

Spiritual Fatherhood

Preached by: Matthew S. Black

Text: 2 Timothy 1:1-9

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Introduction: Open your Bibles to 2 Timothy. The title of the message is: "Spiritual Fatherhood". Not all of you men are fathers today, but we are all called to be spiritual fathers.

Illustration

Seven (7) years ago, Jill and I planted a little apple tree in our backyard. It was just a little sapling compared to what it is today. We cared for the tree, put special soil around it, fertilized it, and watered it diligently for the first several months. In the last couple years it's actually starting to produce fruit. Now the roots are established, and it is able to bear fruit on its own.

People are like trees that bear amazing spiritual fruit when they are established in a healthy spiritual walk with Christ. The Psalmist says (Psalm 1:3), "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper" (NKJV).

Paul was a man who wanted to make sure his spiritual son in the faith was established and healthy and producing fruit before he departed to be with the Lord.

Context

In 2 Timothy 1, we have what many have called Paul's "last will and testament" to his spiritual son in the faith, Timothy. Paul had no physical children, but his spiritual children were all over the Roman Empire. Paul wrote the letter of 2 Timothy just before his death. He knew he was going to die, so he gives his final instructions to his son in the faith, Timothy – the pastor of the church at Ephesus. **Paul wanted to make sure Timothy was well established and able to carry on the work of the Gospel after the apostle's departure to heaven.**

What kind of mark would you leave if you died today? Do you have spiritual children? If so, will they go on and impact the world because of your influence and legacy in their lives? Unless Jesus comes, you are going to die, and others around you will carry on without you. What are you doing to prepare them? Are you a spiritual father (or mother) today?

Let's look at 2 Timothy 1:1-9 to see how Paul prepared Timothy for fruitfulness, and how you and I can prepare people around us for fruitfulness as well.

Text

2 Timothy 1:1–9 (ESV), "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 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.

4 As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 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. 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, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began...”

We all want to leave a legacy. 2 Timothy is Paul’s last letter. It is his “swan song”.

Mamertine Prison in Rome

Paul is in the notorious Mamertine prison in Rome. It is underground. It is about 30 feet in diameter and only accessible through an entrance that looks like a manhole cover. It was used to house prisoners before they were put to death.

In fact, at times the Mamertine prison would hold up to about 30 to 35 prisoners. We are told that in order to make room for the next group of criminals, there was a door that would be pulled open in the bottom of the cell that was an opening to the city sewage system of Rome. As the door was pulled open, the cell or dungeon would fill with the sewage and drown all of the prisoners and wash them back out. The door would be shut; the place would be drained and ready for another 30 to 35 inmates.

The Great Gentile Persecution: Nero

Paul is imprisoned and is all alone because Nero is turning up the heat so to speak on the persecution of Christians. A few years earlier (A.D. 64), Nero had ordered the torching of his own capital city of Rome, which burned furiously for six days and nights. Not only the wooden shacks of the poor but also the stone mansions of the rich, the massive public buildings, and the magnificent pagan temples and shrines were gutted.¹

All But Luke had Forsaken Paul

At the time that Paul is writing, all had forsaken him. Those closest to him like Titus and Crescens, and Tychicus were all on missionary journeys. The only one there to care for Paul was the beloved physician Luke.

Timothy the Pastor at the church at Ephesus

And remember that Timothy is the pastor at the church at Ephesus. Paul had been traveling before his imprisonment, likely around 67AD. His previous imprisonment, spoken of in the book of Acts was five years earlier. He was under house arrest then. That was a fairly easy imprisonment compared to the Mamertine prison. Back then he was able to write the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

This letter has been called Paul’s last will and testament. He knew that the time of his departure was near (4:6) that his earthly ministry and life were soon to end.²

¹ MacArthur, J. (1996). *2 Timothy*. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press.

² Ibid.

Paul is looking toward his departure with Christ. He says: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

Timothy, Like-Minded

There was one spiritual son that Paul had invested in more than all the others. And there was a very satisfying result. Paul could say of Timothy in **Philippians 2:20** (ESV), “I have no one like him [like-minded], who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.”

