

“For God Gave Us Not ...”

“... a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline” (2 Tim. 1:7).

The word “for” in the beginning of this verse ties what the apostle wrote about a spirit of fearfulness with the previous appeal that Timothy stir up the gift that was in him through the laying on of hands (2 Tim. 1:6). Let us not suppose Paul felt Timothy was neglectful in the use of his gift (his commendations of him to others would preclude that); but reminders are necessary for even the strongest of God’s servants. Was not Abraham urged, *“Fear not Abraham. I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward,”* and even the apostle himself was enjoined by Jesus, *“Be not afraid but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee and no man shall set on thee to harm thee”* (Gen. 15:1; Acts 18:10). Paul wrote the Corinthians that Timothy was his beloved and faithful child in the Lord who shall *“put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ”* (1 Cor. 9:17). The Philippians were told of Timothy, *“I have no man likeminded who will care truly for your estate”* (Phil. 2:19). Reminders are needed by all, including Timothy. He was not to be afraid to use his gift, but to *“stir it up.”*

God gave us a spirit *“of power.”* Since Paul included himself and other believers in this “gift of power,” I take him to refer to the power that God gave by faith to all believers. Paul told the Philippians, *“I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me”* (Phil. 4:13). The same power was seen in Old Testament worthies for of them the Hebrew writer said that through faith they *“subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness was made strong, waxed might in battle, turn to flight armies of aliens”* (Heb. 11:33f). All these things confirm Jesus’ words to a distraught father who plead for help for his epileptic son begging, *“If thou canst do anything, help us.”* Jesus response was, *“If thou canst? all things are possible to them that believe”* (Mk. 9:22-23). God gave us ... a spirit of love. What makes all things worthwhile with God is the element of love. *“Neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love”* (Gal. 5:6). James tells us our faith must work, else it is dead (James 2:26). But, while our faith must work, Paul told the Corinthians that should they have faith to give their bodies to be burned, or to move mountains, yet have not love, it profited them nothing (1 Cor. 13:2f). It is possible to work strongly and mightily and be devoid of love; it is not possible to have love and fail to act. John wrote, *“But whoso hath the world’s goods and beholdeth his brother in need and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and in truth”* (1 Jn.

3:17f). The greatest gift of all -- God's love for man -- was demonstrated in Jesus' death.

So, God gave us a spirit of love. "*We love, because he first loved us*" (1 John 4:19). If we love God, and we will also love our fellowman because if God loved us, we must love others whom God equally loved. Should our love for both God and man prompt us to help our fellowman in need and to share with him the saving power in the gospel?

God gave us a spirit of discipline. The KJV puts it "*sound mind.*" This is the only occurrence of this exact word in the New Testament though other forms of the word does appeal. The thought is self-control, exercising restrain and control of oneself. Paul said he did so (1 Cor. 9:27). Peter told us to add "*self control*" to our faith (2 Pet. 2:5ff). Paul reasoned of self control before Felix (Acs 24:25). We must control our minds: "*Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life*" (Prov. 4:23). David said, "*I said, I will take heed to my words that I sin not with my tongue*" (Psa. 39:1). Remember, we must "*deny ungodliness and world lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world*" (Ti. 2:11).

Boldness. Love. Self-restraint. These three characteristics moved early Christians and caused paganism and idolatry to topple before the mighty truth of God. These same qualities accomplish the same results today. "Let us be about our Father's business."

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