



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

HOW TO PASS ON OUR FAITH

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Timothy 1:3-7 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Psalm 24:1 | Proverbs 3:5-6 | Romans 8:28
Philippians 4:19

► SUMMARY

Every believer can leave behind a rich spiritual legacy.

Some parents leave their descendants an inheritance of investments, valuable objects, or land when they pass away. But far more important than material possessions is the godly heritage that followers of Christ can give their children and others whom they encountered. We should never underestimate the impact a consistent, godly role model can make in the life of a child, or anyone who desires guidance in their Christian walk.

► SERMON POINTS

Writing to his spiritual son Timothy, the apostle Paul said, "I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did ... I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelled in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Tim. 1:3, 5-6).

In addition to this solid foundation from his natural family, Timothy was given a rich heritage from his father in the faith, Paul. The apostle passed down to the younger man the biblical principles modeled by his forefathers, and the divine revelation God had supernaturally given him. Because others mentored him in the faith, Timothy was raised up to be a capable, trustworthy leader in the early days of the church, able to handle authority and responsibility wisely despite his youth.

Do you have a faith worthy of passing on?

If so, it will be ...

- **Based on the truthfulness of God's Word.** The Bible is a reliable source of spiritual instruction, and is the foundation for our faith and our eternal legacy.
- **Based on the faithfulness of God Himself.** Instead of resting on information that you have merely read about or heard from others, your faith should be based on seeing the Father be faithful over and over in your life.
- **Worth both living for and dying by.** Our faith should be the foundation of our daily lives. Not only that, but we can be assured that at death, we have certainty of eternity with Him.

How do we pass on our faith?

- **Sharing with our children or grandchildren the principles we have learned in life.**
 - God instructs us on the use of money. "The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains" (Ps. 24:1). For instance, the Father requires us to give Him a tithe of everything, and debt should be avoided.
 - God will give you direction for your life. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:5-6). Kids should have confidence that the Lord will lead them into His perfect plans for their lives.
 - God will provide for your needs. Philippians 4:19 promises, "My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."
 - God will strengthen you by the Holy Spirit to accomplish any task or calling He has for you.

When Charles Stanley was in high school, his grandfather explained these four principles to him and shared stories about how God had provided for various needs. That legacy provided an invaluable spiritual foundation that impacted Dr. Stanley for the rest of his life.

- **Living a godly lifestyle.** Children are watching how we make decisions day after day, year after year. If we are telling them to trust Jesus, but then we try to work things out our own way, we are sending the message that His way doesn't work. In the face of seemingly impossible situations, Dr. Stanley's mother would always respond, "We are going to trust God," then lead him in prayer, often kneeling beside the bed. By her actions, she reinforced to him how much she trusted the Lord in every circumstance. One time when Dr. Stanley's teen daughter, Becky, had an accident in his new car, he made sure not to prioritize the vehicle over his child.
- **Being persistent over the long haul.** To pass on our faith, we must be consistent. It's not enough to trust God some of the time, and other times, make our own way in disobedience to Him. There is no such thing as a perfect parent, but each of us should strive for consistency.
- **Participating in their lives and in the lives of others.** Tell them stories about how the Lord worked in your life when you faced a difficult situation. Pray with them about the challenges they are facing and celebrate together when prayers are answered. Involve them, as appropriate, in family decision-making, and teach them how to go to the Lord with everything. Also, be transparent and tell them the stories of when you failed in the past. Not only does this help them learn from your mistakes, but it also builds relationships. And be sure to apologize to them when you make your own mistakes.

- **Praising the child after successes.** Take time to thank God together for victories, but also use the opportunity to express affirmation. Reinforce that he or she trusted the Lord and the situation turned out well. This will build a child's faith far more than strict rules. When kids experience disappointment, encourage them with the principle of Romans 8:28, which says, "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." The Father is engineering our circumstances for our good. Coach children to ask Him for help understanding why a certain prayer wasn't answered in the way they'd hoped; many times the Lord is willing to give insight into seemingly negative outcomes.

- **Praying for them.** Pray for their safety and success, but also that they would see God's hand at work. Ask Him to send them enough challenges that they must learn to trust Him. Don't rescue them from every tough situation. Certain spiritual lessons can be learned only through difficult or hurtful situations and mistakes, so don't cheat your children by solving everything. The only way for anyone to gain a rich spiritual legacy is to personally experience God's deliverance.

▶ **RESPONSE**

- Consider your own spiritual legacy. Which people were most influential in modeling the Christian walk to you? What about their lives could you imitate, or are you imitating, as you seek to pass your faith on to others?
- Think through the ways to pass on our faith. Which areas are your strengths? In which areas might God want to challenge you to grow?
- Did the sermon cause you to think in fresh ways about sharing your legacy of faith? If so, how? What new insights or good reminders did you hear in the sermon?

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