

AWANA Graduation

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[0 : 0 0] take your Bible and go with me to 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 14 if you would. I wanted a passage of scripture with you and I want you to think about it. This is one of the most important things that we could ever do. We must teach our children about Jesus. And it takes a combination. What's really good would be if there were a school and a church and a home, but at least the home and the church ought together to be teaching our children to serve Jesus. Amen.

And so I thank the Lord that these workers are doing so much to get the gospel into them. Now, you know, before I start reading the passage of scripture, that Timothy is a young man raised by his mother and his grandmother. Now, whether or not his dad is alive, who's a Greek, whether or not he's alive or dead or absentee or whatever, I'm not really sure about that. But we know this, when Paul meets Timothy, he meets a very special young man. And he's so excited about him and he calls him his son in the Lord, but evidently he was well on his way to serving Jesus. He was already becoming the man that he ought to be. And he had been taught by his mother and his grandmother.

And the faith that was in him was first in his grandmother and his mother. And so he writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 14. I want to, I'm going to skip down to verse 15. I want you to read that with me. That's where I'll focus in just a little bit. As I thought about what we ought to do for a one a night, I thought of this and that from a child thou has known the Holy Scriptures. And that from a child that has known the Holy Scriptures. Why so important to know the Holy Scriptures? Because they are able, they're alive, they're active, and they're able to teach a person and make him wise unto salvation. They are able to make the wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. I'm going to go back to verse 14 in a second. But you know, we constantly read verses 16 and 17, and we ought to, they are great verses, but tell us that we have the Word of God.

And we have literally a divine book in our hands. We hold in our hands the very Word of God. I think that can sound so trite and so descriptive in a, in a human way. But if you consider what it really means, it means that somehow, and you underline in verse 16, God inspired the Scripture.

God breathed the Scripture. He gave it to men, holy men of God, and the Holy Spirit moved on them. And all Scripture is given by inspiration to God. That means from Genesis to Revelation, we know God gave us this book. That's extremely important that you understand.

[3 : 1 0] Now, it's important that, this isn't part of the message, but I think it needs to be said, you know, but this isn't a book put together by 40 different authors over 1,500 years. This is a book put together by the Holy Spirit of God. This is a book put together by God Almighty himself. And then he told me, it's good. It'll get the job done. It's profitable. Look, if you would, in verse 16, it's profitable. It'll teach us. It'll reprove us. It'll correct us.

It'll instruct us that we'll have everything we need to serve God. Go back up and read with me verse 14, if you would. I'll give you five little things you can think about, and we'll be done. Look at verse 14.

Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned. I wish you'd just thought of like continue. You know what I pray for these kids is that they'll continue. I wasn't the sparky one. I don't know.

I can't keep up with all that, but it said this for something like where we start and we will not depart. Did I hear that? Is that what I heard? Would one of y'all say something? If I didn't, I just made it up and it was good. We'll start here and we will not depart from here.

Paul said to Timothy, son, just stay in what you were taught by your grandmama. Stay in what you were taught by your mama. Say what you've learned. Continue. Continue.

[4 : 26] Then underline in verse 14, what you have learned, hast learned. Underline that. It takes effort to teach people things. It takes effort to get people to learn, but somehow he learned it. Mama and grandmama and Paul and other people taught him. Not only did he learn it, because I'm going to get to this in just a minute. I want you to know that he was assured of it. Somewhere along the way, he went from knowing what mama said, knowing what grandmama said, to saying it's real to me.

It's not just what they said. It's not just what the Sunday school teacher said. It's not what my want a teacher said, but something has happened and I know for myself that this is true.

Assured of knowing of whom thou has learned them. You know who taught you. It was your mama and your grandmama. You know, they taught you. I tell you today that I regularly, when I preach in other places, and I don't say as much here because I'm always here, but regularly when I preach in other places, I remember those teachers at Wrigley Baptist Church. And I remember learning John 3, 16. And I remember learning that those that believe are not condemned. And I remember singing songs with all those people. And I thought they were so old and I'm sure they were in their thirties. And I thought they were so old, but they taught me the word of God and I learned them. And then it says, and you know that you've known that from a child. I want to have a word of prayer with you. I'll give you five little things about this and I'll be done. Father, help us tonight. And I don't know, Lord, if tonight a parent came or is watching that's not born again, but if they are, I'm asking you to save them.

