there to grumble and question them, don't grumble. Ask, Lord, show me truth.

Show me something about who I am outside of Christ. And show me the beauty of Jesus Christ. Because Christ offers you a life vest.

And kids, if you don't have Christ, when that boat of this earth sinks, when you die, you will drown in a pit of fire called hell for all of eternity. And that should terrify you. Paul said, by the fear of the Lord, we persuade many.

You should want to have Christ. You don't want to gang the world and lose your soul. And I guess I already mentioned this, but kids who are saved, be holy.

Be zealous. I look at the older people in my life and I glean what is good and the areas that are blind, I try to avoid, and then I try to be humble for people to correct me on my own blind spots as they see them. We have an attitude.

Be holy. Be like Christ. Be zealous.

Be more zealous than your parents. Be as zealous as the Lord Jesus Christ. He is your example.

So brethren, we all have to keep on believing. And it says here in 2 Timothy 3.16, all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. But the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

So it's not just parents need to be... The only way a parent can acquaint their kids with the Bible is what? If they're really acquainted with the Bible themselves, right? You can't pour the Word into your kids if you're not pouring the Word into your own soul. It's going to be a dead time and things won't make sense. So in some ways, this is a call to endure in believing the Lord and to endure in being in the Word.

We all need to be in the Scriptures. Keep plowing to know the Bible. Keep memorizing it.

What did Chip read today? Psalm 19. Did you see all of that in Psalm 19 about the Word and the law and knowing it and the treasure that it is? We need to keep diving in to such truth. Let's pray.

Father, Lord, we often can feel like our efforts, we don't see results, we pray, we instruct. Lord, even when some raise kids and pour the Word they love, and it doesn't seem like it's some mechanical shop to just output Christian kids that are cookie cutter, and even then, some of these kids go in the world and perish. Lord, we recognize there's no formula, but we know Your Word has power that people can be born again by the living, abiding Word of God.

Lord, we pray You'd do that, that You would save more among the children. Father, that we'd have many more children here with a sincere and genuine faith, genuinely believing You. Lord, that takes a miracle.

So we humbly ask You, Father, show compassion to us. Lord, at the end of the day, we recognize we fail in many ways as parents. Lord, we're wanting to walk with a good conscience.

We're wanting to have humility and transparency and pour the Word into our kids. But Lord, we're here asking that You would save them. Lord, that our kids would have genuine faith.

Dwell in them. Lord, may it be so. Please.

Would You save? Lord, I thank You for the mothers. Lord, would You strengthen all of those here who have children that they're with day in and day out at home? Lord, help them to not lose heart. Encourage them that their labor is not and the Lord is not in vain.

We pray all these things in Christ's name, Amen.

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