

Living in God's Church Today

Faith and Heritage

2 Timothy 1:3-7

Rev. Freddy Fritz

August 14, 2022

Faith and Heritage

Introduction

The actor Sean Connery has had many memorable movie roles. He is best known for playing James Bond in six of the James Bond movies.

However, Sean Connery has also rejected more than a handful of now-iconic parts. Perhaps most famously, Connery turned down the part of Gandalf in Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

Connery was the director's first choice for the role, which would have seen the actor travel to New Zealand to portray the wizard. The producers of the fantasy series were so desperate to get Connery on board that they offered him upwards of \$30 million, plus 15 percent of the box-office take (which would have been an additional \$447 million for the actor). Yet, the former James Bond didn't budge, and the actor Ian McKellen went on to become Gandalf.

Years later, Connery discussed the *Lord of the Rings*, revealing that he simply didn't understand the series. He said, "I read the book. I read the script. I saw the movie. I still don't understand it."¹

Isn't that true for some of us too? I sometimes talk with friends and they mention an iconic movie or book. They think it is an amazing piece of creative art. And I have to say, "I saw the movie. Or, I read the book. I still don't understand it." Do you find yourself in a situation where you think or say that too?

Fortunately, when it comes to God's script, we don't have

¹ See <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2021/november/james-bond-meets-gandalf.html>.

to understand it completely. You may be going through something very difficult. You may feel that things are heading toward a disaster. You cannot see how things will end well.

The good news is that Christians know that the Author of the script can be trusted fully. Christians know that God is in sovereign control of all things. He is working all things for his glory and our eternal good.

The Apostle Paul knew and believed this glorious truth as well. He wrote to Timothy from prison in Rome. He knew that he was about to be executed by Nero. And Paul wanted to encourage Timothy as he carried on advancing the gospel that Paul had so faithfully proclaimed for more than three decades.

As Paul opened his Second Letter to Timothy, he wanted Timothy to understand what God used to fashion him for his service. And although Paul was writing to Timothy, the principles that Paul set down for him apply to every Christian.

Scripture

Let's read 2 Timothy 1:3-7:

³I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
(2 Timothy 1:3-7)

Lesson

2 Timothy 1:3-7 shows us what God uses to fashion us for his service.

Let's use the following outline:

1. God Uses Spiritual Mentors to Fashion Us for His Service (1:3-4)
2. God Uses Parental Upbringing to Fashion Us for His Service (1:5)
3. God Uses Spiritual Gifts to Fashion Us for His Service (1:6)
4. God Uses Personal Discipline to Fashion Us for His Service (1:6-7)

I. **God Uses Spiritual Mentors to Fashion Us for His Service (1:3-4)**

First, God uses spiritual mentors to fashion us for his service.

Paul wrote in verse 3, **“I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.”** After the opening greeting in a letter, it was appropriate to give thanks. Paul did that here. He thanked God for Timothy constantly (**“night and day”**). You may recall that Paul led Timothy to faith when he met him on his second missionary journey in Lystra. He was no doubt thankful for the grace, mercy, and peace that God had bestowed on Timothy (1:2). And he was also thankful for the “sincere faith” (1:5) that Timothy possessed. By the time Paul wrote this Second Letter to Timothy, Paul had known Timothy for at least fifteen years. Timothy had served alongside Paul on several missionary journeys and

was his trusted assistant, which is why Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to sort out the problems there. Interestingly, Paul's prayer for Timothy here is not for what Timothy needed to do but for what Timothy already had—grace, mercy, peace, and faith. I am sure that Paul prayed that Timothy would be effective in his ministry. But the constant emphasis of Paul's prayer was gratitude to God for what Timothy already possessed.

Paul continued in verse 4, **“As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.”** Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to sort out the problems with the false teachers. Some years had passed and Paul was in prison and he knew that he was facing imminent execution. He had a great affection for Timothy and longed to see him again. As he thought about Timothy and the last time they had seen each other, he remembered Timothy's tears, indicating Timothy's affection for Paul. Seeing Timothy again would fill Paul with great joy.

Timothy was extremely blessed to have Paul as a spiritual mentor. They had spent countless hours together. No Christian had a more faithful spiritual mentor than did Timothy. Paul poured his life into Timothy. Timothy was shaped as a disciple of Jesus Christ by Paul.

