

Journey To A Faithful Finish

LESSON 2 . . . Rekindling Your Spiritual Flame (2 Timothy 1:1-5)

What do you do when your spiritual fire is flickering and about to go out? Paul tells us in this passage. We learn in these verses that to have a “journey to a faithful finish,” we must continually rekindle our spiritual flames by doing at least four things.



First, remember our spiritual gifts (1:6).

We all need regular spiritual rekindling, as Paul writes: *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God . . .* (1:6a).

The word *wherefore* refers to Timothy’s *unfeigned* (sincere) *faith* (1:5). When God saves us, He gives us spiritual gifts in seed form to equip us for His purpose. This may mean transforming talents into spiritual gifts. The word translated *stir up* (ANAZOPUREO) is present tense and means “to continue rekindling.” Just as a fire must be constantly stirred and refueled, so do we, if our spiritual gifts are to flame with continuous vigor and power.

Paul encourages Timothy to *stir up the gift of God, which is in thee* (1:6b). The Greek word translated *gift* (CHARISMA) refers to spiritual gifts received from the Holy Spirit to equip us for God’s purpose. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift. How does 1 Corinthians 7:7b reveal this fact?

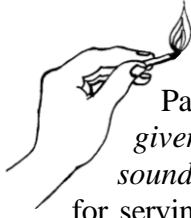
To fulfill God’s purpose for our lives, we must discover, develop, and use our spiritual gifts. This is what it means to *stir up the gift of God*. Then, how are we to use our gifts, according to 1 Peter 4:10?

God has given us a spiritual gift to use *to minister . . . one to another*, and when we forget this, our spiritual flame begins to flicker. Therefore, Paul reminds Timothy of his spiritual gift, which he received *by the putting on of my hands* (1:6c). This could refer to Timothy’s ordination or to the time of his conversion, which is when we receive our spiritual gifts.

To rekindle our spiritual flames, we must not only **remember our spiritual gifts** but . . .



NOTES



Second, recognize our resources (1:7).

Paul continues with my favorite Bible verse: *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* (1:7). We sometimes get tired and lose our enthusiasm for serving the Lord because we face opposition. Sometimes we feel intimidated or helpless, which Paul calls *the spirit of fear*. The Evil One’s most effective weapon in quenching our spiritual flame is fear. A wonderful acrostic for the fear the devil plants in our hearts is **F**alse **E**vidence **A**ppearing **R**eal. We fear we have lost our ability to use our spiritual gifts. It is a lack of spiritual self-confidence.

*F-alse
E-vidence
A-ppearing
R-eal*

In the parable of the talents, a man going on a long journey entrusts his property to three servants: to one he gives five talents, to another two talents, and to the third only one. After a long time, the master returns for an accounting. The first two have doubled their talents. The third man has buried his one talent in the ground. What did he tell his master was the reason for hiding his talent (see Matthew 25:25a)?



A *spirit of fear* will cause us to “bury” our spiritual gifts. The spirit of fearfulness is seen in the Israelites when they finally come to the border of the Promised Land. They send out twelve spies to bring back a report. How does Numbers 13:33 record the report they give upon their return?

When we get a “grasshopper” mentality, we have the *spirit of fear*, which is the result of forgetting the resources God has given us to use our spiritual gifts effectively. When we get that “grasshopper” feeling, we must remember God has given us three great resources.

Our **first** resource is *the spirit of . . . power* (2 Timothy 1:7b). The word translated *power* (DUNAMIS) is the Greek word from which we get our English words, “dynamite” and “dynamic.” It refers to a great force or energy. God infuses us with His *power* so we can effectively use our spiritual gifts and fulfill His purpose for our lives. How is this power described in Ephesians 3:20?

Our **second** resource is *the spirit . . . of love* (2 Timothy 1:7c). The word translated *love* (AGAPE) is a supernatural love that is not emotional or conditional. AGAPE means to love people regardless of who they are or how they act. Accompanying the *power* to do what God has put us on the earth to do is the supernatural ability to love those among whom we must minister—believers and non-believers alike. Nothing reveals our spiritual flames are flickering like our lack of love. When we have a hard time loving difficult people at church, work, or in our families, we need to fan our spiritual flames. When our spiritual flames are fully ignited, we can obey what command in 1 Corinthians 16:14?

Our **third** resource is *a sound mind* (2 Timothy 1:7d). It means self-controlled or cool-headed. When you act like a hothead, you don't have a sound mind. God's Holy Spirit gives us the power to control our passions and reactions.

