

# Spiritual Fathers

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 25 May 2025

Preacher: Ben Peters

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning. My name is not Ben, but he will be coming up shortly.
- ! But I wanted to do just a short introduction as to why.! And turn with me to 2 Timothy 2, verses 1 and 2.
- 2 Timothy 2, verses 1 and 2. It's good for us to see this.
- And Paul is writing to Timothy, a younger pastor, and he's encouraging him. And he says, You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
- And so Scripture instructs us to seek out faithful men and commit to them the word of the ministry.
- [ 1 : 2 6 ]     And as we vision here in church to grow men and women, a part of that is our leadership studies, and it is to grow in character and in the word, and to prepare, allow God to prepare men for ministry as well, or just in serving God in one way or another.
- And so having said that, we would like to give opportunity to individuals that we recognize God is preparing.
- And so this morning we have asked Ben Peters to share the message, and so he will be coming to do so.
- So Ben, if you would come at this time. Now, as Ben shares this morning, I trust there will be a few of you out there that will have some butterflies, knowing that the Lord is perhaps preparing you as well.
- And so this is exciting, and the Lord is blessing. Come on, Ben, and I would like to pray for you. Let's pray.
- [ 2 : 5 3 ]     Father, indeed you are gracious, you are all-powerful, you are sovereign, and you are growing your kingdom.
- You're preparing your servants for your purposes. And this morning we want to commit, Brother Ben, into your care and keeping as he presents the word of God.
- May you anoint his lips, may you give him courage, and above all, Lord, joy in sharing your word. I commit him to you, to your honor and glory.
- In Jesus' name, amen. God bless. All right.
- Well, good morning, everyone. Thank you, Pastor Wayne, for that. And, yeah, I'm super excited, honored, nervous, obviously.
- [ 3 : 5 4 ]     But it is an honor to be able to come up and to share the word of God with each of you this morning. Today's message will be maybe a little bit shorter than what we're all used to, but I trust that God will have something for each of us to take home.
- He says that his word is powerful, powerful, and so no matter what I do up here this morning, I know that God can use it for his honor, for his glory. And so, yeah, we're going to just be continuing through the series in 1 Corinthians.

And so for a little bit of context in today's passage, we'll just go over a few verses in chapter 4. We'll start in verse 6 of 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 4, starting in verse 6. We'll just read through these verses leading up to 14 and just kind of summarize a little bit of what's happening here.

So 1 Corinthians 4, starting in verse 6, says, Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

[ 5 : 19 ] For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

You are already full. You are already rich. You have reigned as kings without us. And indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you.

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death. For we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are distinguished, but we are dishonored.

To the present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands.

[ 6 : 18 ] Being reviled, we bless. Being persecuted, we endure. Being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

And so the Corinthians, they had an abundance of spiritual gifts, but they lacked godly character. These gifts caused them to become prideful, which caused lots of divisions, and they had become self-sufficient, reigning in a sense without the apostles.

The apostles are being treated as fools for Christ's sakes, while the Corinthians are acting and living as wise men. They were living as distinguished and strong, being honored by others, unlike the apostles who were being viewed as weak, and they were being dishonored.

He says, We hunger and thirst. We are poorly clothed, beaten, and homeless. They were laboring with their hands, returning, reviling with blessing.

They were enduring through persecution. And they had been made to look as the filth of the world. They suffered everywhere they went for the sake of the gospel, all while the Corinthians, some of which were just living it up.

[ 7 : 55 ] And so Paul calls them out sharply. And so that's where we get into today's text. Thank you, Martin, for reading that for us. So starting in verse 14, says, I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children, I warn you.

He writes to warn them as his beloved children. He sees the spiritual danger that they are in. They are proud. They are boasting.

Proverbs 16, 18, says, Pride goes before destruction, and a howdy spirit before a fall. And so he's warning them, as a loving father, seeing his children about to fall.

And so a question then, what do we do when we see our children about to fall? Well, often we say something usually very emotionally charged to get their attention, right?

Sometimes it's just, hey, hey, hey, just to try to get their attention, right? And so that's what I think Paul is trying to do here. He is sharply trying to get the attention of the Corinthians.

[ 9 : 22 ] In verse 15, it says, And so he reminds them that though they have many instructors or teachers in Christ, he is their father.

He says, in Christ, I have begotten you through the gospel. And so I'd like to turn to Acts chapter 18, and we'll just pick up a portion there.

Acts chapter 18, and we'll do verses 1 through 11.

It says, After these things, Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.

And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.

[ 10 : 42 ] And he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked, for by occupation they were tent makers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, Your blood be upon your own heads.

I am clean. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles. And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justice, one who worshipped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue.

Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized. Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you, for I have many people in this city.

And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. Amen. And so we can see here from this passage that Paul is actually the founder of the church in Corinth.

[ 12 : 16 ] He's the one who led them to Christ, teaching them the word of God for 18 months, it says. So we'll turn back to our text in 1 Corinthians chapter 4.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Back in verse 16 now.

And that's why he says, Therefore I urge you, imitate me. In verses 9 through 13 of chapter 4, he describes his way of living, him along with the other apostles.

They were living as servants devoted to Christ, suffering for the furtherance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And they knew Paul's character and his lifestyle while he was with them teaching and preaching the word of God.

They had obviously forgotten. So continuing on in verse 17, it says, For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ as I teach everywhere in every church.

