

**Columbia, Missouri**  
**The Worship of God • June 27, 2021**



**The Scripture**  
**2 Timothy 1:1-14**

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.*

*For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.*

**The Message**  
**“11 Indispensable Relationships: You Need a Protégé”**  
**Mark Briley**

Do you remember where you were? Maybe it was more than one specific place or one specific moment, but there was that time when you were sitting on the curb of your life... looking down the road of your past and your future... where you've been, where you're going, and you wondered some version of three big questions: “*Who am I?*” “*Where do I fit?*” and “*What difference do I make?*” These can be gut-wrenching questions *whenever* you face them.

The first time I really asked those questions with a great sense of urgency was the summer after my high school graduation. I wanted to grow up fast for whatever reason and I had some of that internal panic that I didn't know who I was, where I fit or what my purpose was supposed to be. I had ended a near two-year relationship with my high-school girlfriend (*which, looking back, had been a significant part of my identity*). I knew I was ready to move away from home but not sure where to move as I wasn't heading into a dorm-life situation (*unsure of where I fit exactly*). And... my main thought at the time was to head into broadcast journalism or forensic psychology (*was that my purpose?*).

All the questions. Call it a crossroads or an identity quest or if you have them a couple decades into adulthood, we sometimes call them mid-life crises. Even late in life, you might ask these questions as part of the great life review. Have you been there? The pandemic forced these big life questions on many of us, on many relationships, even on organizations (*Who am I? Where do I belong? What's my purpose?*). Whew! And it's been hard... I'm not afraid to admit that it was probably the hardest year of my life so far. I am grateful to have stayed afloat (*new meaning after this weekend's flooding*) and to keep driving forward... and also giving thanks that for four decades, I haven't encountered significant crises to surpass the challenges this last year presented. I know that is not true for many who have navigated great heartbreak and strife well before the pandemic came into play. And it's not that I haven't but there is no pressure like the current one. The truth is... we're asking these hard questions all the time.

Statistically, young people do this wrestling at a higher rate. We all need support and guidance but those emerging adult years (*late teens through your twenties*) ... the years that hold the greatest absence from regular church life are perhaps when that support is needed the most... those years when we make some of the most formative decisions of our lives – about identity and belonging and purpose – and yet a time when a faith-filled presence is statistically most likely to be missing.

Some are quick to say – “*It’s on the young people for leaving the church*” and others will say, “*The church is too far detached from the real-life pressing questions of emerging adulthood to be of any real value to those in their twenties.*” It’s why today’s *witness* in our “*Eleven Indispensable Relationships you can’t be Without*”<sup>1</sup> series is a protégé. You need someone to nurture. Someone to invest in – not to dictate their life but to come alongside and be a sounding board. Dr. Kara Powell of the Fuller Youth Institute, in her book, *Growing With*,<sup>2</sup> gives us another term to add to our *witness*. She calls it “*withing*” ... a verb of coming alongside. You see things from your current vantage point that you don’t see from theirs (*and maybe could not when you were at that stage of life*). *Withing* is not a “*doing for*” but the fostering of a mutual relationship of learning, wisdom sharing and encouragement to seek gains on the three big questions we’ve named already today.

Powell’s work shares that, “*Healthy churches reach young people, and young people make churches healthier.*” She quotes author and pastor John Ortberg who adds, “*You can’t build a great church with a bad student ministry, and you can’t build a great student ministry with a languishing church.*” “*Every church needs young people,*” Powell continues. “*Their passion enriches the soil around them. The curiosity they bring to Scripture and the authenticity they bring to relationships keep your churches teaching fresh and fellowship fruitful. Young people also need a thriving church. A thriving church both grounds them in community and sends them out to serve. Your church needs young people, and they need your church. One without the other is incomplete.*” (Growing Young (pg. 14).

And get this... while 500 teens surveyed expressed that they often experience “*great amounts of stress*”, 80% also answered that being an active part of their church reduced their levels of stress. People can download the best Tik-Tok-style sermons in seconds and hear the best preaching in the world instantaneously – can you imagine how our great-grandparents would marvel at our world today? What they can’t immediately download is a vibrant community. And the question is, “*Can we learn from each other and cultivate such a space where, as Pentecost came to teach us, “the old will dream dreams and the young will have visions”?*” Together, the young and old, the guide and protégé, the dreamers and visionaries... can help each other answer the three big questions of identity, belonging, and purpose.

The Apostle Paul knew his ministry was only as fruitful as it was shared with those coming behind him. He was charting new territory. Who could understand and share the Gospel in and through the lens of their time and place to come? Enter Timothy...

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<sup>1</sup> This series is inspired and based in Leonard’s Sweet book “11” as named in this reference. David C. Cook Publishing. 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Growing with: Every Parent’s Guide to Helping Teenagers and Young Adults Thrive in Their Faith, Family, and Future by Dr. Kara Powell and Steven Argue. Baker Books. 2019. Statistics and research cited in this message come from this resource.

