

“The Unfeigned Faith”

2 Timothy 1:1-5

When all is said, it is the mother, and the mother only, who is a better citizen than the soldier who fights for his country. The successful mother, the mother who does her part in rearing and training aright the boys and girls who are to be the men and women of the next generation, is of greater use to the community, and occupies, if she would only realize it, a more honorable as well as a more important position than any man in it. The mother is the one supreme asset of the national life. She is more important, by far, than the successful statesman, or businessman, or artist, or scientist. — Theodore Roosevelt

This passage highlights the critical role that a **mother - and in this case, a grandmother - can play in the spiritual formation of a child**. While we rightly honor mothers on this special day, Paul’s mention of both **Eunice** and **Lois** reminds us that **grandparents**, and particularly **grandmothers**, can have a lasting impact in shaping a child’s faith. This isn’t just a biblical principle—it’s something we see borne out in everyday life.

What’s especially striking about Timothy’s story is that **he did not grow up in a spiritually ideal home**. In Acts 16:1, we learn that **his mother was a believing Jewess, but his father was a Greek** - a phrase that likely indicates his father was not a follower of the God of Israel and had not converted to Judaism. That’s supported by the fact that **Timothy was never circumcised as a child**, something expected in a faithful Jewish home. Paul never mentions Timothy’s father in any of his letters - not even in this deeply personal letter of 2 Timothy - which may suggest he was spiritually uninvolved or possibly no longer living. Regardless, the **spiritual leadership in Timothy’s**

upbringing came from his mother and grandmother.

Timothy's background reminds us that **God can work powerfully even in less-than-ideal family situations.** His mixed heritage may have made him feel like an outsider to both Jewish and Greek communities. Yet from that unlikely setting came a young man known for his godliness and usefulness to the Lord. He became a trusted co-laborer and spiritual son to the Apostle Paul.

The **faith that lived in Timothy had a clear lineage:** it was found first in his grandmother Lois, then in his mother Eunice, and finally in him. This suggests that Lois may have been the first in the family to come to faith in Christ, then led her daughter to the Lord, and together they instilled those truths in Timothy from childhood. So, when Paul met Timothy during his missionary journey, the soil of his heart had already been prepared through faithful teaching and godly example - and he was ready to respond to the gospel.

The story of Timothy is an encouragement to every mother and grandmother: you may not have everything in place or a perfect family situation, but your faith, your prayers, and your consistency matter. As in Timothy's case, **God can use your influence to shape the next generation for His glory.**

Timothy's upbringing, then, found first in his mother and grandmother:

I. HAD A FIRM FOUNDATION - 2 TIM. 3:15

"From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures"

A. "From a child"

The word for "child" here (βρέφος) is one that means a babe, a new-born child, an infant. This means that from the cradle (or a very early age) he was taught the "holy scriptures" (the Old

Testament), not just from school-age, as we might be inclined to think.

B. “Thou hast known”

1. The word used here - **οἶδα** (from the root εἶδω) - conveys the idea of **full, settled, intuitive knowledge**.
2. It emphasizes **awareness or familiarity with facts or truths**, often with the sense of *knowing deeply* or *being well-acquainted with* something.
3. Being in the perfect tense in Greek, it indicates **an action completed in the past with continuing results** in the present.
4. So, Paul is saying that **Timothy has long possessed a full, enduring knowledge** of the Scriptures - something not superficial or recently acquired but deeply embedded.

C. “The holy Scriptures” - already stated as the primarily Old Testament at the time, since the New Testament wasn’t completed.

Deuteronomy 31:12-13

¹² Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that *is* within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: ¹³ And *that* their children, which have not known *any thing*, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

D. “Which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”

It was through the Old Testament teachings that Timothy was taught by his mother and grandmother who Jesus was, and what salvation was.

1. This affirms that **salvation in Christ can be found through the Old Testament** - not because it explicitly names Jesus of Nazareth, but because **it testifies of Him** (cf. John 5:39, Luke 24:27, 44).

John 5:39

³⁹ Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Luke 24:27

²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:32

³² And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Luke 24:44-45

⁴⁴ And he said unto them, *These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.* ⁴⁵ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

2. Paul often used the Old Testament to preach the gospel (Acts 17:2-3; Romans 1:2; 3:21).

Acts 17:2-3

² And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of

the scriptures, ³ Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

Romans 1:1-2

¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, ² (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

Romans 3:21

²¹ But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

II. HAD A FIRM FAITH – ACTS 16:2; 2 TIM. 1:5; 3:14

A. Acts 16:2 - “well reported of by the brethren”

Acts 16:2

² Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

1. There is one Greek word (μαρτυρέω) for the words “*was well reported of,*” with the basic meaning of **bearing witness to something or someone**. In this case, even at Timothy’s young age (only a teenager at this point most likely), he had a testimony of **godly living and scriptural knowledge**, due in large part to his **mother and grandmother**.
2. The verb is in the imperfect passive tense: “It **was a continuous witness** that was borne by the young disciple both in his hometown of Lystra and in Derbe. Already he had so borne himself that **his gifts and graces for the ministry were recognized**. It is a wise precaution that the approval of the local church

is necessary for the licensing and the ordaining of a preacher. If God has called a man for the work, **signs of it will be manifest to others.**" (Robertson)

B. 2 Tim. 1:5 - "the unfeigned faith that is in thee"

1. "Unfeigned" (ἀνυπόκριτος) alpha privative (to negate) prefixed to ὑποκρίνομαι (to pretend, to act beneath a disguise). The English word "hypocrite" comes from this word and was used in the Greek culture for an actor on a stage.

