

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

Over the years, I've found my life changing and my faith deepening as I meet with our heavenly Father in His word. This has been especially true as I've been writing these devotionals and having to live what I write.

I long for you to be able to say the same as you read through this letter.

As I've gotten to know Paul, James, Peter, Jude, and John through their letters, I'm overwhelmed by how they were changed by knowing and walking with their Lord. How much they must have longed for us to know Him as they did.

As John wrote in 1 John 2:3-6, he wants us to walk as Jesus did and believed that it was absolutely possible to do so. So how did Jesus walk? That's one secret our Father shares with us.

Blessings on your time as we take another walk with the Father,

Margie Martin

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Paul wrote this letter to Timothy (his son in the faith) between 62-64 A.D., the interval between Paul's two imprisonments in Rome. (Nero burned Rome in 64 A.D. and blamed it on the Christians. Soon after the fire, the hunt was probably on for Paul since he was the "main man" in this Christian movement.) Paul was living in Macedonia, possibly in Philippi, and Timothy was in Ephesus. In this letter Paul gives Timothy guidance on how to conduct himself in the leadership of that church and encouragement to stay true to his calling.

For more information on this amazing young man, see these passages:

Acts 16:1-3	1 Thessalonians 1:1
Acts 17:13-15	1 Thessalonians 3:1-8
Acts 18:1-6	2 Thessalonians 1:1
Acts 19:21-22	1 Timothy 1:2
Acts 20:1-6	1 Timothy 1:18-19
Romans 16:21	1 Timothy 4:11-16
1 Corinthians 4:14-17	1 Timothy 6:11-12
1 Corinthians 16:10-11	1 Timothy 6:20-21
2 Corinthians 1:1	2 Timothy 1:2
2 Corinthians 1:18-20	2 Timothy 1:5-7
Philippians 1:1	2 Timothy 3:14-15
Philippians 2:19-24	Philemon 1:1
Colossians 1:1	Hebrews 13:22-23



New Testament World

As you spend time in this letter, please take the time to talk with our Father about what He's showing you so you're not just gathering information. As you pray, you can use the space on each page to journal your thoughts or write Him a note.

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 1:1-2

“ . . . my true son in the faith”

We've looked at many greetings as we've read through Paul's letters, and the one remarkable difference in this greeting is the phrase, *“To Timothy, my true son in the faith.”* All of us are sons or daughters, and many of us are fathers or mothers, but Paul is adding a new type of relationship in the faith—family style relationships among believers. We all “know” that God is our Heavenly Father, but the idea of this section is to incorporate that truth into how we really live.

Have you been a son or daughter in the faith with older Christians? Have you observed their lifestyles? Have you watched them interact with others? Have you gone to them with questions and issues, and then learned from their years of walking with Jesus Christ?

And then after years of being a son or daughter in the faith, have you thought of being a dad or mom (or older brother or sister) to someone else in the faith? Have you asked our Father to open your eyes to those around you that He wants you to be involved with?

Many people over the years have been moms or dads to me, as well as older brothers or sisters. Sometimes they didn't even know I thought of them this way because I was observing them from a distance.

I'm starting to transition from seeing myself as an older sister in the faith to a mom with young Christians, and it's not an easy change since it takes more responsibility, time, and heartache. But I don't have a choice in the lifestyle God has laid out for me. During this transition, I'm learning to live as the adult daughter of our King, under His loving authority.

How about you? Where are you in this process? Do you need to see other believers as family members instead of as distant friends or acquaintances? Do you need to open yourself up to an older believer and ask for help in your “growing up” in the faith? Or is it time to start looking out for others who you can be available to help in their growing up process? Or both?

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 1:3-11

“The goal of this command is love”

What a job for a spiritual father to give to his son: “Deal with those false teachers!” Not a warm fuzzy, is it? Let’s look at this group of teachers and see what Paul is concerned about so we can understand the goal of his command and why love is so important.

- They devote themselves to myths [lies] and endless genealogies.
- They promote controversies rather than God’s work, which is by faith.
- They engage in meaningless talk.
- They want to be teachers of the law but don’t know what they’re talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

Do you see a common thread to what these false teachers are doing? I think they’re promoting a religion that’s a waste of time because they don’t understand what they’re talking about. They talk and talk but don’t say anything. I’m guessing that these teachers don’t see the law as a tutor that leads us to Christ (Galatians 3:24), but as a standard for how to live—and which is impossible to attain. So their hearers feel guilty and try to live under a load of perfectionism.