I'm asking you to change them. I'm asking you to give them new life. And then God, on the other hand, I'm asking you to help these teachers keep on teaching. After their little break over the summer, I pray God, they'll come back with all the fervor and more and hungry to teach truth to children.

I pray God that the parents will believe enough in this, that they will tell their children about it and help them come to know you. And I'll give you praise and honor and glory for all that you do.

[6 : 42] I thank you and I give you glory and praise in this moment in Jesus name. Amen. Go with me if you were to verse 15. I just want to give you, I'm going to break the verse down to just my way of doing this. I want to tell you that you are commended for starting early. You are commended for starting early. The Bible says in second Timothy three 15 and that from a child, that means that from the time he was delivered from the time he was born, that word child is actually the child that's recently born. That's what child that's an infant. That's a newborn baby. And a newborn baby comes out mom and daddy are like, boy, I want to raise this kid for Jesus. I want this kid to grow up knowing about him. I want to teach him Bible verses. I want him to be in a one as I want him to hear.

And I thank God that you that got your children here tonight. You started early. You started early. It says that from a child, I'm thankful that you are dispensing truth to them. I'm thankful that you are trying to make sure they learn the truth. Everywhere they go, they're going to hear a whole different line. They're going to turn on the television and they're going to watch cartoons that you think are innocent, but they're going to teach them that they're, they're evolved beings.

They're going to watch cartoons. They're going to learn about even about powers and satanic stuff with all covered and all, all made to look nice. They're going to hear about all sorts of stuff. They need some truth poured into them. They need the word of God poured into them. And I thank God, I commend you for starting early and teaching them. And here's what we all know as parents, though we start early and though we teach them, they're going to have to decide for themselves.

And boy, we need to pray. You need to start praying for your children. You ought to beg God on a regular basis to save your children. You need a miracle. You need a miracle. You need God to take that sweet child that you love so much. It memorizes all the verses and goes to church, but you need God to do something in their heart. They've got to come to a place where they go, boy, I have sinned and I've trusted God, trusted Jesus Christ. Can I just tell you that when you're brought up in a Christian environment, it's hard to get saved sometimes. You're probably thinking it's hard to get saved when you're brought up in a pagan environment, but when you're brought up in a Christian environment, sometimes you kind of live like I'm always good. I mean, the worst thing I've ever done is told a little lie, sold a little piece of candy every now and then. It's hard to admit they're a sinner.

You need God to do something in their hearts. Pray for that. Number two, I want you to look, if you would, at verse 15 and underline this, known the Holy Scriptures. They have known the Holy Scriptures. I want to congratulate you for getting them to the source of all truth, the source of all truth, the Scriptures. I want to challenge you. I want to thank you for it. I want to congratulate you for it. I want to tell you, I don't just say, I believe the Bible.

[9 : 35] I really believe the book. I get up in the morning, I think about the book. Last night, I'll just be honest with you, I had a pretty rough night. I was somewhere, and several of our people from our glorious church were with me. My wife was with me, and we were in a car trying to get to church, and we were in a cave. I'm not sure how that happened, but I couldn't get the car out of it, and I couldn't find my iPad, and nobody knew where my Bible was, and everybody that was with me wanted to eat supper. I must have been hungry. Man, I woke up, I'm like, Lord of God, where is my, I went to the office this morning. I went, oh, there you are. Yes, the message is still there, but you know what? It's the Word of God that changes lives. I dream about it. I think about it going to bed. I think about it getting up. It's the Word of God that changes lives because it's inspired.

inspired. It's God-breathed, and you ought to help them to have a reverence for the Bible. They ought to know every time we open that. They ought to know they're holding the infallible. It's the inspired, inerrant, infallible, preserved Word of God. You want to get them to know that there are no mistakes in it, and that's where they go to get their instruction. That's where they go to learn what truth is. I'll just say to you that in a very confused world, I am totally not confused.

