

Prayer List

Cyndie, Nichole & Lauren
Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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This Week's Question:

According to Psalms, what sort of people are like chaff that the wind blows away?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Absalom - 2 Samuel 18:9-10

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Courage (2 Timothy 1:7)

By John Hagenbuch

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me as a prisoner, but share with the sufferings of the gospel, according to the power of God." - II Timothy 1:7

What kind of disposition needs to be developed in order to tell other people what they need to hear about the Lord and His will? What gives us the willingness and the desire to want to speak out to others about spiritual truths? When Paul wrote to Timothy, he wrote about the kind of spirit that God gives to His children, and it is the kind of spirit that we need to have if we are going to be effective in our fervency of evangelistic efforts.

Some may wonder what the word "spirit" refers to in the above passage. This has been an issue of differences among many scholars and linguists. There are many scholars who believe that Paul is talking about the Holy Spirit. They say that when he talks about how it is that God has given us a spirit, "not a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind," that these are descriptions of the Holy Spirit, and how the Holy Spirit then works in our lives. And I'm not going to

suggest, by any means, that the Holy Spirit does not work in the sense of enabling us with power, and with love, and with a sound mind, but I don't believe that that is what Paul is directly talking about here. There are several definitions that Greek scholars give to this word "pneuma" (spirit). Thayer gives five alternate definitions, and it seems to me that the definition that fits the context of our text is his fourth definition: "The disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one; the efficient source of any power, affection, emotion, desire, etc..." That is what I believe Paul is talking about when he talks about the spirit that God gives us; it is a type of attitude that we develop.

The first thing that He has said here in this verse is that He has not given us a spirit of fear. So, from the very start of this idea, the spirit that God gives to us begins in a negative sense. And Paul tells us that it is not of fear.

Now, there are many times in the English bible where the word "fear" is used. Like for instance, when it talks about "fearing God." (see: Acts 10:35; II Corinthians 7:1) That is fear in a good sense! But that's not the Greek word that is used in our text. This word "deilia" is never used in a positive sense; it is always used in a bad sense, and according to A.T. Robertson, it is always used in the sense of "cowardice." In fact, if you look at the New American Standard Bible, what you will see is that the word is actually translated by the word "timidity." The opposite of "timidity" is courage! And so, I would suggest to you that the idea that Paul is presenting here is that God gives us a spirit of courage! He has NOT given us a spirit of cowardice! He has NOT given us a spirit of fear!

Think about that for a moment: Being a Christian takes courage! And the reason why is because being a Christian is not an easy task. We live in a world that is totally foreign to the ways of Christ - a world that doesn't care at all about God.

This is why we are told, for instance, not to love this world. (I John 2:15-17)

Being a Christian takes courage; it is a coward who can live in the ways of the world, because you don't have to do anything but live as the world wants you to, but to be a Christian takes an enormous amount of courage.

There are sacrifices that may have to be made. Jesus said, "Assuredly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time - houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions - and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30). You may have to give up some precious relationships, and it's not always easy to do so. You may, in fact, have to give up your life: when Jesus was sending the disciples out on what has been referred to as the "limited commission," He gave them warning when He said, "Do not fear those who can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him, (fear God) who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). We might even be killed for what we believe.

What this illustrates to us is that it takes a great amount of courage to become a child of God and to walk as a child of God. It seems to me that if it took the courage to become a Christian in the first place then one should also have a spirit of courage in walking as a Christian. We should especially have courage in taking advantages of the opportunities to tell other people about the great spiritual blessings that we have received as a result of being a Christian. We can have this courage because of the fact that this is what God gives us. From Expository Files 11.11; November, 2004