The nature of Timothy's faith, which was established by his mother and grandmother, was one **without pretense, without hypocrisy, but was genuine and abundantly so.**

1 Timothy 1:5

⁵ Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

1 Timothy 4:6

⁶ If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

1 Peter 1:22

²² Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see *that* ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

2. "Faith" (πίστις) considering the word "unfeigned" describing his faith, this is more than just saving faith - it is **the outcome of that faith lived out in the life of Timothy.** True

saving faith should be seen in the life of the believer.

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

3. This same “unfeigned faith” that was in Timothy “dwelt first” in his grandmother Lois, and then in his mother Eunice.

a) The word for “dwelt” as it relates to the faith in them is a **wonderful picture** of how living faith is possible.

b) “Dwelt” - ἐνοικέω, ἐνώκησεν (aorist, indicative, active) - compound word from ἐν (to rest in, preposition of position), and οικέω (to occupy a house, reside) - **put together, they mean “to inhabit.”**

This word is only used five times in the Greek New Testament, primarily used of the indwelling Holy Spirit and His influence on ones’ life.

Romans 8:11

¹¹ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelt in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

2 Corinthians 6:16

¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Colossians 3:16

¹⁶ Let the **word** of Christ **dwell** in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

2 Timothy 1:14

¹⁴ That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the **Holy Ghost which dwelleth** in us.

- c) The **outward demonstration** of faith as found in Timothy was there because **he saw it "dwelling"** in the life of his mother and grandmother.

C. 2 Tim. 3:14 - "the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them"

This speaks of both his mother, grandmother, and the spiritual leadership of the Apostle Paul, as well as those other leaders that were part of Timothy's teaching.

2 Timothy 3:14

¹⁴ But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*;

Had a firm foundation

Had a firm faith

III. HAD A FIRM FUTURE - 2 TIM. 2:1-3

Because of his upbringing and the influence of his mother and grandmother, and because of the tutelage of the Apostle Paul as they journeyed together in their service for the Lord, Timothy had a future ahead of him that would become one of great influence upon others. It took him time to get there, but ultimately, he

did.

A. He could (and would) “be strong” - vs. 1.

The word for “be strong” here - ἐνδυναμοῦ (present, imperative, passive) - means to make strong, or strengthen, to enable, and **carries the idea of being bold**. His **boldness** was a **product of his faith**, which was a product of his **upbringing and teaching**.

B. He could (and would) be productive - “Commit thou to faithful men” - vs. 2.

The word “commit” (παρατίθημι), in its use here, means **to entrust to someone else**, to give to them for their good, as well as the good of others. They aren’t to keep it either - they are to use it and give it away.

C. He could (and would) be faithful - “Endure hardness” - vs. 3.

The word for “endure hardness” (κακοπαθέω) means to **suffer evil or afflictions**, to suffer ill. Timothy would learn to endure those hard times of trial and persecution because **he had seen** how his mother and grandmother, and then the Apostle Paul, had dealt with them. **His future ability was determined by his past experience**.

Conclusion: The faith of Timothy’s mother and his grandmother was so strong that it guided Timothy as a child to want to be like them in his faith. How about you, as a mother, as you teach your children? Or you, as a grandmother, as you teach your grandchildren?

I found the following story in some of my Dad’s notes. I don’t know its source, but it makes a profound truth on the impact of a mother’s teaching.

As a father and his daughter were out in a boat steering for shore, a storm came up which threatened to destroy them. The coast was dangerous. The mother lit a lamp and started up the worn stairway to the attic window.

"It won't do any good, mother," said the son.

But the mother went up anyway, put the light in the window, knelt beside it and prayed.

Out in the storm the daughter saw a glimpse of gold on the water's edge.

"Steer for that," the father said.

Slowly but steadily, they came toward the light, and at last were anchored in the little sheltered harbor by the cottage.

"Thank God," cried the mother, as she heard their glad voices and came down the stairway with a lamp in her hand.

"How did you get here?" asked the son.

"We steered by mother's light, although we did not know what it was out there," said the daughter.

"Ah!" thought the wayward boy, "it is time I was steering by mother's light."

And ere he slept he surrendered himself to God and asked Him to guide him over life's rough sea.

Months went by, and disease smote him. "He can't live long," said the doctor, and one stormy night he lay dying. "Do not be afraid for me," he said, as they wept; "I shall make the harbor, for I am steering by mother's light."