I know exactly where I came from. I know that there was a time some 7,000 years ago when God stepped out on eternity and said, I'll make something from nothing, and he made a whole earth, and he made this earth. He took six days only because he wanted to show how patient he could be.

He didn't need six seconds. He's God. He can do anything he wants to do, but he made us. I know that. I know he made a man, and I know he made a woman. I know he made a family. I know that God's in charge of things because I have the book that instructs me. I also know that I'm a sinner.

I know that I'm a sinner because the book tells me I'm a sinner. When I open the Bible and read it, it's pretty easy. I'm pretty old, and I've been reading the Bible a long time, and I can read the Bible and start reading, and I go, oh boy, I've been messing up on that, haven't I? Lord, I'm sorry.

[11 : 41] It's alive. It's real. Then I want you to go to 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 15, and I want you to see the life-changing strength found in the scripture, are able. Would you underline that? I don't know if you ever meditate on that word, are able. You see, the scriptures are alive. I don't have to tell you that because this church knows that, but maybe some parent that's got your children involved, and you're not really up to date on everything. I need you to know that the Bible we read and hold in our hands, though it was written a long time ago, it was translated for us a long time ago, and we hold what appears to be an old book. It's not old, it's alive.

The Bible says in Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 12 that it is a discerner of our thoughts. It knows what I'm thinking. That's a crazy thing to think. How does a book know what you're thinking? But the Bible knows what you're thinking. Not only does the Bible know what you're thinking, the Bible knows what your intentions are, what the intents of your heart. It's an alive book. It's a book that our children need to understand. They need to understand that the Bible knows what they're thinking, and the Bible knows everything about them. That the Bible is able, it says here. The Bible is able. It has the power to teach a person. It has the power to teach a person. It teaches them the need of rescuing from their sin and failure. I'd just like to say to all of you quickly, you know, don't teach your kids that all good little Christian boys and girls sit still and put their hands in their lap. They're not good little boys and girls. They're sinners in need of a Savior. It's hard to admit that. We want to say, my little boy is a good boy. I've met people who said they've been saved all their life from the time they were born, but that's never true. Say amen. The Bible teaches me that I need rescue, and the Bible also teaches me the sufficiency of Christ as our Savior. He is the one who saves, and he is all I need. The Bible is able. It has the strength, the changing strength, because it's alive and it's able, but it's available to me. In Romans chapter 5 and verse 8, he saved us while we were yet sinners. He died for us. It is him dying on a cross for us to be saved. And salvation's available right now. Thank God. It won't be long till they'll die. Won't be long till Jesus may come back, but they can know for sure they'll go to heaven when they die if we'll share the gospel with them.

I want you to go with me to 2 Timothy 3.15 and look at this phrase, wise unto salvation. Wise unto salvation. Look at the verse, that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. The Bible, the Scripture will carry your children to the needed steps. It'll show them what they need to do. As we instruct our children, as we set them down and have family devotions, which I pray that you're doing, as we set down and have to have them in Sunday school and let a teacher take the Bible and say again, and the beautiful thing is you're at home. The parents are saying, boy, Jesus loves you, but you sinned against the Holy God. They come to church and the Sunday school teacher says, boy, you know what? You sinned against the Holy God, but Jesus loves you. And then they go to children's church and hear that same thing. And then they go to one and they hear that same thing.

Sooner or later, they are getting the instruction. And now we pray that they'll be inclined to accept it. Well, I have to pray for that. Just because you're born to a preacher's home doesn't mean you're going to go to heaven when you die. Just because you're born in a preacher's home doesn't even mean you'll get saved. You've all known people that were born into those homes that weren't, and it's going to end up being an individual decision. I can't make my children get saved.

I can't make them be saved. I can't make them go to heaven when they die. No telling you. I know that you, because of this kind of church and the kind of people you are, you don't ever think like this. But in Peru, I was often asked by parents, they'd come to me and they'd say, we need you to save our kids. And I'd say, I can't save your kids. They said, would you baptize them? I said, I can't baptize them. They can't be baptized if you haven't trusted Christ as their savior.

