

Why You Should Never Underestimate the Power of a Godly Mother's Faith

Note: Although Mother's Day has come and gone, I wanted to share this with you about the importance of the influence of a mother. It cannot be overstated.

A mother's love and encouragement help shape our worldview. Godly mothers impart faith that guides and strengthens us.

I am grateful for the influence of my mother. She believed in me always. Her confidence in me helped me overcome challenges and setbacks later in life.

George Washington, our first U.S. president, said this about his mother, "All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all of my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her."

Abraham Lincoln, our 16th president during the U.S. Civil War, spoke of his mother's prayers for him, "All that I am or hope to be I owe to my angel mother. I remember my mother's prayers, and they have always followed me. They have clung to me all my life."

Today, looking at Paul's second letter to Timothy, I want to examine "The Power of a Mother's Faith."

This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I have been sent out to tell others about the life he has promised through faith in Christ Jesus. I am writing to Timothy, my dear son. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace. Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I

constantly remember you in my prayers. I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again. I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline (2 Tim. 1:1-7, NLT).

Paul, imprisoned for the second time, writes this letter to his protégé Timothy around A.D. 66 or 67. Paul wrote 1 and 2 Timothy just before his death by Roman Emperor Nero. Timothy had become a son in the faith and one of Paul's closest friends.

Timothy converted to Christianity after Paul's first missionary journey to Lystra (Acts 14:6-18). By Paul's second visit, Timothy had grown into a respected disciple of Jesus (Acts 16:1-5). Timothy would later join Paul for his other two missionary journeys.

Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, where there was a young disciple named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek. Timothy was well thought of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium, so Paul wanted him to join them on their journey. In deference to the Jews of the area, he arranged for Timothy to be circumcised before they left, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek. Then they went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day (Acts 16:1-5, NLT).

Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother and a Greek father. To the Jews, he was like a Samaritan. So, Paul asked Timothy to

be circumcised to remove some of the stigma with Jewish believers. Timothy was not required to be circumcised (in Acts 15, the Jerusalem Council decided this), but he voluntarily did this to overcome any barriers to his witness for Christ. Timothy's willingness to be circumcised as an adult emphasize his commitment to Jesus and spreading the gospel.

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3-4) to oversee the church there. Paul's letters to Timothy (1 and 2 Timothy) provided him guidance, instruction and comfort during challenging times.

Sharing the Faith of His Grandmother and Mother

Paul recalled the faith he observed in Timothy's mother and grandmother, "I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you" (2 Tim. 1:5, NLT).

Timothy's grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice were early Christian converts, possibly through Paul's ministry in their home city of Lystra. They may have heard Paul's preaching when he was there during his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-18). Timothy is the first second-generation Christian mentioned in the New Testament.

Timothy's mother and grandmother had faithfully influenced him for the Lord. There is no mention of his father being a believer; nevertheless, the faithfulness of his mother and grandmother prevailed.

In these verses (2 Tim. 1:1-7), we observe the influence of a mother's faith, as well as principles to impart faith to others and grow one's faith.

- 1. A mother's faith is generational; it leaves a godly legacy.** Paul first observed genuine faith in Eunice and Lois. They raised Timothy in the Jewish faith prior to

their conversion to Christ. Timothy learned the precepts of Judaism and God's Word from a young age.

The writer of Proverbs tells us, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6, MEV). The phrase "train up" is from the Hebrew word *ḥā·năḵ*, meaning to develop a person's behavior by instruction and practice.

We do not know much about Timothy's conversion experience, but the training and demonstrated faith of his mother and grandmother (both in Judaism and Christianity) played a significant role in his coming to Christ.

Mothers, your influence is greater than you may realize! Your faith in God and His Word, along with the faith you have in your children is powerful!

David said, "But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You caused me to trust while I was on my mother's breasts" (Ps. 22:9).

The special bond between a mother and child creates trust and influence. Faith develops through love; the nurturing bond of a mother lays a foundation for trust. The stories and prayers you share with your children empower them to dream, trust God and believe in themselves!

My mother always encouraged me, always believed in me and gave me the confidence that I could do anything. Perhaps it was being raised on a farm in the Midwest; she demonstrated a resolve to press ahead despite hard work, setback and loss. Her ability to press through and persevere in hardship help build a determination in me that helps me to this day.

I read a story about Thomas Edison (the man credited with inventing the light bulb) which described as a young boy, his teacher sent him home with a note that said, "Your child is dumb; we can't do anything for him." Mrs. Edison wrote back,

“You do not understand my boy. I will teach him myself.” She did and Edison impacted our world!

The Atlantic publication reported in 2016: A new report from the Pew Research Center suggests mothers have more influence on their children’s religious upbringings than fathers, especially in interfaith households. One-third of respondents in a survey of roughly 5,000 Americans said their mom was more responsible for their religious experiences than their dad. In families with parents of mixed religious backgrounds, the percentage was well more than half. This was especially true in households in which one parent was religious, and the other wasn’t; in those cases, nearly two-thirds of respondents said their mom had the most influence on their religious lives.”

Did you notice how significant a mother’s faith influence their children? Especially in the homes where the father was not religious? Considering that nearly 25% of the children raised in America today are raised by single mothers, it underscores how influential and how important it is for mothers to impart their Christian faith to their children. It has generational implications!

