

# What God Has Given

**Introduction.** In 2 Timothy 1:6, Timothy had a gift from God, given to him by the laying on of Paul's hands. Paul had urged him in his earlier letter to not neglect his gift (1 Timothy 4:14). We do not know what this gift was, and it is pointless to argue the exact nature of it. However, the gift Timothy possessed was something he had power to exercise or suppress. He was not to neglect it; he was to stir it up. This agrees perfectly with the truth that men controlled the Spirit's work in them (1 Corinthians 14:32).

What could stifle this young man from using his God-given ability? Fear! What could help him to "Be all you can be" and "Serve God with your all"? We talk a lot about what God has given us in Christ, such as redemption and forgiveness of our sins, but our text today will show us three elements of what God has given that we should accept, embrace, and live.

## ***I. What God Has Not Given***

- A. Fear is real. Don't deny it, suppress it, or run from it. Admit it, face it, and work to overcome it. Over 60 times the Bible exhorts us to "fear not" (cp. Isaiah 41:10).
- B. The word "fear" in this text means timidity or cowardice. Sometimes what we call "political correctness," "tact," and "taking it slowly" is just fear on our part. Fear causes reluctance. It causes us to not have the difficult conversations that are necessary (Proverbs 17:27; Titus 2:8) and to hide our lights (Matthew 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8).
- C. If fear does not come from God, what is the source of fear? It must be from doubts the devil implants in our hearts. He wants us to question God — to doubt our ability and to be afraid of the future. We do not have to cower in fear at the devil's devices, because God is greater than Satan (1 John 4:4; cp. John 12:31)!

## ***II. What God Has Given***

- A. Power.
  1. God is all-powerful, and His word is powerful (Hebrews 4:12). The gospel is God's power to salvation (Romans 1:16), and it not only delivers us from the devil's enslavement, but empowers, strengthens, and energizes us spiritually.
  2. Thayer says that "power" is "strength and ability" and then he adds, "power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature." Our spirit is the thinking, reasoning, and choosing part of us. It is that part of us that makes us what we are (Proverbs 23:7). We do not fear because God changes our inner person and the inner person He creates in us is not by nature fearful. It is by nature strong, able, and powerful (Joshua 1:6-7). This power would allow a naturally timid man to develop a boldness when called in the name of God to fulfill a difficult work (Acts 4:13, 29, 31). We can boldly approach God's throne of grace with assurance (Hebrews 4:16).
  3. Peter said "the God of all grace" is able to "perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you" (1 Peter 5:10). David affirmed, "The Lord is my strength and my shield" (Psalm 28:7). Paul exhorted us to "be strong in the Lord ... and put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:10-11). What, that God asks of us, can we not do if our spirit is 100% of God and for God (Philippians 4:13)?

B. Love.

1. Love comes from God for God is love (1 John 4:8). He is the epitome of love. His divine love soothes the soul, steadies the spirit, and provides peace for the heart. The tranquility of love's character fortifies our faith and drives out our fears (1 John 4:18).
2. It is easy to welcome the spirit of love God gives us, but we may fail to recognize how it removes fear and motivates action. The spirit of love is indispensable to all Christians, most of all to the chosen ministers of Christ, and none understood its power more clearly than the apostle (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). We love God and others because who we are has changed and there is now no place for hatred in us (1 John 3:17-18). When our spirit is given us of God and is "of love," our thoughts and actions will follow, especially in our treatment of those without (John 13:35; 17:25-26).

C. Sound mind.

1. Disciples of Christ have not abandoned reason. We are clear thinking and self-controlled (1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). This is the result of God's influence in our lives. We do not live in fear, not because we avoid all fearful situations, but because we remain clearheaded even in intense situations. No one can have discipline over others who has not first subdued himself. In fact, often the deciding factor between success and failure is self-discipline.
2. Furthermore, we know something that fearful-spirited people do not know. We do not live for this life. We know our hope is based on infallible truth and the guaranteed promises of God (2 Peter 1:3-4). Nothing can divert our attention from the author of our faith or separate us from His love (Hebrews 12:2; Romans 8:38-39). What fear could intimidate a spirit like this?
3. Fear is overcome by rational reasoning and tranquil thoughts that stems from spiritual meditation. When we think on what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good repute, our minds will become disciplined to conquer fear. Meditate on virtues that are virtuous and praiseworthy instead of putrid and vulgar (Philippians 4:8; cp. Psalm 19:14; 119:99; Proverbs 12:5; 21:5).

**Conclusion.** A gift, spiritual or natural, has to be cultivated and stirred. None of us have gifts like Timothy, but all of us have gifts — gifts we should stir up, not neglect. Gifts which are used have a way of multiplying (Matthew 25:20-23). Gifts neglected will ultimately be taken from us (Luke 19:20-24). Like Timothy, we must not neglect our gifts but stir them up that we might glorify God!

As we go out and use our talents, we should not let fear paralyze us, but realize that God has given us power, instructions about love, and reasonable thinking to expound and live the principles of the kingdom to others.