[16 : 01] They said, but we want to get them ready to do that. And I said, well, then let's have Bible study at home. Let's not miss Sunday school. Let's not miss all the other things that are going on. Let's get them to where they can hear the gospel. Then go with me, if you would, to 2 Timothy 3, verse 15, and underline this. Faith, which is in Christ Jesus. Make thee wise unto salvation through faith. Christ will be their security. I say that because I've been pastoring and I've been preaching over 50 years and I've been pastoring 47 and a half years. I run the ministry full time as a youth pastor, assistant pastor, pastor. And I'll tell you this, parents go bad.

After they took them to church, that's what they did everything. Then one day they just wake up and decide to commit adultery and walk out on God. And I don't need my children's security to be wrapped up in their parents. I need to be wrapped up in Jesus. Their parents can die, but Jesus won't.

Their parents could fail, but Jesus won't. I don't want their security to be wrapped up in the church because churches fail and pastors fail, but Jesus doesn't fail. And the verse says here, to make thee wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. You know who they're going to be taught to believe? Jesus. Salvation is only found in Jesus. There aren't other ways to get to heaven.

Sometimes, yesterday I spent quite a bit of time just meditating on this thought here. So many of, you know, everybody's like, well, we're all the same. We all believe the same, but unless they believe Jesus died for them, people don't believe the same. Unless they believe that salvation is purely by what Jesus did on the cross, they don't believe the same. I want to teach them the same.

I want to teach them about Jesus. Salvation is found only in Jesus and salvation is furnished, provided by Jesus Christ. It's him. Teach your children that. Please don't be good parents and act like you're good parents. And that reason means your children ought to do something.

[18 : 12] Help them know you too needed Jesus. Help them know that you had to have him. Help them know that you would be on your way to hell if it weren't for what Jesus did. Help them know that salvation's free, though it came at great cost to Christ. You know, salvation may be free to us, but it's certainly not cheap. Jesus paid an enormous price when he went to the cross of Calvary. The father paid an enormous price. I've often thought when I think about Jesus down on the cross, I think about me as a dad.

And I think about watching one of my children suffer. I can't handle it. I can't handle it. I'm sure all the other dads in this room would feel the same thing. We can't handle it. I can't stand to watch them. When Betty and I, when Betty and I were having, she was having our first baby.

We didn't have it together. I just was there for the show, but I was in the other room. They wouldn't let you in the same room where the baby's been born and they doped Betty up and she's passed out, but she's in another room and she's screaming and calling my name. And I'm trying to get out of the room. And my buddy said, stop, you can't go in there. I'm going to go in there and whoop some doctors or something, you know, probably not a weight 145 pounds. Anyway, I probably wasn't going to, but I wanted to, you know, salvation cost our father. He sent his son. Salvation cost the Holy Spirit. He tracked you down in your sin stained world and your sin cursed world. He came to find you. And the only real freedom they'll ever enjoy will be what they find in security in Christ.

The only real security we have, I have no idea what's going to happen in the government. I have no idea what's going to happen in the economy. I have no idea what's going to happen between all these countries that are mad at each other right now. But you see, mine is found in Christ Jesus.

And I'll tell you what, he ain't going to fail me. He hadn't failed anybody yet. Never has failed anybody. Never will fail anybody. I want my children to know it. So I close with this. You have the awesome privilege of being a parent or a grandparent. Let's teach them about Jesus.

[20 : 11] Please don't believe that when you bring them here to church and you take them in that little room with those Awana workers, or you take them in a Sunday school class or a children's church, we're not teaching them to be good, moral little kids. We don't want to be good, moral little kids.

We want to be sinners saved by the grace of God. We want them to come to know Jesus. That has to be our goal. That has to be our heart. It has to be what we're doing. It has to be what we're praying for. I thank you for working with the Awana people. I thank all the workers in Awana. I thank all the parents who are bringing their kids. I thank all you kids who are learning about Jesus. And I challenge every one of you children to make your decision now. Father in heaven, I love you. And I thank you for the opportunity. I had to share your word. And I pray to your God that you would touch hearts and draw people to you and save those that aren't saved and encourage parents and encourage teachers. God, do a work and I'll give you praise.