So what is Paul’s answer? Love that comes from a:

Pure heart

Good conscience

Sincere faith

If we let the law do its real work—lead us to Christ—we’ll learn to count on Him and not on ourselves. We’ll learn to die to ourselves and let Him live His life through us (remember Galatians 2:20?), and we’ll have lives that are meaningful, purposeful, and not a waste of time.

How are you spending your time these days? Look at your calendar (or PDA) and your checkbook. You may say that “such and such” is important, but these two items will show you your real priorities. Are you spending your time in activities that promote the Kingdom, or are frustration, guilt, and conflict the hallmarks of your activities and relationships? What will be the outcome of how you’re handling the life God has given you? If you don’t like the answers to these questions, what can you do differently?

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 1:12-20

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he has considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was . . ."

In mid-December my husband and I hosted a dinner party as our Christmas gift to some dear friends we meet with regularly—Barney with the men and me with the women. That morning as I reviewed all that I needed to do before dinner, I began to panic. And when I panic, I don't work systematically.

The thought went through my mind, "Open your Bible." I almost didn't, but the memory of how God has met me this past year when I've been writing made me open to this section. I read "Christ Jesus my Lord will give me strength." Immediately the panic left as I realized that it was His strength that would carry me through the day, not my own abilities; He had called us to meet with these wonderful men and women and had led me to invite them for a holiday dinner, so I realized that the evening was His responsibility.

From then on I almost floated through the day as I worked hard to prepare a nice evening for all of us. What a change from the panic of the morning.

Oh am I glad that I opened my Bible at His prompting—what a miracle I would have missed experiencing if I hadn't. And He gave me this gift because of His love for me. He did it because He "considers me faithful and has appointed me to His service" with the dear folks who were coming for dinner.

Are you feeling overwhelmed and are beginning to panic? Are you feeling that nothing good could happen for you? Or are you just in the blahs? I encourage you to take a step of faith with our Lord and ask Him to meet you in His Word. You may think that you don't have the time to stop what you're doing and meet with your Heavenly Father, but I discovered today that being with Him is the best way to spend my time, especially when I'm overwhelmed, beginning to panic, discouraged, or feeling blah.

He may not give you the answer you think you need, but I bet He'll give you the words you really need. Want to take a chance?

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 2:1-15

“ . . . live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness . . . men to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger of disputing . . . women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God . . . a woman should learn in quietness and full submission . . . but women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.”

Do you get a sense that the believers in Ephesus were having a problem with growing up? They almost sound like unruly teenagers rather than maturing adults.

What does your life look like these days? Do the words “peaceful, quiet, godliness, holiness, modesty, decency, propriety, good deeds, quietness, full submission, faith, love, and holiness with propriety” describe you? Do they describe me?

If they do, wonderful.

If they don't, what do we need to do differently? Paul says, in essence, that we are to give up anger, disputing, indecency that draws attention to ourselves, selfish deeds, a rebellious nature, fear (opposite of faith), indifference, hatred, and a life out of control.

How would you like to be the one sent into such a group of believers with the goal of turning them around, especially if you were younger and timid? How could Timothy take on such a charge? How could anyone ever live the style of life that Paul proposes? (commands?) I think the answer is by depending on the amazing power of our risen Lord living in us—because this is how He lived while here on earth. And He takes us from this destructive way of life to His way of living one step at a time, one day at a time.

So how's your walk? Is there something you need to give up so you can grow up? What do you want your life to look like?

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 3:1-16

"I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."

"How to conduct ourselves in God's household." What an amazing phrase. And aren't we glad that Paul thought he might be delayed so he would make the effort to write down these standards for Timothy! Probably they had talked about all the issues in this letter during their travels over the years, but now we have Paul's thoughts for us to think about and put into action.

As a young Christian I ran across this section and decided to use it as a standard of living for myself, even though most of it was addressed to men. I was living at a time when freedom and license were the norm (San Francisco in the early 1970's). I'm so glad Paul wrote these words because they set the standard for the lifestyle I was to live.

So what idea stands out to you today? Managing your family, not indulging in much wine, no malicious talk? What stands out to me is "Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ." (v. 13)

I want to think for a while about the phrase "have served well." I know I serve, but what does God mean by "well"? Perhaps it means faithfully, with skill, humbly, in dependence on, and in fear that I'll take over and do things in my own self-serving way.

