

“STIR UP THE FLAME!”

II TIMOTHY 1:6-7

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INTRODUCTION

Is the fire burning? How low are the embers? Are they almost gone out?

“I am mindful of your genuine faith” (v. 6). It is wonderful that you are saved! [Some of you had better make sure!]

- But, are you stirring the embers into a white hot flame on a regular basis?
- Are you using the spiritual gift(s) God has given you to serve Him?
- Does fear constrain you in serving your Lord? Are you too timid about serving Christ?
- Do you manifest power in living your life and working with others—the lost and saved?
- Do you evidence God’s agape love in relation to the world and to the body of believers?
- Do you live a disciplined and self-controlled life?

So, you are a Christian? Great. Therefore I remind you:

STIR UP THE FLAMES—GOD HAS NOT GIVEN YOU THE SPIRIT OF FEAR!

I. KINDLE AFRESH THE GIFT OF GOD (6)

The word “stir, kindle afresh, keep in full flame is a combination of “again,” “to live,” and “fire, burn.”

It occurs only here in the NT.

- A. This gift is in you because the Holy Spirit is in you.
- B. Every believer has at least one gift—I Pet. 4:10.
- C. We will not get the kind of special gift Timothy received (I Tim. 4:10).
 1. Through laying on of the hands of Paul the apostle.
 2. Through the laying on of the hands of the elders (I Tim. 4:10).
 3. Through prophetic utterance (4:10).
 4. At his ordination.
- D. The Holy Spirit distributes to each one as He chooses (I Cor. 12:11).
- E. Paul says in I Thes. 4:19: **“Don’t quench the Spirit.” [cf. the context]**
 - V. 16—rejoice evermore; V. 17—pray without ceasing.
 - V. 18—in everything give thanks; V. 19—do not quench the Spirit.
 - V. 20—do not despise prophetic utterances—today in searching the Scriptures.
 - V. 21—examine everything, hold fast to what is good; V. 22—abstain from every form of evil.

Spiritual gifts must be exercised in conjunction with godly Christian living!

Why this exhortation to Timothy? What were his tendencies? [Compare your own weaknesses]

- Timothy was handicapped by frequent physical ailments (I Tim. 5:23).
- Was naturally timid”; see I Cor. 16:10—“Now if Timothy comes, see to it that he is with you without fear” (I Cor. 16:10).
- Was, in a sense, ‘a young man’ (I Tim. 4:12; cf. II Tim. 2:22).”
- Moreover the purveyors of false doctrine with whom Timothy had to deal in Ephesus were very determined (I Tim. 1:3-7, 19, 20; 4:6, 7; 6:3-10; II Tim. 2:14-19, 23).
- Believers were being persecuted by the State. Think of Paul (II Tim. 4:6).

We cannot be certain as to the extent that any or all of these factors contributed to Timothy’s current situation.

Timothy’s flame had not gone out but was burning too slowly and needed stirring again into a white hot flame.

Circumstances were difficult and Paul was about to depart this life; Timothy must be able to carry on where Paul will soon leave off. Timothy was largely raised by his mother and grandmother, and Paul now acts like his spiritual father in toughening him for the rigors of life and ministry.

Thus, v. 7 is joined with v. 6 by the word “for”:

II. GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEAR [TIMIDITY].

*The “giving” here calls our attention to the “gift” of v. 6; that gift [think of “spirit” as used by Paul in I Cor. of “spiritual gifts”] must so govern our human spirit by the power of the Holy Spirit so that the end result is **not** one quality but **is** three other qualities.*

A. NOT A Spirit of Fear

- God intends spiritual gifts to be used with freedom and without any hesitancy or intimidation.
- Along with the gift, he gives the spiritual graces necessary to the proper use of the gifts.
- We must not be cowardly or faint hearted, or timid.
- Rev. 21:8 tells us that the “fearful”—adjective related to this noun—are outside Heaven!

B. A Spirit of Power—cf. Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:16

- Strength of character, avoiding ungodliness and sin.
- Bold in the exercise of one’s gift.
- Energetic in carrying out one’s ministry.

C. A Spirit of Love—cf. I Jn. 4:18: ‘Perfect love casts out all fear.’

- Comforting and caring for God’s people.
- Reaching out to and saving the lost.
- **Selfishness breeds fear; love leads to selfless service.**

D. A Sound Mind—*discipline, sound minded, balanced, prudent.*

- Self-control over one’s own life.
- Self-control in dealing with others.

Note that spiritual **power** is wonderful, but often the deciding factor between success and failure is the matter of **self-discipline**. Moreover, none of these attributes are the result of self-efforts or natural power; they are aspects of a divinely bestowed *charisma*, for while **spirit** in this context does not directly denote the Holy Spirit, it defines specific graces which he mediates. We must not neglect our spiritual lives; the Holy Spirit does not fill the believer, give him power, and use him effectively in service if the believer neglects his spiritual life; he must “stir the embers” and walk in the power of the Spirit.

CONCLUSION

Do you spend time with the Lord in your personal devotions on a regular basis? DO you study the Word of God as your passion in life, seeking to apply it to your life?

If you are a parent, have you taken the spiritual leadership in your home; if you have children, are you strong in guiding them and disciplining them for the Lord?

If you are a teenager, or a younger child, have you fully surrendered your life to Christ? Are you willing to serve the Lord in any way He chooses?

When is the last time you have volunteered to help in a church ministry, to relieve someone of some of their responsibilities, or to take over the leadership of some ministry in your church?

When is the last time you have witnessed to someone—shared the gospel of Christ?

When is the last time you have taken a young, weak, or struggling believer under your wings and cared for them? Discipling and training them to be strong in the Lord?

When is the last time you have stood for Christ in a public setting—at work, school, a party, a family gathering, a doctor’s office, at the mall, in a restaurant, at sporting even—when a moral issue has arisen, or you have been criticized for being a Christian or having Christian standards?

Life is more than career, work, money, bills, entertainment, sports, hobbies, friends, and social media!
Life is about Christ, knowing Him, living for Him, serving Him!

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