

2 Timothy 1:7

Instructions to Timothy
Guiding, Growing, Guarding!



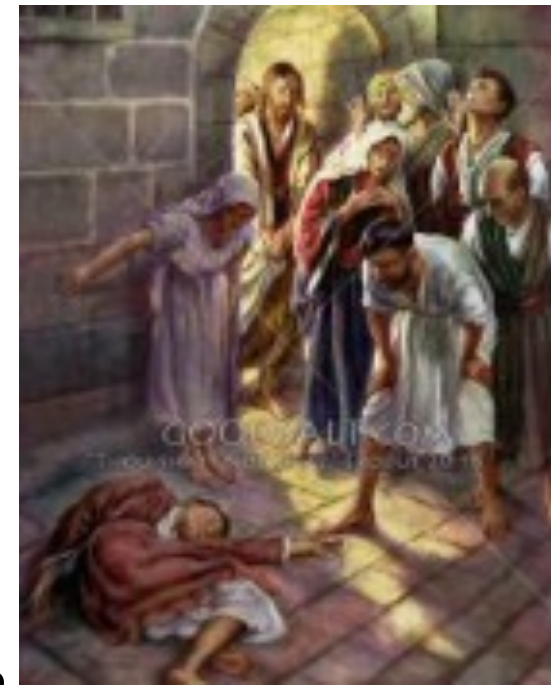
That Which is Given 2



Last week we spoke of what God does not give. To sum it up in three brief sentences, He does not give a spirit of “**timidity**”, “**fear**”, or “**cowardice**” to His followers. I just wanted to mention that passage that I had wrong last week. Don’t know how I wrote it down so wrong. I should recheck any passages that I am including in the sermon. But I missed it last week, and badly! What I had wanted to read you was from 2 Cor. 4:8-18. It is about a common trait of Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit gives every one of His followers. It is about the immense “strength of weakness” in the Christ-follower! No “spirit of timidity here. But read it and you’ll see! It is about the resiliency of the true Christ-follower. We may bend, but we don’t break! This is what the Spirit gives! [2 Cor. 4:7-18]

This week we want to continue to focus on what God gives – “**power, love, and of a sound mind**”. We will examine what that looks like and what that doesn’t look like.

After seeing that God gives courage, not cowardice, there are three more important attributes that God gives. The first of these is **POWER**! Now, this is a bit of a difficult one for me. Paul and some of the other apostles were able to consistently call on the power of the Holy Spirit to perform some very amazing healings. *On the island of Patmos, we saw a couple of weeks ago that Paul was bitten by a poisonous viper and suffered no ill effects. Then he healed someone, and the people thought he was a god and brought all the sick in the area to him – and they were healed after he prayed for them or touched them! ***Acts 20:7** tells of a man named Eutychus, who was attending a church service in a house church, in which Paul was speaking. They were meeting in the upstairs of the house that was at least three stories high. Eutychus was listening while sitting on the sill of what was a third story window. Around midnight, as Paul droned on and on, he fell asleep, fell over backward into the courtyard or street and was declared dead by the first ones on the scene! *(It should teach everyone a lesson – no falling asleep during the sermon or there might be consequences!)* Anyway, and Paul rushed out with the others, and, tragically, Eutychus was declared dead! But going to the man’s body, Paul wrapped his arms around it, and Eutychus immediately regained life and consciousness! Now whether he was actually dead or knocked out, we cannot say for sure – but three stories is a long way down. Traditionally,² most believe he was brought back from the dead!



Now those are just two stories of apostolic power that some of the apostolic leaders possessed in the days of the early church. After those eyewitnesses died, the church leaders that came after them did not have the same access to the healing power of the Holy Spirit! Timothy himself probably did not have access to that kind of “on demand” power, since he was not an eyewitness of Jesus. So what kind of “power” is Paul referring to here? I am quite certain that this “power” is referring to the even greater miracles (John 14:12) of committed Christ-followers receiving



a powerful spirit of “**love and of a sound mind**”! It is not hard for the God, who created the human body and all the minutia that governs our bodies, to heal or even recreate what has gone wrong with it! That really isn’t a big deal for Him in the least! But we don’t know the criterion for those times He heals and those times He doesn’t. What we do know, is that God has given us the power of the Holy Spirit to be greatly healed of our *fallen human nature*. Our fallen human nature is pre-disposed to oppose other people. We don’t **trust**, we don’t **like**, we are **suspicious**, we are **cynical**, we can easily **hate**, we are **unforgiving**, we can be **abrasive, rude, malicious, threatening**, and **underhanded** in our dealings. We are **stingy** toward them, not wanting them to succeed, and when they do succeed, we can undermine them, because our own envy demands it - and so it goes! We are born in sin, therefore we have these strong inclinations to live in enmity and relational chaos! Most people are born with very low emotional and relational IQs. As we become social, all these negative traits that we instinctively indulge, quickly evolve into habitual intuitive and reactionary behaviors. Some of us have it more than others, usually depending on whether our early encounters with other humans were largely positive or largely negative – from parent encounters to siblings, to neighborhood friends, or school friends, to authority figures like day care workers, teachers, the police, or doctors, or store clerks, etc. Experience with some or all of these affect a person’s attitude later in life toward other people and how we react emotionally ³ to them