We see that Timothy was Paul’s protégé. Paul was confident that Timothy would carry on and bear healthy spiritual fruit after the apostle’s departure. Imagine you knew your life’s end was very near. Would you have spiritual children that you could say this of? Have you and are you investing in others?

We must remember that at all times we are leaving a legacy. People are watching we are on display!

I. **First let us see the threefold foundation for spiritual fatherhood** (vs. 1-3).

Having spiritual children is kind of like the adoption process. Some of you have gone through that, and you have to be deemed fit by the state before they will allow you to adopt.

Having spiritual children is kind of like that. You have to be faithful and fit in the little things before God gives you spiritual children to look after. And just like you want a warm house for your children to sleep in, you have to have a spiritual house built on the threefold foundation of:

- **Authority**
- **Affection, and**
- **Attention.**

Paul built Timothy with a commanding **authority** in the Gospel, a deep **affection** for him personally, and paying him a lot of **attention** in discipling and molding him for ministry.

A. Authority

Verse 1: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

Background: Some liberal scholars have tried to throw doubt on the Pauline authorship of 2 Timothy because they say that Paul would not have to present his credentials as an apostle in such an intimate letter to his son in the faith, Timothy. But what they miss is that all godly relationships are based on an authority much greater than ourselves.

Illustration: Wife / Husband Committed to God

I am committed to my wife because of a vow and an authority greater than myself.

Unfaithfulness is not only a sin against the spouse, but primarily against God! When the hard

times come and I'm difficult to live with, I know that my wife will be faithful because her commitment is not only to me but also to God!!

Illustration: Church Committed to God

It is the same way in the church. We are committed to each other in the church through good times and bad, for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and health, because Jesus Christ is our head. Our commitment to each other finds its roots in our Exalted Head!

Paul Had a Commitment to Timothy that was Rooted in His Commitment to God

There must be a commitment to God in all relationships. This is where Paul is coming from. He is an apostle of Jesus Christ. This would be assuring to Timothy. Paul is committed to his son in the faith because He is first and foremost committed to God.

Paul's Position gave him authority

Paul begins the letter by confirming his apostleship. He confirmed his apostleship in writing in order to strengthen and encourage his beleaguered and sometimes fainthearted young friend and to undergird the authority of Timothy's leadership and teaching.³

Apostle – “sent out one”

Paul was an “apostle” literally, a “sent out one”, an emissary, an ambassador, a representative.

God's Idea!

This was not Paul's idea. This was “by the will of God”. Paul's authority came by through his calling on the Damascus Road! **Acts 9:1-6** (ESV), “But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” 5 And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.””

Verse 1: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,”

Paul's Promise and Power gave him authority

Verse 1b: “according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus”.

Two Eternities – Life / Death

Paul's promise to Timothy and all who heard the Gospel was “eternal life”! There are only two destinations for the human race: heaven or hell. There are only two eternities for all of us: life or death. This is the promise. With Christ's substitution on our behalf we have LIFE! Without Christ we must suffer the just penalty for our sins in the Lake of fire in eternal death, destruction, and torment.

³ Ibid.

- This promise of life is an authority that all Christians have! We see this in Matthew 28. Jesus said in **Matthew 28:18–20** (ESV), “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Paul’s authority as a “sent out one” came from Christ’s calling on his life. He actually saw Jesus Christ appear to him. Perhaps today you wish Christ would appear to you. That would make it easy wouldn’t it? But God has given us Christ’s marching orders. He’s given us what Paul calls the “good deposit” or the “treasure” of the Word of God. God’s Word was Paul’s authority and it is ours.

Our Authority: The Word of God

Now today, we are not going to have an experience where our Lord appears to us from heaven. That was a unique experience for Paul since he was called to be an apostle after the twelve – “as to one untimely born” (1 Cor. 15:8). But Paul’s authority and ours, is the Word of God!

Paul in this letter of 2 Timothy is concerned that Timothy guard the deposit of the Word of God given to him. It would be easy for him to compromise and water down the Gospel in this fierce persecution by Nero.