[ 13 : 40 ] And so Timothy is to come and remind them of Paul's ways in Christ. Timothy, who is Paul's beloved and faithful son in the Lord.

And so, I just want to explore that spiritual father and son relationship just a little bit further. And so, if you'll all turn with me back to Acts and we'll go chapter 16.

Acts chapter 16 and we'll read verses 1 through 5. It says, Then he came to Derbe and Lystra and behold, a certain disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek.

He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region for they all knew that his father was Greek.

And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily.

[ 15 : 14 ] And so here we have the account of where Paul and Timothy first meet and Timothy is believed to be about his mid-twenties at this point so he's still a fairly young man.

In verse 2 it says he was well spoken of meaning that he had a good reputation among the brothers and he also had gifting for ministry and we know this from other scriptures.

And so Paul seeing these things wanted to have Timothy come along with him on his journeys as a missionary preaching, teaching the gospel and the first thing that he does is he takes him and he circumcises him and he did this as a protection so that he wouldn't be a stumbling block.

Rather so that it wouldn't be a stumbling block to him he wanted Timothy to be able to freely serve and grow without that bearing on him.

And so right away we have Paul seeing a potential danger or a hindrance for Timothy and like a good father will do he prepares him he helps him out in that area.

[ 16 : 40 ] and then from there we can see that they go out and they share the word they share the word of God and strengthen the churches.

I have one more scripture I would like to turn to just in order to really highlight this relationship between a spiritual father and son and that's in 1 Timothy 1 Timothy chapter 4 and we'll read verses 12 through 16 it says let no one despise your youth but be an example to the believers in word in conduct in love in spirit in faith in purity till I come give attention to reading to exhortation to doctrine do not neglect the gift that is in you which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership meditate on these things give yourself entirely to them that your progress may be evident to all take heed to yourself and to the doctrine continue in them for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you and so here too we can see the care that Paul has for Timothy the care he has for the continued spiritual growth of Timothy as he gives him clear directions and encouragement to carry on with the ministry that God has called him to we'll go back to our text in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 and so we know that Timothy had at this point spent lots of time with Paul he knew his character he knew the way that Paul lived his life he knew that Paul taught the same things everywhere that he went and that Paul practiced what he preached and so who better to send than Timothy so we'll move along in verse 18 it says now some are puffed up as though I were not coming to you but I will come to you shortly if the Lord wills and I will know not the word of those who are puffed up but the power so Paul knows that there are some who think maybe he's scared to come since he didn't come right away in person he's sending a letter and he's sent Timothy but he assures them and he says

I will come if the Lord wills and he's saying that he's going to come and test them to see if there's any power behind their words what does their character look like does their walk match their talk in verse 20 it says for the kingdom of God is not in word but in power and so we can say all kinds of words if we want to but without any action they are just that words and words alone don't do anything we'll finish off the portion here in verse 21 it says what do you want shall I come to you with a rod or in love and a spirit of gentleness and so Paul is giving them the choice here and how he comes he's either going to come with a rod or a spirit of gentleness and so I don't believe that he's meaning a physical rod that he wants to come and beat them up with

I personally can't picture Paul doing that but rather a rod of correction and so we know that he actually prefers to come in a spirit of gentleness as a loving father coming to correct his children and so that brings us to the end of our passage and so before I share some closing thoughts and encouragement I would just like to share a personal example of a spiritual father in my life and so over the past seven years Pastor Wayne has been instrumental in the growth that I have experienced as a Christian and I say instrumental because really it wasn't

Pastor Wayne it wasn't because of Pastor Wayne that I grew to where I'm at today it was God working through him to be that spiritual father that I needed and so many times he has encouraged me and many times he has nudged me forward and he has also corrected me probably more times than he knows and it wasn't always exactly fun but it's part of being a mentor and so I know that he has been this for many of you here this morning and so it's not just me and I hope that nobody misunderstands me I'm not trying to lift him up or give him any glory the glory belongs to God alone and so Pastor Wayne didn't get to where he's at today without other more mature believers to come alongside him and to help him to grow to where he's at today others to speak into his life as well to encourage him and also to correct him when necessary

[ 23 : 55 ] I'm sure there has been many times and so my point in sharing this is that we all need a spiritual father or mother perhaps to speak into our lives someone we can talk to and share personal things with and someone who cares about our spiritual growth and also someone who is willing to correct us when it's necessary we all know that it's not fun to correct and yet it is crucial for character development and so we have many instructors in Christ but without any fathers to help us and guide us we could easily become like these puffed up Corinthians who were full of knowledge and giftings but they lacked godly character and we could end up never fully mature in Christ and so just for encouragement here this morning if you are here this morning and you don't have a mentor

I encourage you to find one and if you are here this morning and have walked a few miles in the faith maybe God is wanting you to be one for someone else let's bow in a word of prayer father we come before you this morning again and just so thankful for the beautiful day and thankful for your word Lord we thank you that that we do have your word to lead to guide us and father we thank you for mentors as well as we know that each of us needs a mentor in our lives to help us to point things out to us when we don't see to come alongside and to correct us as a loving father or mother in Christ and you have designed it this way father and we just we're so thankful for it and father as well just thankful for this time that I was able to share your word and and I trust that it will be a blessing to all those who are here as it has been to me and again father we're just so thankful for you thankful for your word and thankful for this time as well may you be honored and glorified in Jesus name amen and and and and and and and and!