

BEING A MOTHER—OR GRANDMOTHER—OF UNFEIGNED FAITH

INTRODUCTION: A fairly common saying is: “Behind every **great man**, there is a **great woman!**” And the “great woman” in many cases is the man’s **mother**—not his wife! Why the man’s **mother**? One man put it like this: “A mother’s love and training do more to **mold character for life** than ten wives. By the time a man marries, **most of his character** is already formed.”

True, isn’t it? That doesn’t mean a man cannot go through a **radical transformation** after he reaches adulthood because **the apostle Paul** certainly did! And it doesn’t mean that behind **every bad** son or daughter there’s a **bad** mother! And it certainly doesn’t mean that we can **use the way we were raised as an excuse** for the way we are now! But...we cannot ignore the fact that **a mother has an incredible amount** of influence on their children—and that the Bible has a lot to say about **mothers!** In fact, we know more about the **mothers** of some of the **heroes of the faith**—like Moses and Samuel—than we do about **their wives!**

And the same is true of **Timothy** in the New Testament! In fact, we don’t even know if Timothy **was married**—but we do know the names of both his **mother and grandmother!**

--[Ask] Anyone **know their names?**

Lois and Eunice

--[Ask] Anyone know **where in the Bible** their names are found?

II Timothy 1.

Let’s turn there; please follow along as I read verses 1-5. In vs 5 we see their names—but more importantly we also see **what** they “passed down” to Timothy. **What was in** Timothy’s grandmother—and **in his mother**—that was also **in Timothy? Unfeigned faith!** And you already know from the title of the message that that is what we are going to be talking about this morning.

But this message isn’t just to challenge **grandmothers and mothers** to have unfeigned faith—it is **for all of us!** **Every one of us** should be a person of unfeigned faith. But what **does it mean** to have unfeigned faith—and how do we **go about having** that kind of faith? That is some of what we will be looking at this morning.

1. What is unfeigned faith

A. The meaning of unfeigned

Although “unfeigned”—and “feigned”—are not words we use often, we are at least somewhat familiar with what they mean. Many of us know that if someone “feigns” **an injury**, they are **pretending** to be injured when they really aren’t. So if “feign” means **pretend**; “unfeigned” means **not pretending**, right?

The English word “unfeigned” is used only 4 times in the KJ version of the NT—three times by Paul; once by Peter. Of the four times it is used, I found it interesting to learn that **twice** it is used in connection **with faith**—here and in I Timothy 1:5—and twice it is used **with love** (II Cor 6:6; I Peter 1:22). **The Greek word** it is translated from appears **six** times in the NT: the **four** I just gave you—plus Romans 12:9 (connected with love) and James 3:17 (connected with wisdom).

According to **HELPS Word-studies** (in Biblehub), **unfeigned** means: “not a phony...describing sincere behavior free from hidden agendas and selfish motives – literally, ‘without hypocrisy...”

In other words, it is genuine, sincere, and “the real deal.” It is not living **behind a mask**; it is not **pretending to be something** we are not—like the Pharisees so often did!

A **one-word** definition would simply be **“unhypocritical.”** So Paul says to Timothy in vs 5, that Timothy...and his grandmother...and his mother all had an **unhypocritical faith**—a faith without hypocrisy.

Next, let’s consider... B. The meaning of faith

What did Paul mean when he wrote that Timothy...and Lois...and Eunice all possessed **a faith** that was **without hypocrisy**? First, **1) It was a “living” faith—not just a “saving” faith.** What is **living** faith? Faith that comes out in how **we live**—what we **do**...and **say**...and where **we go**...and who we “**hang out**” with.

What is **saving** faith? The faith that is demonstrated when we believe that Jesus died for us—and that He will save us from the penalty of our sins when we **receive Him as a gift** from God!

How do we know Paul is referring to **living** faith—and not **saving** faith? Because the only way you can determine if a believer's faith is genuine—or hypocritical—is to **know what they believe**—and compare it to how they **live out those beliefs**!

Paul **saw evidence** of a genuine, sincere, unhypocritical faith in Timothy and Timothy's grandmother and Timothy's mother. What about you and me? What do people **see** when they watch us—and **hear** when they listen to us? A number of years back—probably just before we moved here—one of my **granddaughters** said to me, “Poppa, I've never heard you say a naughty word.” Praise the Lord, right—that's **a good testimony** to have! But...there is obviously a lot more to being a Christian than semi-controlling **our tongue**!

Graham, on the other hand, probably 3 or 4 years ago said to me, “Poppa, do you believe in God?”—or something to that effect. Part of me was a bit **taken aback** because he had been faithfully coming to church and hearing me preach! But on the **flip side**, I had to ask myself **why** he would ask that question. Is it possible that even as a Pastor, I do not talk about the Lord enough **outside** of church—and when I am **with him**?

“Our **talk** talks”—doesn't it—but “our **walk** talks louder than our **talk** talks!”

2) It is lasting faithfulness—not just short-term belief. The word “faith” doesn't always mean **a belief in something**—it sometimes carries the idea of “**faithfulness**.” In other words, it is consistent...and steady...and **stands the test of time**.