It's easy, isn't it, to set our own standards of what it means to serve well, but what is really important is to know God's standard. And if Paul's life (or David's or Moses') is any indication of what God wants, I have a long way to go. But the goal is worth it: to gain an excellent standing and great assurance in my faith.

What area in your life is God putting His finger on today?

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 4:1-16

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”

I think one of the hardest things for young people to deal with is being looked down on by those who are older and more experienced. However, since I am now an “older person,” I struggle at times with not being listened to *because* I have lived longer and had more experiences. So I think this passage speaks to all of us.

I remember when my long-time physician and dentist retired around the same time, and I transitioned to doctors who were my own age instead of being older and wiser. Then as we moved to Georgia and had to find new doctors, they turned out to be around the same age as our oldest son. But they knew what they were talking about and were thorough and were respectful. They’ve won over my confidence, and now I’m glad I have doctors who know me and who will outlive me. Most of the staff at our church are at least ten years younger than we are, and we learn from them all the time.

Perhaps this is what Paul is saying to young Timothy: live a life that’s worthy of being imitated, respect all people (including yourself), and the believers—even the older ones—will follow your lead and listen to your teaching and preaching.

So where are you in this? Are you a younger person who is frustrated with not being listened to? Perhaps your lifestyle, attitudes, and words need to agree with each other. Or are you an older person who isn’t being sought out? Perhaps God wants to teach and lead you through the younger generation. And if you’re willing to let them be involved, they’ll start letting you be involved. I think God wants us to love and learn from each other; our relationships are never just to be one-way.

As Christians, we’re called to love without a response because God first loved us, and for a long time we didn’t respond to Him either. But He never stopped loving and reaching out, did He? Maybe this challenge is to help us with the character quality of perseverance.

What do you think?

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 5:1-16

“widows: . . . for this is pleasing to God”

Caring for the elderly in the church and in our families—what a hard topic to read about and live out as we are overwhelmed by a society that says that only the young are important and that we should live for ourselves and our own pleasures. But is this what pleases God?

My husband and I have buried three parents while we’ve been married (the fourth, his dad, died before we were married). While we didn’t need to participate financially in my parents’ last days, we gave ourselves to being there for them. Barney’s mom had Alzheimer’s for about 13 years, and we did financially supplement her care giving, as well as progressed through the many stages with her. The hardest thing to do was to tell our parents that they could no longer drive. But we knew we were pleasing God.

However, my lessons of caring for older family members came from a couple who have been my second parents for almost thirty years. I lived with them for three years as a young Christian, along with an elderly aunt. After she and I had moved out, Gina’s dad came to live with them until the dementia, and the need for fuller care, overwhelmed them. All through this time Gina’s step-mom was in the picture, and she eventually came to live with them until she required full-time care for dementia and physical needs. Gina always gave herself to being a caregiver of her family, even when she would have loved being out with friends and involved in ministry. Her husband, Barney, as a true saint and servant of Jesus Christ, was willing to share his wife and his home with these elderly folks. Their godly lifestyle has been my standard, and I know that “God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.” (Heb. 11:16)

Now these dear people are in their 80’s and are praying about where they should spend their last years. I’m lobbying for a place an hour away, close enough that we can be involved with them as they get older—and be pleasing to God.

So when you get to heaven and meet Barney and Gina Brogan, please give them a big hug and thank them for being faithful servants.

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 5:17-20

“elders: double honor and double witnesses”

I don't know how elders operate in your local body of believers, but we can gain insight into first century eldership from this passage: they directed the affairs of the church and did the preaching and teaching.

In the church where I grew up spiritually, the elders were chosen because they were already functioning as elders and shepherds in their ministries in the church. They were chosen for life, and they all had the gift of teaching (and some were preachers). But if they or anyone in leadership fell into sin and wouldn't change their behavior (such as in cases of adultery and homosexuality in our church body), the church was told about what was happening. Of the three men who had been rebuked publicly, two came back to the Lord and to fellowship.

At first when the announcements were made, we were shocked and saddened at the news, but then we were challenged to look at our own behaviors since the elders had taken sin so seriously. When these men returned to the Lord, and us, we all jumped up and down for joy (figuratively) and were able to experience restoration without finger pointing or emotional reservation. Those who had been lost were found, and we were complete again. The elders hosted a banquet to welcome back their brothers.

