

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES
"God's Mighty Citadels For The Intimidated"
(2 Timothy 1:1-2:1a)

Introduction: (To show the need...)

(1) As I was typing up these introductory notes on the computer Thursday, I received a call from Sonya Swatsley. She asked if I could go to Danbury, Connecticut Friday Morning, at 8:30 a.m., and talk to a homosexual man who was considering converting to the Watchtower Society to solve his spiritual problems! Now, keep in mind that I have an enormous aversion to the homosexual orientation, and that I needed to pull out all sorts of stuff in my "Cults" file and review it, and humanly I struggled with old fears about witnessing to **hardened** people! I told Sonya, "Sure, I'll go!", but inwardly I wondered, "How will I **do** this?!"

(2) Next came a call to conduct a graveside service. I always try to be sensitive to the needs and desires of the surviving family members, and thus asked the family member who had informed me on this matter for input regarding what I should say and what I should leave out! The family member indicated that she was rather reluctant to let me know as such things can be delicate when different surviving family members hail from different **church** groups. I was glad to do the graveside; but, inwardly, there was that old battle of concern--of feeling strained by the pressures of the spiritual warfare at hand!

While these calls came in, I was counseling a party in my office regarding the role of the Lord in overcoming a lack of power, of selfless love and of self control to do necessities that are normally, naturally difficult to accomplish!

So, without further adieu, we turn to our "Need" section...

Need: "In seeking to do God's will, I often find that formidable spiritual pressures can arise, and I don't know how to fulfill these tasks confidently to stay productive! Any ideas?!"

I. When Paul wrote 2 Timothy, Timothy faced ungodly opposition to his ministry that intimidated him!

- A. Paul's mention of Timothy's "tears" (1:4) and implied "cowardice" (v. 7) reveal that Timothy experienced intimidation in his ministry.
- B. This intimidation came from opponents to God's truths:
 1. Paul ordered Timothy not to be ashamed of the Gospel, implying that Timothy was intimidated because he preached it, 2 Tim. 1:8a.
 2. Timothy was not to feel shame for defending a prisoner, Paul. Apparently Timothy was afraid to identify his beliefs with those of a prisoner who was locked up with **criminals**, 2 Tim. 1:8b.

II. To address this need, Paul gave Timothy input on God's citadels of strength for Timothy to use during ministry persecution:

- A. Citadel One For Intimidating Trials - The evidence of one's conversion as the **basis** of all citadels involved, 2 Tim. 1:5-6a.
 1. Regardless of Timothy's tears, Paul conversely **rejoiced**, v. 4.
 2. The cause for this joy was Paul's certainty that Timothy evidenced a true conversion to Christ in his life, 2 Tim. 1:5.
 3. Since Paul knew that Timothy was saved, the **foundation** for handling ministry persecution was in place as Timothy was spiritually "plugged into" God, 2 Tim. 1:6a.
- B. Citadel Two For Intimidating Trials - God's spiritual gift for Christian service, 2 Tim. 1:6b-7.
 1. As a believer, Timothy was also spiritually gifted for ministry success, 1:6a & 1 Cor. 12:7.
 2. Accordingly, Paul encouraged Timothy to exercise this divine enabling which would offset his intimidation as follows:
 - a. Use of this gift would give Timothy power to counter fear.
 - b. Use of this gift would give Timothy love to erase any self-preservation worries which can lead to intimidation, 1:7.
 - c. Use of this gift would supply Timothy with behavior control to counter his intimidation getting in the way of his task of standing up to opposition, 2 Tim. 1:7 where the KJV's "sound mind" is better rendered self-control, B.K.C., N.T., p. 750.
 3. Thus, if one uses his spiritual gift in serving in God's will, he has all he needs to overcome intimidation under stress!
- C. Citadel Three For Intimidating Trials - The Holy Spirit.
 1. Paul told Timothy to offset his fears with God's power, 1:8.
 2. What Paul **means** by this order he describes in 2 Tim. 1:12 and 14:

- a. Paul revealed that Timothy was to preserve God's good deposit (God's deposit of truth to be proclaimed) by means of the Holy Spirit Who indwelled Timothy, 2 Tim. 1:14 in light of 1 Corinthians 6:19.
 - b. Paul exemplifies just **how** Timothy was to **use** this Resource: Paul was convinced that God would preserve in his own life and ministry what God in turn had committed to Paul *if* Paul simply rested in God throughout his earthly life, v. 12.
3. See Mark 13:11 for another example in the witnessing arena!
- D. Citadel Four For Intimidating Trials - God's Eternal Plan
1. Paul said that God's eternal plan covered Timothy's service:
 - a. The believer's salvation and service are based only upon God as they come by grace and not by works, 2 Tim. 1:9a,b.
 - b. This calling and service are given to the believer in Christ from eternity past so that nothing that occurs in history has to alter the believer's succeeding in his service unless he fails to use what God supplies him, 2:9c.
 2. Accordingly, was Timothy to rely on the spiritual tools at hand, he was assured success due to God's eternal plan that foreknew and controlled all that Timothy faced in history!

Application: To handle ungodly pressures that intimidate us in life, we must (1) believe on Christ as personal Savior from sin as a basis for blessing, Jn. 1:12. (2) Then, we take advantage of God's citadels for those who suffer from intimidation as follows: (a) Knowing that we succeed only if we are true believers, use 1 Jn. 4:1-4 and test for a true personal conversion. (b) Then, based upon this confidence, for vigor, we depend upon the Holy Spirit Who indwells true Christians, and (b) minister ONLY in that area where our spiritual gifting and God's Biblical leading direct us to enjoy His blessings of success! (c) Trust God's eternal plan to enforce our success no matter what we face in life. (3) Thus shored up, go ahead and do the job anyway!

Lesson: All that the believer needs for handling intimidation in the Christian life is provided for him by God. All the believer has to do is to use the citadels of spiritual courage by faith! (2 T. 2:1).

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon's points...)

(1) A number of years ago, Dan and Lisa Cassell who now attend Faith Bible Church in Winsted lived in a condominium in the Pine Meadow area of New Hartford.

(2) One day, when Dan talked with me, he expressed his deep concern over his housing situation. He had to travel a lot away from the family, and his absence coupled with the disrupted family lives of those families on either side of the thin walls of his apartment created anxiety in his children. He was concerned about his need as a family man to provide housing for his family as it now affected their spiritual welfare.

Got to provide you the means to change what you have now if you are to obey 1 Timothy 5:8. However, God expects you to start looking for it!"

(4) He replied, "Pastor, that's the problem! Where are we going to get the funds to buy a single family home--that's the problem!"

He tried. 1 Timothy 5:8 demanded that he **try**.

Same price which he had **purchased** it years before as a ministry to a fellow believer in Christ. That made the home affordable for Dan and Lisa!

(7) When Dan closed on the sale, he had a lot of equity in the home the day he purchased it, let alone the money to make payments.

New home, one that Duane Doot built for them up in the West Hill Pond area! Why? Dan dared to believe the availability of God's power to achieve what God wanted him to achieve to fulfill 1 Timothy 5:8, and it worked!!

It can work for us, too, if we have the courage to trust God amidst our fears in life's trials..!