My favorite Bible commentator, John Stott, writes:

I thank God for the man who led me to Christ and for the extraordinary devotion with which he nurtured me in the early years of my Christian life. He wrote to me every week for, I think, seven years. He also prayed for me every day. I believe he still does. I can only begin to guess what I owe, under God, to such a faithful friend and pastor.²

² John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel the Message of 2 Timothy*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 29.

Every Christian should have a spiritual mentor. You say, "I would love to have a spiritual mentor. How do I find one?"

Let me encourage you to get involved in a Bible study or Adult Bible Fellowship. That is where you can ask questions and learn and grow in your faith. I believe that every Christian needs to be in a regular Bible study to grow well in his or her Christian discipleship. Your leader will become your mentor.

II. God Uses Parental Upbringing to Fashion Us for His Service (1:5)

Second, God uses parental upbringing to fashion us for his service.

Paul wrote in verse 5, **"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well."** As Paul thought about his beloved assistant, Timothy, he also thought about Timothy's mother, **Eunice**, and grandmother, **Lois**. Paul likely knew them personally from his first missionary journey (cf. Acts 13:13-14:21). He and Barnabas may have helped them understand how the Old Testament Scriptures found their fulfillment in Christ. It seems that they were faithful students of the Scriptures that they had, which was the Old Testament. Undoubtedly, they taught the word of God to Timothy so that they were all able to believe that Jesus was the Christ when they first heard the good news of the gospel from Paul.

By the way, Timothy's father is not mentioned here. We know from Acts 16:1 that Timothy's father was Greek. His father may not have been a believer. Some commentators think that he may have died, which is why he was not mentioned.

Parents have the inestimable privilege of teaching their children the good news of the gospel. My wife and her siblings grew up in a home where Jesus was Lord. They were taught to read the word of God and they learned about the good news of the gospel from the time they were born. What an incredible heritage to grow up in a home where the gospel is taught to the entire family. This is not a privilege to be taken lightly. My wife's parents have long ago entered the Church Triumphant. But their legacy lives on as their children and now their grandchildren are teaching the good news of the gospel to their little ones.

Parents, let me encourage you to take very seriously your responsibility to “bring [your children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). You get about eighteen years to shape your children with Biblical truth. That is almost 1,000 worship services that you have to teach your children how to worship God in spirit and truth. And that is about 6,500 family worship times to pour into your children the truths of God's glorious gospel. Read God's word to your children. Sing the psalms and hymns of our faith. Talk to the Lord in prayer. And model Christlikeness to your children.

III. God Uses Spiritual Gifts to Fashion Us for His Service (1:6)

Third, God uses spiritual gifts to fashion us for his service.

Paul wrote in verse 6, **“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”** Apparently, Timothy received a spiritual gift from God when Paul laid his hands on him, most

likely, at his ordination. The “**gift of God**” that Timothy received was not specified but perhaps it was the speaking gifts of teaching and preaching.

Every Christian receives a spiritual gift at the time of conversion. If you are a Christian, you have a spiritual gift. You may not know exactly what spiritual gift you have but be assured that you have a spiritual gift.

There are roughly two kinds of spiritual gifts: *speaking* gifts and *serving* gifts. Speaking gifts refer to, well, speaking, such as teaching and preaching. And serving gifts refer to a host of gifts such as administration, hospitality, music, and so on.

Every spiritual gift must be fanned into flame by service to God. Some professing Christians do not use their spiritual gifts. They attend worship services and that is just about all they do. They do not use their spiritual gifts to participate in advancing the gospel.

Every church has all kinds of service opportunities, such as making and serving coffee, cleaning up afterward, watching children in the nursery, teaching Sunday school, ushering, greeting, and many more. Finding a place of service in the church is how one fans into flame the gift of God.

Let me ask you: how are you exercising the spiritual gift that God has given you? If you are not active in some ministry, let me encourage you to get involved today.

IV. God Uses Personal Discipline to Fashion Us for His Service (1:6-7)

And fourth, God uses personal discipline to fashion us for his service.

God gave Timothy a spiritual gift. As I said, it was most likely a spiritual gift of teaching and preaching. That is the gift

of God. However, the gift of God must be exercised through personal discipline. That is why Paul said in verse 6a, **“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God.”** Paul exhorted Timothy **“to fan into flame the gift of God”** (1:6) and then gave him a reason for doing so in verse 7, **“for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”**

The Greek word for **“fear”** (*deilia*) occurs only here in the New Testament and can be translated as “cowardly.” Timothy faced tremendous opposition, partly due to his youth and partly due to his standing for the truth against error. Paul wanted Timothy to know that any fear Timothy may have felt did not come from God. Rather, God gives every believer all the spiritual resources needed for every trial and difficulty. Timothy was not to have **“fear”** and act cowardly.