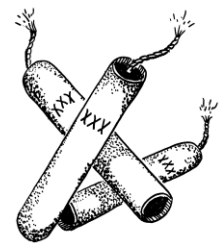
Power, love, and a sound mind are available to us because the Holy Spirit lives in us. Therefore, there is no reason to have a *spirit of fear* in using the gifts God has given us.

To rekindle our spiritual flames, we must **remember our spiritual gifts, recognize our resources,** and . . .



Third, rely on God's power (1:8-10).

The resources God supplies enable us to be faithful to the finish. Therefore, Paul writes: *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord* (1:8a). Timothy may have been struggling with fears of being arrested and executed. Paul's impending execution planted fear in the hearts of all believers, which was Nero's intent.



When we are in an intimidating situation, we should not be *ashamed of the testimony of our Lord*. Have you ever been in a situation where fear caused you to hope no one would find out you are a Christian? Have you ever been afraid to speak up about what is right? Have you ever been ashamed to speak up about biblical morality? This is part of being *ashamed of the testimony of our Lord*. Sometimes the only alternative to being ashamed is to suffer hardship for the Gospel. When tempted to be ashamed of our Lord, we need to remember what words of Jesus found in Luke 9:26?

We are not to be ashamed of Christ, and we are not to be ashamed of other Christians, as Paul writes: *nor of me his prisoner* (2 Timothy 1:8b). There are

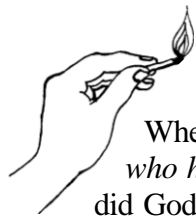
times when we are tempted to be ashamed of a brother or sister in Christ. Maybe it has to do with their boldness in expressing their faith or their unwillingness to compromise their convictions. We may not agree with their methods or convictions, but we must cherish their commitment to the Lord and the fact we are part of the same spiritual family.

Paul continues, . . . *But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God* (1:8b). Suffering, ridicule, or persecution in any form is not something we must endure in our own power but by *the power of God*. This kind of enduring power is not available until we need it. Jesus told His disciples not to worry about what to say or how to say it when they were arrested. Then, what did He tell them in Matthew 10:19b-20?

Sometimes I have had to preach when I had the spirit of fear. I was afraid because I knew some people would not like what I had to preach from God's Word. At those times I forgot Jesus' promise that I would have the power to say what I need to say and how to say it. Sometimes we forget God's power is made perfect or complete in our own weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). We can endure any *afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God* (2 Timothy 1:8b). This is because of what truth found in Philippians 4:13?

When we are suffering for the *gospel*, we will receive supernatural strength *according to the power of God* (2 Timothy 1:8b). Do you know why most Christians never really experience the power of God in their lives? They are never in the midst of circumstances where they need it. They just "go with the flow." But when you endure suffering, in whatever form, because of the Gospel, you will experience God's supernatural power in your life. However, this power is reserved for those who are not *ashamed of the testimony of our Lord* (1:8a).

To rekindle our spiritual flames, we must **remember our spiritual gifts, recognize our resources, rely on God's power,** and . . .



Fourth, review our salvation (1:9-10).

When our spiritual flames begin to flicker, we need to remember *who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling* (1:9a). Why did God save you and me? He saved us so we would live a *holy* life before a sinful world. We are to let our lights shine. We are saved *not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace* (1:9b).

God saved us because of *his own purpose* or plan for our lives. The reason for our salvation is God's purpose for our lives, and the means of our salvation is God's *grace*. *Grace* means we don't deserve it, but God saves us anyway. This *grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began* (1:9c). In other words, Christ existed before the beginning of time, and the grace that saves us preexisted in Him. How is this truth declared in Ephesians 1:4?

This means your salvation and mine was in the mind of God in eternity past, long before we existed. If that doesn't fan your spiritual flame, I don't know what could. God had you and me on His mind *before the world began*.

Before time began, God had made provision for your salvation and mine, and it *is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death* (2 Timothy 1:10a). The word translated *abolished* (*kata-geo*) means "to render inoperative." The Bible teaches that when Jesus died on the cross, He took the *sting* out of death (1 Corinthians 15:54-57). It is no longer our enemy; it is our friend because death for us is not the end of life but the beginning of eternal life.

Jesus also *hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel* (1 Timothy 1:10b). Eternal *life and immortality* was obscure and hidden in darkness, but Jesus brought eternal life *to light* so we could see it and understand how to receive it. How does John 1:4 describe this truth?

The word *light* refers to spiritual understanding. The life and words of Jesus, which contain *the gospel*, penetrate our hearts and minds, bringing spiritual enlightenment or understanding about the way of eternal life.

Rekindling our spiritual flames requires we **remember our spiritual gifts, recognize our resources, rely on God's power, and review our salvation.** What most often causes your flame to flicker, and which of these four things could best rekindle it?
