

Don't Be Afraid: Bible Reasons for Courage

D Group study based on 2 Timothy 1:7
Suggested as a two week study (Part 1 and Part 2)
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Part 1

Read 2 Timothy 1:1-10 together.

- 2 Timothy was written by Paul from prison in Rome. Prison is not exactly the most comfortable place to be. ☺ This was the time in history when the Emperor Nero was persecuting Christians; Paul knew he would probably be put to death soon. He is writing to his son in the faith, Timothy, a man he loved dearly (1:3-4).

Read 2 Timothy 1:7 together again.

- Is Paul pointing Timothy to himself as the reason not to be fearful? Does he say, "Self-confidence is the key to courage?" Who does Paul point to as the source for courage?

Discuss this statement:

"Paul doesn't point Timothy toward Timothy. He points Timothy toward God. Think about the great resource God has given you. He's given you the Spirit. You should be courageous, not because of who you are and what you've done, but because of who God is and what He has done!"¹

- How does recognizing that self-confidence is not the answer to fearfulness give you hope?
- How does recognizing that self-confidence is not the answer to fearfulness humble you?
- Instead of giving the believer of a spirit of fear, God has given the believer what kind of spirit?
- Does Timothy have a different personality than Paul? Is he older or younger?
 - Yes, though we can't just assume Timothy was timid because of this verse, several things Paul says to Timothy suggest that he did not have a strong personality like Paul. We know that he struggled a lot with sickness (1 Tim. 5:23). We know he was a younger man (1 Tim. 4:12).
 - Paul is asserting that every believer, regardless of personality, can have a spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind!

A Spirit of Power

- Read Romans 8:11 and Ephesians 1:18-19. How powerful is the Spirit of God within you? What did God's Spirit use His power to do in these passages?
 - Hint: What did the Spirit do to Jesus Christ after He died?
- Think about Moses in the Bible. Was he naturally a courageous person? Why or why not? (See Exodus 3-4 if needed.) How did God use Moses? Whose power was made evident in Moses' life?

Making Application

- Why can you and I be confident that God's power is available to us? How does one know if the Holy Spirit is within them?
- What is one area God wants you personally to have faith in His power to help you?

Time to pray: Confess to God your sinful fears or self-confidence apart from Him. Praise Him for this wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit and for the power that we have because we are in Christ!

¹ Mack, Wayne. "Courage: Fighting Fear with Fear"

Part 2

A Spirit of Love

- What is the opposite of sinful fear?
 - In many ways, the opposite of fear is actually love.
 - Read 1 John 4:18.
 - Sinful fear focuses on who? Love focuses on who?
 - Discuss this quotation from Jay Adams:
“Love is self-giving. Fear is self-protecting.
Love moves toward others; fear shrinks away from them.”
- What is the love of God like?
 - Read Romans 8:38-39.
- How does this love affect us?
 - Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 1 John 4:8.
 - We can love fearlessly because we have been loved unconditionally.

A Spirit of a Sound Mind

- How does the ESV translate the word “sound mind”? How about the NASB? The NIV?
- Fear produces thoughts of confusion, irrationality, and indecision.
 - What is an example of someone’s fear causing them to behave irrationally?
 - How have your fears influenced you in ways that you know are not living in reality?
- Read 2 Corinthians 10:5 and Philippians 4:8.
 - How do these verses work together with having the spirit of a sound mind?
 - According to 2 Corinthians 10:5, which kind of knowledge helps us to cast down imaginations?
- Self-control applied to your mind is choosing to control your thinking instead of letting it run crazy. But you don’t create self-control in your own power. You depend on God and His Spirit for the ability to control your thinking and responses!
 - Read Ephesians 4:22-24. “Put off” and “put on” are actions that we do. But the phrase “be renewed in the Spirit of your mind” is in the passive voice. In other words, it is something done to us. Who renews our mind? What does He use to do so?

Making Application

- Why can we say that the opposite of a fearful spirit is a loving spirit?
- What is most beautiful to you about the love of God?
- How can you demonstrate love to someone in your life this week instead of being focused on self?
- Have each person write out 2 Corinthians 10:5 on a sticky note or 3x5 card and put it on their computer screen or on the mirror, somewhere that they will see it and review its truth each day.

Time to Pray: Thank God that He is love. Ask Him to help you be in His Word each day so that He can use it to renew your mind and give you the will to control your thinking.