- **2 Timothy 1:13** (ESV), “Hold fast [retain] the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me...”
- **2 Timothy 1:14** (ESV), “By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.”
- **2 Timothy 2:15** (ESV), “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”
- **2 Timothy 4:1-2** (ESV), “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”

Paul’s authority came from the Word of God. In the heat of the present persecution, there would be a temptation to water down the message – to water down the Word. Brothers and sisters, we must never edit the Gospel. The Gospel does not need improvement. The Gospel does not need apologies. We are called to proclaim it in all its power and authority!

- **Hebrews 4:12** (ESV), “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”
- **Romans 10:17** (ESV), “...faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”
- We to plead for people to “receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save [their] souls” (**James 1:21**).

This was Paul's authority, and it is our authority. He was an apostle sent by the will of God to preach the promise and power of eternal life!

Jesus said it this way: **John 6:63** (ESV), “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”

The words that Jesus speaks are spirit and life! The promise of life! That was Paul's authority!

If we want to have authority in people's lives, we must be people of the Word. We must be founded on the Word of God. It's not enough just to be a friend. You need that affection, but you need to be a friend that faithfully points to the Word of God.

B. Affection

Verse 2: “To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Illustration: I love children!

I love children. If it were up to me I would have 6 or 7 or 8. Of course we men can say such things because we don't have to have the babies! I think the greatest miracle in the world is to see a baby be born and to hold that newborn baby. It's not hard to love a little baby! It's hard to take care of them at 3 o'clock in the morning, but it's not hard to love them!

Application: Discipleship is a Lifestyle!

Discipleship and mentoring is not simply a program, but it is a 24-7 culture of lives bonded together in love! Discipleship is a lifestyle of love and patience. If you are mentoring someone, they are going to disappoint you and you are going to disappoint them. That's just the way it is.

Illustration: Special Names for Love Birds

I remember before I got married, I could never imagine fighting with my wife! Have you ever noticed how those couples who are in love always have special names for each other – sugar dumpling, hunny bunny, baby cakes, and teddy bear! Jill and I still have those love bird names for each other – but I'm not going to tell you what they are!!

Yet, marriage is not without disagreements! I know you would never say you fight with your spouse, but perhaps you and your wife have “Christian discussions”! At any rate, sometimes with family, there are ups and downs. There sometimes are hurt feelings.

Thick Skin and a Big Heart

If you are going to disciple someone and get into the nitty gritty of their life, you must be ready for these ups and downs. You must have “thick skin and a BIG heart”.

Paul called Timothy his own child, his own beloved son in the faith. Paul met Timothy at Lystra and Derbe. Timothy did not have a father who was “plugged in”. We do not know much about his father except that he was Greek. It is probable that he traveled a lot and was away from the home much. But Grandma Lois and mother Eunice had an amazing impact and influence on

Timothy. And so, Timothy, though he likely had an absentee father, had a father in the faith that cared deeply about him!

Our Affection Comes from God's Affection for us

Our affection for others comes from God's affection for us. Paul could call Timothy "my beloved child" because he had received that same "Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." Think of how you are loved by the Father! He says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3).

All we are are broken mirror fragments reflecting the love of our precious heavenly Father.

Transition: So we've got to build our discipling relationships on the strong foundation of authority on God's Word, unconditional affection and commitment based on God's love for us!

Finally, if you want to bear spiritual fruit in discipleship and mentoring relationships, it's going to take a lot of work and attention! So our third foundation is attention.

How do you spell discipleship? W – O – R – K! Listen to what Paul says in verse 3.

C. Attention

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."

Paul was constantly giving attention to Timothy. First, when he was in Lystra and Derbe, he spent much time with him, discipling him. Then Timothy became Paul's ministry partner.

Paul served God like Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, with a clear conscience. He has a sincere commitment to Timothy, even though he knew he could invest all that hard work into Timothy with no return.

Paul is often concerned about that.

Demas Has Forsaken Me

Five years earlier, Paul had written the prison epistles, and Demas was his faithful co-laborer. Remember verses such as:

- **Colossians 4:14** (KJV), "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you."
- **Philemon verse 24**, "Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow workers [send greetings to you]".
- But then we read a heart-rending report from Paul later in **2 Timothy 4:10**, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica." Demas according to Paul caved into the persecution of Nero. He was ok serving Christ as long as it was somewhat comfortable. But once intense danger came, he forsakes Paul and the Gospel loving this present world.