Paul understood this. In the next chapter he tells Timothy (who understood the generational impact his grandmother and mother had upon him):

“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim. 2:1-2, NIV).

Notice there are four generations of disciples mentioned in these two verses? Paul, Timothy, reliable people and others taught. Genuine discipleship leaves a generational legacy. Timothy understood this concept firsthand through his mother and grandmother. As Paul instructed Timothy, mothers understand that your imparted faith to your children leaves a

generational legacy.

2. A mother's faith is anchored in God's Word. Paul encouraged Timothy to read and study God's Word, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, NASB).

This verse is compelling. Paul clearly tells Timothy, despite persecution and adversity, he needs to give attention to study of God's Word in order to present Godly truth to believer and unbeliever alike. By so doing, he is an approved worker in God's vineyard! Certainly, Timothy's mother and grandmother instilled the value of the consistent study of God's Word to him.

One of the founders of the Methodist Church, John Wesley, said of his mother's biblical instruction, "I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians in England." His mother, Susanna, was a woman of faith, the Word and prayer. She faithfully taught her 10 children and others God's Word.

Once, when her husband Samuel (who was a pastor) was called away for nearly four months, he left Susanna with the responsibility of the care, education and religious training of the children. Susanna cared for the spiritual wellbeing of her family by leading Sunday afternoon prayer gatherings for her 10 children, including John and Charles Wesley, who were 8 and 4 respectively at the time. "I thought it my duty to spend some part of the day in reading to and instructing my family," Susanna Wesley wrote to Samuel, "especially in your absence, when, having no afternoon service, we have so much leisure for such exercises." She thought family worship was more beneficial than private devotions.

A 2019 LifeWay study found that only 32% of Americans who "attend a Protestant church regularly say they read the Bible

personally every day.” Unfortunately, this is a concerning statistic. Biblical illiteracy is on the rise, and believers must place a higher priority on God’s Word.

In our 21st-century culture, we are easily distracted through instant access to video, social media and information—adults and children alike. Mothers (as well as fathers) it, is imperative you model to your children a love and study of God’s Word. Teach them the value of memorizing Scripture. Read them Bible stories consistently; build biblical literacy in them, love for God and faith for God to do the impossible!

3. A mother’s faith is demonstrated through consistent prayer and worship.

“Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers” (2 Tim. 1:3, NLT).

Paul was a man of prayer, and he modeled it for Timothy, “I constantly pray for you Timothy—night and day!” I believe Timothy’s mother and grandmother were prayer warriors too, like Paul and most of the believers at that time.

Acts 16:1-2 describes Timothy as a disciple, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed (Eunice), and was well spoken of by other Christians in the city. These verses imply that the faith and practice of Eunice influenced her son in the Christian faith—certainly through teaching in God’s Word, prayer, worship and service.

Judaism is filled with prayers recited consistently. Timothy, before he and his mother and grandmother converted to Christianity, would have prayed routinely before meals, on Shabbat and so on. As Christians, the tradition of saying the Lord’s prayer and other prayers would have been habitual.

One cannot be well spoken of by other believers apart from genuine faith that is filled with love for Jesus, His word,

prayer, worship and service to others! The early church demonstrated a commitment to prayer.

We read in Acts 12 how Peter was imprisoned by Herod who planned on executing him for his Christian faith, but the church prayed fervently until he was supernaturally released. God sent an angel who freed Peter and led him out of the gate of the city!

“So Peter was kept in prison. But the church prayed to God without ceasing for him. ... Realizing this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together praying” (Acts 12:5, 12, MEV).

The early church had no other recourse but to rely completely on God and stay vigilant in prayer. They knew as truth prayer moves mountains! Doubtless, Timothy’s mother Eunice and Grandmother Lois also understood the power of prayer and modeled it for him.

James tells us that, “...The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]” (James 5:16b, AMPC). Effective or earnest from the Greek *energéō* means to work, be active, or bring about.,

The basic idea in the Greek means prayer “having activity or energy.” Effective prayer is characterized by earnestness, fervency and energy. This text suggests that our praying, when energized by the power of the Holy Spirit, causes things to happen!

4 A mother’s faith is full of love, a love that overcomes fear! Paul could see a strong faith in Timothy because of the loving influence of Eunice and Lois. He then finished this section with, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline” (2 Tim. 1:7, NLT).

Faith needs love to function properly—love fuels faith! Paul explains the link between faith and love: “but faith which works through love” (Gal. 5:6b, MEV). A mother’s nurturing love fuels fiery faith! Faith working through love overcomes fear and timidity. Godly mothers help infuse a faith that loves, serves and is bold when needed!

Timothy, like every leader and follower of Christ, needed to be courageous and confident. But he also needed to be loving, tender and compassionate toward others. His mother and grandmother helped shape these values in Timothy, and Paul was simply reminding him of what was important.

Final Thoughts

Mothers, I want to thank you for helping to raise godly children who are destined to change our world. Be encouraged and do not grow weary in well-doing; you will reap an eternal reward for your investment in your children and the children of our generation. They are destined to change our world!

You are building a strong faith in them to overcome in the most adverse situations. Moms, stay committed to the task of raising godly children. Continue to infuse them with love, faith and courage!

Here more of Pastor Bob’s teaching at this link. {eo}

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