My point is, that for God to change our hearts along with our predisposition for hurting and destroying relationships with bad attitude and bad behavior - He has a REAL job on his hands! He could just point and zap us with a changed heart, but the heart, soul, and mind is different than a blind eye, a withered hand, a lame leg, or even death! Not everyone believes this, but I do – firmly – that God leaves our will alone – or it would not be free, and everything would be pointless nonsense. So God works with our will through persuasion, evidence, and love. It has to be a frustrating process for Him – an all-powerful God limiting Himself over these puny little creatures called *people*! None-the-less, the scriptures show time after time that this is how He works. So, changing the heart is a process, incorporating many miracles along the way! Undoubtedly God puts pressure on us at times, but that’s all. *Think of Jonah who did not want to go to Nineveh to save his enemies there – but through some strong *persuasion* - the great storm and the whale - he went, right?! So, back to my point - if God would heal this deepest innermost part of us, it must be with our permission – and *usually* by our sincere request! In this kind of healing He does not go where He is not wanted. But, where He is asked to, He brings emotional/mental healing with Him! He does it with the emotion that is dearest to His heart! If all these ugly, negative human traits have to go – **cynicism, malice, unforgiveness, etc.** - traits that I mentioned previously – something else has to fill the space they have vacated in a person. That replacement is **LOVE – agape love, God’s kind of love!**

Now, love is not unknown to us, even in our fallen condition, except for the many people for whom love has been beaten out of them, or betrayed out of them, or in some other way squeezed out of them by other loveless, manipulative, predatorial people – often the very people they were supposed to be able to trust! So now they are selfish beasts - **selfish, hostile, malicious, and terribly hard to love any more.** It can get so bad, so intense that - well - I read that the highest percentage of murders that occur, are within the family! Hard to believe, but that is how badly love can be when love goes awry – and it seems to be always going awry in family after family! Not to the point of murder, of course, but certainly hatred! It is because the knowledge of how to love each other was lost at the curse of sin and death in Eden! If love were a course at school we would be flunkies! But the Holy Spirit of God knows how to love and will teach us if we are willing!



So He's offering classes. He is screwing people's heads on right! It is what His job is! He takes imbalanced upside-down thinking and turns it right-side-up! He heals sin-diseased minds and emotions! He takes our truth grid/filter and begins to pluck out the strands of falsehoods and lies that we have foolishly accepted as true, and replaces them with real truth – with both common sense and uncommon! You see, that is the **last thing** on this short list – **God gives our minds back!** Our minds have been stolen from us through the schemes and conspiracies of the Evil One/Satan, and his plan to derail and destroy the human race because of his rage against God! But God gives our mind and our sense back to us! He begins to build back into us a relational IQ that is smart – wise and discerning! He does this to **EVERYone** who follows Jesus and who wants exactly what Jesus wants, and He does this to **no one** who doesn't! [1 Tim. 6:11] says we must "**flee**" the bad stuff and "**pursue**" the good! Remember last week – our three enemies – **1) Satan**, the enemy of God and humanity who deceives and devises destruction! Run from Him! **2ndly) The world** and the world system– an ally of Satan's and full collaborator in his attempt to suck us in to the secular culture and its horrible values, and keep us from God! Run from this too! **3)** and finally, **ourselves** - our own fallen nature, which is heavily inclined to side with the world, and Satan, adopting **skewed values, misplaced priorities, poor choices, erroneous and unfair judgments, uncontrolled emotions, a lack of self-discipline, an uncontrolled and poisonous tongue, pridefulness, a toxic fear - and the inability to change any of it!** We are to "**flee**" these enemies of God *and* our soul, and then turn and "**pursue**" the Kingdom of God and the "**power**", "**love**", and a "**sound mind**"! This is done in cooperation with the Holy Spirit who **empowers!** It is His job! He builds sound minds with the wisdom to know *how to love others* – our spouses, our children, our parents, our siblings, our neighbors, and even our enemies! This doesn't come naturally! The **restraint, putting others before ourselves, the forgiveness of the flaws and offenses of others, the kindness, the generosity, the acceptance, the caring, the admission of wrongdoing to God and people, accompanied by remorse for what we have done** – these qualities and more must be taught because we are not born with the inclination toward them! These things are taught through the word of God, and by word of mouth - or **teaching** that focuses on the scriptures! This is a key part of the re-creation process, that metamorphosis of our fallen human nature - from grub to butterfly! [Rom. 12:2]