Paul's protégé witness. Protégé is not just a fun word to say, though it is. It's grounded in both English and French origins describing a person who is guided and supported with the influence of one who has more experience. Timothy is a rising voice in the community. Paul takes Tim under wing to share from his own rocky experience in trying to embody the Gospel in the world. Historically, Timothy was son of a solo-parent, probably sixteen when Paul first called him, "*My son*" ... a term he used to demonstrate how much he meant to him. Timothy had a faithful mom and grandma like nobody's business. Paul names them: Lois and Eunice.

I would love to know their stories. I know their heart. How many of us were shaped by the incredible faith of our mothers and grandmothers? Paul would serve a different role of course. You have likely come across someone in your life where you ultimately said to them (*or at least thought in your head*), "*You remind me of me when I was your age.*" It *can* be a huge encouraging compliment. I remember one of my first mentors in ministry saying, "*You remind me of me when I was your age only, you're a much better listener than I was.*" I don't know if that was a fair statement, but I was humbled and more open than ever to soak in his wisdom.

When you see yourself in another with great potential to grow beyond the reach you were able to make, it usually comes with a great desire to help them... *maybe* helping them propel forward more quickly because of your experience. This feeling is different than an Uncle Rico on the sidelines of the football field who is trying to re-live his high school glory through his nephew. You've seen the guy... he's yelling and pushing so hard and yelling at the referees and his kid is only five years old. Every time I get out there in the stands to watch my own kids play ball, you see Uncle Rico somewhere alongside you in the stands. We're not talking that kind of *witness*.

Think differently here. You're not looking for someone to be *you*. You've simply spotted the characteristics in one who has the potential to sing their own song well and you simply long to be a sounding board as they face those three big life questions of identity, belonging, and purpose. Now... sometimes it might be someone who ultimately steps into roles you have filled yourself. Paul saw this in Timothy and credentialed him in this way to the churches he started. Of the 13 letters attributed to Paul that show up in the New Testament, five of them include a shout-out to Timothy in the first verse. Paul is building up Timothy to the community. He's a budding leader and Paul wants Timothy not only to be respected but also challenge to rise to the occasion.

This is a good reason Broadway has often made specific inclusive leadership positions for youth and young adults in the biggest moments of our church's life. We need more spaces for these voices to emerge and shape who we are.

I remember one of my mentors, 77 years old, wise, and experienced beyond any measure, saying at one point when we were looking for a new leader for a particular role: “*Go younger,*” he said. And I was surprised at the moment. I was thinking more seasoned, and he reminded me, “*Someone trusted you before you were seasoned, right?*” ... gave me a chance before I was probably ready. It’s always in context of balance, of course, but it was his sense that with the right support around, the upside of growing up leaders and trusting their influence was essential to the overall health of the community or organization.

There’s intentional work in this... sometimes over long periods of time. Sometimes, however, you can be an encouraging word to a protégé in the right moments of time. Eileen Perry, one of our beloved founding members, grabbed my hands this week as she prepared to be discharged from the hospital, and with the biggest grin on her face, she looks me in the eye and says, “*I’m so proud of you. I’m so proud of Broadway.*” It was only a few words, but it was a blessing of love from a Broadway saint to a protégé of the Broadway spirit that gave encouragement to press on.

Do you know the value of your encouragement to those generations behind you who are trying to navigate the way of life forward? More than you know, I promise. And when encouraged in that way, hearts open to hear the stories... to feed off the energy of what helped the movement thrive early on without a mentor having to say, “*You’ve got to do it like we did.*” You can hear it in their voice – it’s about the same spirit, not doing it all the same. They have a heart for heirs of the faith... of the soul... not heirs of possessions, style, or process... heirs of the spirit.

We see this in Paul as he credentials Timothy to these churches as a leader to be followed and respected. Paul places his own integrity next to Timothy. And in so doing, protégés rise up. They are motivated to work together to see the common passion and purpose flourish forward to another generation. This flourishing, of course, requires your faithful investment over time. Having a protégé isn’t a given and you can’t just pick and dictate who fits such a bill. You earn such openness through your own faithful living.

One of MU’s football coaches on Coach Drinkwitz’s staff is a buddy and we were talking this week about all the NCAA changes with the transfer portal and the like and then we got to talking about their current workouts with the players right now. As we talked further, I asked him what he loved most about what he does. “*The most rewarding thing,*” he said, “*doesn’t come in year one... and often not year two. It’s a few years in, when you’ve sweat alongside each other, when you’ve showed up again and again in their life; when you don’t impose but are always available and then when that moment comes?... they come to you, open, ready, and trusting you with the deeper things happening in their lives.*” It’s all the prep work and dedication over time

that put him in a position to be the *witness* to his players when they faced one or more of life's three big questions: "Who am I?" "Where do I belong?" "What is my purpose?"

