

Cross-Generational Missions

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2 Tim 1:5

(NA 28th ed.)

(YLT)

ὑπόμνησιν λαβὼν

taking remembrance

τῆς ἐν σοὶ ἀνυποκρίτου πίστεως,

of the **unfeigned** faith that is in thee,

ἣτις ἐνόκησεν πρῶτον ἐν τῇ μάμμη σου Λωΐδι

that dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois,

καὶ τῇ μητρὶ σου Εὐνίκη,

and thy mother Eunice,

πέπεισμαι δὲ ὅτι καὶ ἐν σοί.

and I am persuaded that also in thee.

Young clearly shows that the first line is a participle with a noun. Look at line 2, “unfeigned.” The Greek has the *α-* privative, and then *hypokritos*, in other words, “hypocrite.” Timothy had an un-hypocritical faith. This faith is said to “dwell” (*en+oikos* = “in house”, but as a verb).

One interesting example of inner-New Testament variety is within the writings of Paul. On the one hand, the Christian faith is conceived of as a fresh and new movement. On the other hand, the Christian faith is conceived of as a tradition to be passed down from generation to generation—an “entrusted deposit” (a term found only in 1 and 2 Timothy).

We can clearly see the first-generation church in all of its liveliness and excitement in 1 Corinthians. The gospel is vital and full of energy, and yet the people are wild and untrained. Discussion of supernatural gifts constitutes a major part of the book. But in the pastorals (1 – 2 Timothy and Titus), this seems to have settled down, and in our verse, the gospel was already in its third generation. Actually fourth, since Timothy was a pastor and probably had his own children.

I believe that over time, churches look less and less like the immature Corinthian church—as legit and authentic as it was—and more and more like the normative church of 2 Timothy. Thus we should major on the preaching of the word, ordaining elders, discipline, taking care of our poor, and worship. And part of that is seen in cross-generational ministry.

It is particularly an “un-hypocritical” faith that Paul commends in Timothy. I am sure that you don’t need me to point out the importance of this in raising your kids in the Lord. I remember a session meeting at my church when this very thing was being discussed. One elder pointed out how there was evidence that some covenant children were departing the faith. The pastor, in a moment of emotion, slammed his hand on the table and exclaimed, “Then we are failing our kids!”

It is interesting to me that the Bible doesn’t say a whole lot about issues that we want guidance about. It says very little about how to pick a career, how to choose a spouse, where to go to school, how to buy a house, and so on. It is as if the Holy Spirit is saying that we already have been given sufficient wisdom for those kinds of decisions.

Along with that, there are not a whole lot of detailed instructions about child-rearing in the Bible. “Train up your children in the way they should go”—doesn’t tell us much about *how*. “Don’t spare the rod” doesn’t tell explain what sort of “rod” to actually use. I wrote a longish article on what Proverbs does tell us about child rearing; get it [here](#). (Or [email](#) me for it!) See also Deut 4:9 – 10. Paul says not to provoke them to discouragement or anger (Col 3:21, Eph 6:4). We are obligated to save up for them (2 Cor 14:12). And so on.

But by far, the biblical witness emphasizes instruction. How you do this is apparently up to you—provided that you live it out before them. “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 19:14).

Live out what you believe consistently before them, and make sure they keep hearing the gospel, and use the wisdom God has given you. That was what Lois and Eunice did—living long before proliferation of books on parenting—and Timothy turned out okay.

One more thing. Pray for them!