Paul would regularly voice concern that he didn't want his labors over the churches to be in vain. He was concerned that some might fall away, and some did (c.f. 2 Thes. 3:5; 2 Cor. 6:1).

Do you want fruit / spiritual children? Get Ready to Work!!

If you want spiritual children, then you must be ready to work! I saw Dr. Vince Tello holding little Amea the other day. Before that he was practicing on his nephew Jeremiah. He looked like a deer in the headlights! Actually, he's doing great! But it is a lot of work! Ask any of the new mothers in our congregation. The husbands always want more children, but they don't want to do the work to take care of them. Husbands, let me tell you, if you want kids, get ready to be an expert at diaper changing, cleaning up throw up, and giving the bottle to your precious child at 3am. Get ready to get up with them at all hours of the night.

Discipleship – Babes in Christ

Babes in Christ in the same way are HARD WORK. If you want to see people come to Christ, you had better be available 24/7. It's a massive commitment. If you want to see spiritual fruit in your life, be a good example. Be faithful, be committed.

Application – Be faithful in the little things!

Do you have trouble making it to all of the services? Do you have trouble giving God the firstfruits of your income? Do you have trouble serving in the local church? If you cannot be faithful in these littlest of areas, how can God entrust you in the more important areas of helping people to grow and change in Jesus Christ?

So we need to have three foundations of authority, affection, and attention in our lives if God is going to give us spiritual children.

II. Second, we want to see three areas of fruitfulness in the lives of those we are fathers (and mothers) to (vs. 4-9).

What are those three areas of fruitfulness that we are looking for? They are faith, fire, and focus.

A. Faith

“4 As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 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.

1. God brings faith through the **Faithful**. “Paul, a servant” (vs.1-2)

2 Timothy 1:2 “To Timothy, my beloved child”

Paul looked at Timothy as a son in the Faith. We must thank God for those who I call “the faithful,” those who preached the Gospel to us. The Bible says in **Acts 14:6-7** that Paul and his co-workers fled “to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, 7 and there they continued to preach the gospel.” It was here that Paul met Timothy because by the time we get to **Acts 16:1** (ESV), we read that Timothy was already a disciple and follower of Christ, “Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of

a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.” Verse 3 goes on to say, “Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him,”

Paul had prayed for Timothy, preached to him and his family, and prepared and groomed him for the ministry (Acts 14).

Do you remember the one who pointed you to Christ?

- **Psalm 126:5** They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
- 2. God brings faith through the **Family**.

2 Timothy 1:5, “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.”

The real key to Timothy's faith was not just missionary Paul. It was Missionary Grandma and Mom! The greatest mission field in all the world is not the distant lands of the world. The greatest mission field is your HOME!

The impact and influence that a Mom has on her children is amazing. It is a true saying that “the one who rocks the cradle rules the world.” If you are a godly mother, you are the only hope for the crumbling American family. One godly mother can truly turn the world upside down. Let me show you this from the Bible.

We come to a hopeful story of the influence of a mother and a grandmother who are still having an impact today. We read of their lives in **2 Timothy 1:5**. Paul writes to his faithful co-worker, Timothy. What was the secret to Timothy's strong faith? Paul says, “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.”

JILL'S TESTIMONY: I think of the testimony of Jill's family. She is the eighth generation in her family to accept Christ as Savior. Eight generations back, her ancestors were Anabaptists. They were actually from a royal family in Switzerland – followers of Menno Simons. Three brothers had to flee because of persecution of their faith in Christ. Where would Jill and I be without Jill's faithful mother and father? What about her faithful grandmother and grandfather. What about those before that, and so on? Are you faithful in your family? The greatest mission field in all the world is the FAMILY!

Transition: So, God engenders faith through the Faithful, those that preach to us the Gospel. And of course, He uses the family. Mom and Dad promoting the Gospel and godliness in the home. But ultimately, and truly, our salvation comes “from the Father!”

- **John 1:13** Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

- **Romans 9:16** So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

With that in mind, let's look at verse 9...

