

Surrounded by Faithful Christians

by Bryan Gibson

Timothy was a strong Christian, and here is the evidence: “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord...” (1 Timothy 4:17). Now if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do” (1 Corinthians 16:10). “But I trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to send Timothy to you shortly...for I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state” (Philippians 2:19-20).

To whom should we give credit for the kind of man Timothy became? First and foremost, the praise should go to God, something which Paul acknowledged in 2 Timothy 1:3-5. But how about the people God used to help Timothy? Let’s start with his upbringing. Timothy’s father was not a Christian (Acts 16:1), but his mother and grandmother were, and they made sure he knew the Scriptures from childhood (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15). There were also the good brethren from the area in which he grew up (Acts 16:2). And look at the good influences he had on those preaching journeys, men like Paul and Silas and Luke, not to mention the countless brethren he came in contact with on those same journeys. Throughout his life, Timothy was surrounded by faithful Christians, and together they helped him become the kind of man he was. Could he have been faithful without them? Sure he could, but who thinks that he would like to have started over without them?

I’m not yet the man Timothy was, but I can certainly relate to what it means to be surrounded by faithful Christians. Both my parents were faithful Christians, and they raised me accordingly. I grew up in a church where obedience to the Lord was more than just talk; it was exemplified. I was surrounded by “brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers” (Mark 10:28-30)—faithful Christians who took a personal interest in my spiritual welfare. I received the sound, Scriptural teaching I needed, both by word and by example. I was encouraged, warned, comforted, corrected—all the things necessary to help someone be faithful to the Lord. And what’s more—I’ve had this same blessing all my life, and it continues till today. I’ve been laboring with the brethren of the Prattmont Church of Christ for 32 years, and it’s quite possible that I’ve received more good from them than they’ve received from me. Where would I be today without all these good influences in my life? It’s hard to say, and quite frankly, it scares me to even think about it. I’ve known some good brethren who have been faithful to the Lord without the many good influences I’ve had, and I thank God for them. That being the case, I still feel compelled to offer this prayer: “Thank you, God, for surrounding me with faithful Christians from the first day until now, and help me to take full advantage of this wonderful blessing.”

“For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Luke 12:48).