A number of years later I remember when one of the pastors talked in a sermon about the overwhelming situations that our elders and their wives were experiencing. His observation? Elders are those men whom the rest of us are to learn from. Therefore, God asks them to go through amazingly hard times, and to go through them publicly so the rest of us can learn how we're to respond to difficult times in our own lives. How grateful I've been for this observation, for I have truly learned the value of enduring with grace from these men and their wives.

So what about the elders in your local body? Do you thank them for leading and serving? Are you learning from them and accepting their leadership? Are your spiritual leaders set free from working at extra jobs so they can teach and preach?

Elders are special men in our lives, and they will have much to be responsible for when they meet our Lord. Let's not make their jobs of serving us any harder.

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 5:21-6:2

“In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden.”

The other day I was talking with a friend who was telling me of a lesson she was learning: when she does a “good deed,” she doesn’t tell all of her friends what she has done. Her deeds are now a secret between her, the recipient, and her Heavenly Father. But her face showed that she was loving these “secrets,” and I could see a difference in her character as she was eliminating the need/drive to let peers know of her good deeds. She was enjoying the Lord’s pleasure.

So when I read this verse this morning, I thought of her and could understand how non-obvious deeds cannot be hidden. (I know I just used a double negative, but it fits with the passage.)

How are you and I doing with our good deeds? Paul says in Ephesians 2:10 that God prepared good works for us in advance that we might do them. So God prepares them, and others benefit from them; no wonder we want to talk about what we’re doing—our fallen natures always want to be center stage. But our new natures always want to give credit to whom it’s due, and hence the struggle.

Do we want the fleeting pats on the back from friends? Or would we prefer a “well done” from our Heavenly Father and a changed character that brings glory to Him and results in His being able to use us more and more? It’s the difference between instant and delayed gratification, isn’t it?

So the next time you walk into a good deed that God has set up for you, how about keeping the secret with Him and enjoying His pleasure?

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 6:3-10

“ . . . *financial gain* . . . *great gain*”

Isn't it amazing how our view of life after this world affects how we live now? What is your view of an afterlife? The people Paul is talking about seem to think that what they have now is all that they're going to have—so they'd better go for all they can get. Which, if they're right, is a logical conclusion. But let's think about the lifestyle that would come from that way of thinking:

- Conceited
- Understands nothing
- Unhealthy interest in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction
- Use of godliness for personal comfort
- Fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men [and women] into ruin and destruction
- Pierce themselves with much grief

On the other hand, if we believe in the afterlife that God gives us hints of in the Scriptures, and that Jesus certainly believed in, we know that we brought nothing into this world and will take nothing out of it. So why pursue things if they're just going to be stolen, burned, not valued or appreciated by the next generation; if they're going to fall apart and stay behind when we leave this life? Instead, Paul says to pursue godliness first, because it goes with us into eternity, and then be content with what we have.

I have a feeling that Paul is speaking from experience. In Philippians 3 he summarizes his own background. For being such a respected Pharisee and even a student of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), I'm guessing that Paul had been wealthy and had enjoyed all the perks that went with his wealth and position. But now he can say that the “great gain” of walking with Jesus is far superior to any financial gain that this world can offer.

Sometimes we have to take this perspective by faith, but do you really want to live with the alternative?

Walking With the Father Through 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 6:11-21

“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.”

Take a moment and think about what your life shows that you’ve been pursuing. Is it wealth, status, comfort, recognition, love, autonomy? We can say we’re pursuing “such and such,” but our actions, checkbooks, and calendars show where our hearts really are. Are you pleased with what you see? If so, great! But probably like most of us, what we’re pursuing, seeking, running after, or have as a goal is transitory and centers on ourselves.

Paul says to flee from this (the attitudes we saw in yesterday’s section), and go in a new direction. In this new direction, which of these words strikes your heart?

righteousness

gentleness

godliness

endurance

faith

love

As we finish this letter and go on to Paul’s second letter to Timothy that Paul wrote at the end of his life, first think about what you need to flee from as Joseph did from Potiphar’s wife in Genesis 39. Next, choose what you want to pursue that will go on with you into eternity. Think carefully about this, because all too often we flee from God’s truth and pursue the world’s ways.

Are you willing to write down what you’ll be fleeing from and what you’ll be pursuing?