Instead of **“fear,”** God gives **“power and love and self-control.”** God gives his divine **“power”** to believers to stand against spiritual opposition. God gives his divine **“love”** to enable believers to focus on pleasing God and seeking the welfare of others rather than pleasing themselves. And finally, God gives **“self-control”** to believers so that they can think correctly about their situation to stand for the truth. These qualities don’t just magically appear. They are nurtured and developed by personal discipline as believers worship and serve God day by day. Believers exercise personal discipline to grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Andrew Brunson was a missionary in Turkey with his wife and family. He served there for 20 years. In 2016, he was arrested on false charges and imprisoned. His wife was also arrested and imprisoned but she was released after 13 days. Pastor Brunson spent two years in several Turkish prisons. During much of that time, he did not know if he might ever be

released. He did struggle at times and lost 50 pounds. Yet, the Lord sustained him, and even in extremely difficult circumstances, Pastor Brunson came to experientially know the truth of 2 Timothy 1:7, **“for God gave [Pastor Brunson] a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”** God is always faithful, even in the most difficult of circumstances. Pastor Brunson had exercised personal disciplines that enabled him to stand in the most difficult of circumstances.

In an interview with Dick Staub in 2002, R. C. Sproul talked about his love for the violin. He decided that he was going to learn to play the violin. His teacher was a world-class performer from Russia. She trained with the best teachers in Russia, and she imposed the same rigid strictness on him that she went through. When R. C. did something wrong, he said, she smacked his hand and said, “Nyet! Nyet! Nyet!” R. C. added, “I’m learning more Russian than I am violin from this woman, but I am having an absolute ball.” He said that he sometimes practiced three hours a day. He had a lot of screeches, but when he got it right, it sounded beautiful.

R. C. went on to say that it takes discipline to play the violin or any instrument—like a piano—well. Many people start playing an instrument but then after a certain period, they give up. He then said that for many people studying the Bible, it is the same thing. They start well but after a time, they give up. Many Christians have never read the Bible all the way through. They have read portions of it but not all of it.³

Friends, God uses personal discipline to fashion us for his service. If you are going to be effective in serving God, you must exercise yourself in the spiritual disciplines of reading your Bible and praying and worshiping and using your spiritual

³ See <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2003/february/14188.html>.

gift in God's service.

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed 2 Timothy 1:3-7, we should serve God faithfully since he has fashioned us for his service.

Herb Turetzky attended the New Jersey Americans' first-ever ABA game in October 1967 expecting to be just a spectator. Turetzky, a student at LIU Brooklyn, arrived early at the Teaneck Armory. Max Zaslofsky, the Americans' coach and GM who had attended the same high school as Turetzky, greeted him as he walked in, "Herb, can you help us out and keep score of the game tonight?"

Turetzky responded, "Max, I'd love to. I'm here, so why not?" Turetzky sat down at a wooden folding chair at half court and jotted down the lineups. That was more than 2,000 games and 53 years ago. Since then the team has moved to three different cities, played in eight arenas, and been absorbed into the NBA. And Turetzky is still setting in that wooden chair. "I've never left that seat since," he says. "I'm still here and I'm still going." NBA official Bob Delaney calls him, "the Michael Jordan of scorekeepers." And an article in *Sports Illustrated* referred to him as the "courtside constant." One simple "yes" led to a life of meaningful service.⁴

If you are a Christian, God wants you to have a life of meaningful service to him. Say "yes" now and commit yourself to serving God with all that he has used to fashion you for his service. Amen.

⁴ See <https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2021/april/simple-yes-led-to-life-long-service.html>,

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church
is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can
be found at:

1. <https://tampabaypresbyterian.org/SermonAudio>.
2. www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/freddy-fritz-sermons-11181.asp.
3. www.sermonaudio.com/source_detail.asp?sourceid=FreddyFritz.

Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Answers for Life!

Address: 19911 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL 33647

Telephone: (813) 973-2484

Fax: (813) 973-4673

Email: Office@TampaBayPresbyterian.org

Web site: www.TampaBayPresbyterian.org