

“3 Generations Strong— and Growing!”
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Mother’s Day Sunday, May 9, 2021

How does one pass down something to the next generation? Herein lies the puzzle every parent has to face. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn’t. E.g., I recall the way Casey and Debby have taught Kaylor to have a love for sailing, and she does! E.g., I recall my Dad was a great golfer— he won the golf championship at Colonial Country Club when he was about 17, and then won it four more times— and he would take me out to play golf when I was young. He clearly hoped that I, his only son, would take up the love for the game of golf. Unfortunately, I had, and have, what seems to be a perpetual slice, and I did not show a natural gift for the game. Also, I liked other sports, and decided to play them, like basketball and running. E.g., I recall I have had experiences where I tried to hand things down to my sons, like the love for watching the New Orleans Saints play football on Sundays. I recall for a while there I could not get Norwood interested in the game at all when he was around the fourth and fifth grade; in fact, when we were watching the Saints play the Rams he would do annoying things like pull for the Rams because he liked their helmets! But around sixth grade, the love for football struck him, and he has been an avid fan of the Saints ever since. Of course, Drew Brees had something to do with this! There are things we’d like to pass down to the next generation. Somethings, like golf and the Saints, are not necessarily all that important, while others things are, as the apostle Paul points out.

READ 2 Timothy 1:5-7 (p. 211)

CONTEXT: Paul is writing to Timothy, his “beloved child”, though they were not related by blood. Paul opens his letter saying how grateful he is to God for Timothy.

READ v 5. “The first generation was Timothy’s grandmother Lois. What needs to happen in such relationships?” We find out that Paul is impressed with Timothy’s sincere faith, which first lived in his grandmother Lois. It is interesting that the verb for “lived in”, ἐνοικέω, takes its meaning from the word for house, οἶκος. God has made His home in Lois, which reminds of Ephesians 3:16-19, where the verb κατοικέω is used of Christ dwelling in us. And because Christ has made His home in grandmother Lois, she has influenced Timothy to have Christ living in him. How can a grandparent influence a grandchild? I encourage you to think about what your grandparent has passed down to you spiritually. Some of us may not know of anything, but others of us have been blessed to have grandparents whose influence on us is apparent today. I have heard many people tell me that even though their parents were not interested in spiritual things, their grandparents were, and the grandparents took them to church. E.g., I recall my grandmother, my Dad’s Mom who was from Switzerland, had me on her lap when I was about four or five and taught me how to tell time with the hands of a clock. E.g., another was when I was about seven I spent the night at my grandparents and I went to sit in my grandfather’s bed with my grandmother and they had a devotional with me before they went to bed, and then afterward they kissed twice on the lips— and I thought that was so cool! E.g., on my Mom’s side of the family, my Mom’s Mom who lived in Tennessee would make me a cake with butterscotch icing and mail it to me for my birthday, and I loved it!

“The second generation was Timothy’s Mother Eunice. What needs to happen in such relationships?” Again, like Timothy, Eunice had a sincere faith. E.g., I recall my Dad used to tell me and Elena, “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world”, because a Mother can have a tremendous influence on a person.

The Lord can use a Mother in a special way. E.g., I recall a professor at Vanderbilt who had a close relationship with his mother, but he was not a believer, and he went to Yale and every Sunday his mother would talk to him on the phone and ask him if he went to church, and he did not want to disappoint her, so he went to church fairly regularly, but did not get a lot out of it; finally, his sister was going to marry a guy who was a Christian and in ministry, and his mother asked him to go on a retreat his future brother-in-law was leading, and with some hesitation he decided to honor his Mother and went, and he got nothing out of the retreat, until the last night the band played the song “To Obey Is Better than Sacrifice” by Keith Green where the lyrics go, “To obey is better than sacrifice/I don’t need your money/I want your life/and I hear you say that I’m coming back soon/but you act like I’ll never return”. The Holy Spirit used those words to cut him to the heart, and he broke down weeping, because he had big plans for making money, and even arrogantly told his sister if she insisted on marrying this guy of whom he disapproved he could possibly help them out financially. E.g., I recall my Mom used to sing hymns to us while she drove me and my sisters in the car, and she was probably the bigger influence on me spiritually than my Dad, even though my Dad had a great influence on me and taught me Sunday School, but my Dad worked a lot and my Mom spent a lot of time raising me and my sisters in the home, and she was very attentive. I recall when I was in junior high my friends would want to go see movies on a Saturday, and I would be on the phone with my Mom asking if I could go, and she would want to know why the movie was PG and want me to call the theater to find out, and meanwhile my friends and their Mom was watching me as I spoke to my Mom and I was very embarrassed, but my Mom did not care about being the cool Mom, just being a Mom who honored Jesus. I recall when I was in my early to mid-twenties I was shaving in the morning and my Dad came up to me rather awkwardly and said he wanted to encourage me to be sure to be careful with

dating Elena, to keep the relationship physically pure before the Lord, and I assured him that that was the very thing we wanted to do; but I knew, even though he did not say it, that my Mom got him to go and talk to me! She was very intentional, and I appreciate that to this day. Never underestimate the influence of Mother.

READ vv 5-7. “The third generation was Timothy himself. What needs to happen in the relationships which follow?” I have heard it said that Christian is just one generation away from going out of existence. Paul realizes this, and sees cowardice as what can make us lose the next generation. And he apparently saw this potential for cowardice in Timothy. READ 1 Corinthians 16:10. READ also 2 Timothy 1:8. Edmund Burke, the English Member of Parliament during the 1700’s— a contemporary of John Wesley— once said, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to say nothing”. We live in a world where the culture either wants us to affirm what they say or say nothing at all— just shut up. They are pleased with either path we take— but *not* if we speak up. Apparently Timothy was a sensitive person, did not want to make waves, wanted to get along with people, and wanted people to get along with and like him. Have you ever experienced that power to conform to this world? E.g., I recall a woman who was very sensitive and wanted others to like her, and she gave her life to Christ and Jesus started getting her to speak up to others about the gospel— in a kind and caring way, not giving monologues— and it took her a lot of courage to do so, and the Lord has used her in a very effective way to get people’s attention with the gospel. The Lord has not given us a Spirit of cowardice, but of power, and love, and a sound mind. And Timothy had his godly Mother and Grandmother to help him, and they probably did!

“What is our role in the generational relationship you and I play?” To our Grandmothers out there, I want to encourage you, you have far more influence than you think— please use it for God’s glory in your grandchildren. Ask them

how they are doing spiritually, how you can pray for them. To our Mothers, you to have an amazing influence on your children, no matter the age; I encourage you to engage them by asking them how they are spiritually, and how can you pray for them; read them Scripture that you have learned and that God has touched you--perhaps today in your quiet time. And for the rest of us, let us be sure not to let this day pass without letting the special women in our lives to know how very much we appreciate all they have done for us! So, let us first share what we are learning in our devotional times; second, ask our children and grandchildren where they are spiritually, and just listen before saying anything; and third, pray for them!