The strength in this *witness* requires the faithful openness of both people. And often... as Leonard Sweet points out, "Every great leader and teacher has been a Timothy themselves. Jesus was protégé to John the Baptist, Paul about five years younger than Jesus, was protégé to Gamaliel who was one of the most influential rabbis alive during Jesus' time, Elisha was protégé of Elijah, Joshua protégé to Moses."

But... Joshua did not pass on the baton. Joshua had no soul-heirs, no protégé, so when his reign ended... what surfaced was the reign of the Judges... some of the most horrible times recorded in the Hebrew Bible which we read from last week. Scripture says the judges came because the baton-less generation "did not know the Lord or the work that the Lord had done for Israel." Joshua prepared no protégé. We begin to see the implications for not taking the time to live the faith and pass the faith in a way that empowers another generation... which begs the question.

Who is ready to run with you? Run with faith to do bold things for God? Paul says in this passage to Timothy, "You are constantly in my prayers day and night." Who is constantly in your prayers? Do they know you are praying for them? Paul goes on to say, "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline." There must be a sense of commitment and boldness in this relationship. A mentor/protégé relationship is a mutual commitment to do big things, faith-filled things... and it will not come easy. The challenging part for some comes in the spirit of control. Even if you have one who respects you and listens to you and is teachable... it is unhealthy to try to control the ideas and actions of your protégé. It's not a true *witnessing* if you are trying to manipulate their direction. Trying to create a clone is not the point. Sometimes we'll say, "He's my mini-me" or "She's my mini-me" but the best of this protégé relationship is to see the same Spirit flourish even if the way it gets done is a wholly new and beautiful way.

A genuine mentor desires to see their protégé break the mold... not just be *better* but embrace the flourishing in whatever way that same heart and work ethic and faith breaks the mold in new and extraordinary ways in today's world. This is what the tech giant, Apple, envisioned with their ad campaign that simply said, "Think Different." It calls for imagination, some level of risk, a boldness of faith, and the encouragement of a mentor cheering on his or her protégé in the flourishing. In other words, "It's sitting on the curb of a young person's life, celebrating their dreams, and grieving over their despair..." living faithfully yourself... being in good spirit-health so when that pivotal moment comes, when the big three questions arise, you've been a trusted presence and therefore a trusted source of guidance.

Those same 500 high-school seniors that I named earlier were asked what they wished they had more of in youth group. Of the 13 options provided, the students top answer was “*time for deep conversation.*” Your patient spirit creates an open spirit in a would-be-protégé. And for the flourishing to occur, it will be your release into God’s hands the end result of your presence and counsel. Paul tells Timothy to do more and reach to new heights that Paul would not ever know himself. Run the race. That’s what can be exciting about our faith and all the more the reason to pass on your faith. To say to your protégé, here is truth about God... here’s how God has shaped my life... here’s how I lived it to the best of my ability. You run now with this truth in ways I can’t even imagine possible. I will love you. I will cheer you on. I will constantly hold you in my prayers. Imagine. Dream. And Go for it!

There was an emerging adult struggling through some early version of the big three questions about identity, belonging and purpose. He loved music but didn’t show much promise. He only received a C in music in the eighth grade and failed music in high school. His music teacher told him he had no aptitude for singing. While most classmates rejected him, a neighbor boy a few years older named Jesse Lee Densen took him under his wing... taught him what he knew about music but encouraged him to let his own voice and style come out of his soul. “*In August of 1953, this struggling kid now driving a truck for a living, arrived at a Memphis studio and announced he wanted to start a singing career. “What do you sound like?” asked the secretary. “I don’t sound like nobody,” answered Elvis Presley.*” (*Sweet; “11”*). Elvis was protégé to a neighbor willing to spend time with him and encourage him to find his own voice which ultimately shaped the way we came to know Rock ‘n’ Roll.

Who is your Timothy? ...A protégé that you are teaching and nurturing yet also setting free to do wonderful things in a different way? Someone in your life is asking those big three questions right now... and... maybe it’s you. And maybe it’s our community. Can you come alongside? Can we be a *withing* church? There’s never been a more critical need. My prayer is that we discover that living the *withing* life may also be the greatest blessing we have yet to know.

### **Song of Response**

#### **“Know You Are God’s Child”**

**Words by Ed Varnum**

**Music: “Morning Has Broken” (BUNESSAN), Gaelic melody**

1. Know you are God’s child, filled with God’s Spirit,  
unique and gifted, precious and loved.  
Praise God! You’re chosen to be a blessing  
and serve, empowered by God above.

2. So, I remind you, rekindle in God's grace  
gifts of the Spirit who in you lives.  
I'll walk beside you, with you develop  
gifts that you nurture, service you give.

**BROAD HEARTS | BROAD MINDS | BROAD REACH**