

The Spirit of Intimidation

For this reason I remind you to fan to flame the gift of God which is in you...For God did not give us the spirit of timidity, but the spirit of power, love and self discipline

II Timothy 1:6a & 7.

I have not really thought of the gifts of God within us as fires needing to be fanned into flame. But that is how Paul sees them. He encourages his spiritual son, Timothy, to make sure that his gifts stay fiery through constant use. If the gift of God in us is just an ember it cannot be effective. Think about the upcoming hayride. We will all be standing around a bonfire on a cool October night. What's more effective to you, a blazing fire or smoldering coals? Likewise, the Lord is looking for those gifts that he placed in you to get fired up and cause people to draw around the warm loving embrace of God rather than the dark, cold burnt out embers of worldliness.

What is it that causes a gifted person like you to lose their spiritual fervor? I see that the second verse above points to the culprit, "God did not give us a spirit of timidity." Being timid is being ashamed or fearful of using your gift. Timidity comes from intimidation, those nasty feelings of inadequacy or the lack of confidence that creeps in when someone challenges your faith in Jesus Christ. Intimidation is a compound word in the Greek New Testament. It comes from putting the words faithless and dread together. Faithless dread, anyone hear panic? When your faith is shaken, fear begins to grip your heart. Since God did not give us this spirit it could only come from one other source. Why mention his name? You know who I mean. Think about it. Adam and Eve knew no fear before the fall. After the crafty serpent led them to disobey God's only command, they found themselves naked and ashamed and hid in fear from God. So timidity, faithless dread, is a result of the fall and your enemy knows how to play on your fears, intimidate you, to cool your zeal in serving the Lord.

One person said, to be intimidated is to be over-awed by something. Here's an over-awed statement, "The land we explored DEVOURS those living in it. ALL the people are GIANTS. We seemed like GRASSHOPPERS in our own eyes and in theirs." I put those words in caps for emphasis. They are over-awed words.

Last week I was helping serve at the Mall Ministry. As I was sitting there praying and waiting for some folks to pass by so that I could engage them in conversation, the Lord spoke to me and said, "Don't look at the mountain, look to me." The truth is, there really are scary things that happen in our lives. Dread and fear build the more we focus on them. God did not tell me to ignore the mountain or to forget about it, he simply exhorted me to refocus. It is a better way of seeing the mountain. A God-view is much better than what my fallen nature has a tendency to see. My fallen nature is susceptible to the attacks of the enemy. But my new nature sees a God worthy of all of my awe. When an awesome God fills our eyes of faith, fear has no foothold. We'll talk more about this, but for now read Hebrews 12:18-29 and get a new picture of your God!