3. God brings faith through the **Father**. "God...called us" (v.9)
2 Timothy 1:8–9 (ESV), "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,"

- **Philippians 2:13** (ESV), "it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."
- **1 Corinthians 3:6**, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

It's not us who can bring faith to a person! We can plant, we can water, but **GOD GIVES THE INCREASE!**

Transition: It is not enough to have faith. Plenty of people profess to have faith and are still dead in their sinful habits, or at best they simply are "casual" Christians. They are Christians of convenience. Perhaps you find yourself here today, and you are bored with your Christian life. You are stuck in a rut and you don't feel like you can talk to God and His Word is dry. You are enduring the Christian life. Well, look at verse 6.

B. Fire

"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..."

Insight: As Timothy grew in his faith, it was obvious that there was this certain overwhelming desire. And any one who is called into the Body of Christ won't be happy until they are utilizing the gifts given to them by God.

1. The Fire is Cultivated. "stir up"

Insight: The word "fan into flame" also gives us the sense of PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. You must engage in ministry activities in order for your gifts to rise to the surface.

Illustration: When I was younger I used to love to go camping in Louisiana. We used to stay up all night around the campfire and look at the stars. But what must you have to have a fire? Sticks, wood, fire, fuel.... You must put the wood in a certain position, start the fire, provide oxygen to the fire, etc. The fire must be cultivated!

Application: You've got to stir up the fire. Use the gifts that God has given you. Get involved. Lead singing, study, preach, start a Bible study, do everything you can to stir up the gifts within you.

- **Psalm 35:23 Stir up thyself**, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.

2. The Fire is Confirmed.

2 Timothy 1:6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, **which is in thee by the putting on of my hands**.

When a person is gifted for a certain ministry, it is recognized by others. It is obvious when a person is called by God to do something, and Paul was referring to Timothy's ordination. Now Timothy was ordained first by God before he was ordained by men. It is God who first confirms our gifts, and secondly men recognize them.

E.g. Correy LaLonde

We went out yesterday evangelizing and in our record book, we happened to be evangelizing the building where we met Corry LaLonde a year ago. We looked at our record and it said "6-11-11, Correy and Maria LaLonde – God touched Correy's heart". Isn't it amazing that one year later on 6-16-12, Correy is a baptized member of Christ's Body and we are going out to evangelize his very building!!

We are in the business of stirring up disciples to make them fruitful. There should be a pattern.

2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV), "what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

C. Focus

Verse 7: "for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

Insight: God has NOT given us a spirit of fear. Timothy may have been fearful because of the gruesome and awful persecution that Nero was bringing.

What is *fear* anyway? Fear is a focus on failure. Fear is rooted in that which fails. There is much fear in self. You will fail. There is fear in trusting others, for they will fail you too. But there is no fear in God. Why? God never fails. Don't focus on fear and self-reliance, but be God-dependent and God-focused! God says we need to focus on three things:

1. God has given us POWER!

Insight: God's power is in a person! We need to get our focus on Jesus Christ!

- **Jesus said**, "Without Me, ye can do nothing" (John 15:15).
- **Matthew 28:18** "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"

- **Romans 13:1** "For there is no power, but of God . . ."
- **I Corinthians 1:24** "Christ, the power of God . . ."

2. God has given us LOVE.

Love is that work of grace in our hearts that motivates us to desire the undesirable. The "Desire of All Nations" (Jesus-Haggai 2:7) can give you an all consuming love

- **John 13:35** (ESV), "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
- **We say with the Psalmist**, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee".
- **God loves us with an everlasting love!**

3. God has given us SELF-CONTROL

Insight: The words "SELF-CONTROL" have the idea of "thought out, self-disciplined, well planned, sound mind."

2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Colossians 3:1 If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Conclusion: Are you a spiritual father or mother? Are you drinking in the faith and fire of the Holy Ghost and the presence of Jesus Christ in your life? Are you focused on the battle? Are you disciplined? Lift up your eyes and look on Christ! Lift up your eyes and see Christ! Focus not on yourself, for that will bring fear! Focus on Christ. Christ is our all in all. He is all we need! Are you a useful vessel? Is God using you? Are you a Christian that is stable when the winds and the waves come? Turn your eyes on Jesus, for when the waves are over your head, they're under His feet!