Did Paul see that in Timothy's grandmother and mother? Vs 5 says unfeigned faith **first dwelt** in them. And in II Tim 3:15—just a page or two over—we see “And that **from a child** thou hast known the holy Scriptures.” In order for Timothy to know the Scriptures **from childhood**, he had to have been taught them by his **grandmother and mother**!

How do we know Timothy's **father** probably wasn't involved? Because Act 16:1 says Timothy's father was a Greek—meaning a non-Jew—and more than likely **an unsaved man**! And his name is not mentioned!

Notice what it says in the end of vs 5 “and I am persuaded that in thee also.” Paul says to Timothy that ‘the faith of your grandmother and mother has **stood the test of time**—and I believe that same kind of faith is in you!’ What **about us**? Are we going to stay faithful till God calls us home—either through death or the Rapture? You won't hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” if you **quit the race** before it's over!

Next, let's consider...**2. How we can have unfeigned faith**

How can we have unfeigned faith—faith without hypocrisy—**that continues** right up until the day we die—or the day Jesus comes back to get us?

A. Have saving faith first!

I don't think I'm going out on a limb to suggest that in order to have an unhypocritical **living** faith, we need to first have real, genuine **saving** faith! Stated another way, you can't **live the Christian** life without first being a **born-again** Christian! Why is that? There are several reasons; here are three:

1) Jesus taught it! Think with me for a moment about the parable of the sower. What happened to seed that fell on the **stony** ground? Notice what Jesus says in **Mark 4:5-6** “And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and **immediately it sprang up**, because it had no depth of earth: ⁶ But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, **it withered away**.”

What is Jesus' **explanation** of this part of the parable? Notice what He says in **Mark 4:16-17** “And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately **receive it with gladness**; ¹⁷ And **have no root** in themselves, and so **endure but for a time**: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, **immediately they are offended**.”

Is this person **saved—or lost**? Hard to say—and I'm not convinced that **salvation** is the main point of the parable! And I don't think it is something we can be **dogmatic** about. But it seems to me that the reason they **didn't persevere**—the reason they quit when the going got tough—was because they had **no root**! They **mentally agreed** that the message sounded good—but they weren't genuinely born-again!

A **second** reason we need saving faith is this: **2) Because “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”** The Bible uses those exact words in Romans 8:8. But what does that mean? It means that our sinful, selfish nature **does not have the ability** to do what pleases God. Don’t **misunderstand** me; unsaved people can do good and right things—but for the wrong reasons! And if their **motives** are wrong, their “good” is tainted with bad—and they are **not pleasing** to God!

Proverbs 15:8 “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the **prayer** of the upright is his delight.” Think about what that is saying! What the wicked (unsaved) **gives** is an offence to God—but what the upright (saved person) **asks** is a delight to God!

Proverbs 21:27 “The **sacrifice of the wicked** is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a **wicked mind?**” Here it is again—with an added reference to motive!

Reason # 3 we need saving faith: **3) To not have it is the epitome’ of hypocrisy!** What makes me say that? Is there anything more hypocritical than pretending to **be a follower of Jesus** when you refuse to see your need to be forgiven by Him! I don’t think so—and I’m sure I’m not the only one!

So for our faith to be lived out without hypocrisy, we need to first have **saving** faith. Second, we need to have...**B. Humility.** It’s very humbling to be a parent, isn’t it? **Why?**

--Because as a parent, we are reminded—**daily**—of the reality that we **cannot change another** person’s heart, can we? We can **outwardly** make a child “sit in the corner,” so to speak—but **inwardly** they are still rebelliously **standing up!** So we need **God to change their heart** because we can’t!

--Not only that, we are also reminded—**daily**—that our own **heart needs changing**—and we need God to do the changing! So we certainly need humility in order to have an unhypocritical faith. What will that look like?

I’m sure there are more, but here are **three**. And please know that they aren’t in any particular order.

1) Transparency. Passing on an unhypocritical faith requires **transparency**—especially during the teenage years. **Why?** Because you can’t teach **a teenager** how to properly deal with sin in their lives if you don’t properly deal with sin in **your own life**. Example: Most of us as parents don’t want our teens to **handle their frustrations** by yelling, screaming, slamming doors, or breaking things! But what if **we as a parent** end up doing **the same thing**—or something similar? We have **two** choices: **own up** to our sin and **ask for our teen’s** forgiveness...or **pretend** our sin wasn’t that bad—or that we **had a good reason** to be angry!

What happens when we aren’t transparent with our sins against our children—regardless of their age? We are teaching them to “do as I **say**—not as I **do**”—and **how to be a hypocrite!** Oh, how I wish I had been better about **asking my kids for their forgiveness** when I sinned against them!

Not only is humility seen in our transparency, it is also seen in being... **2) Teachable**

We know Timothy had an unhypocritical faith—and we also know that he had a **teachable** spirit because he **listened** to Paul—and **learned** from Paul! Several times in this letter we see Paul exhorting Timothy to “look at me” and “follow my faith.” Here are just a couple. Turn to chapter 2; notice what it says in vs 7. Now chapter 3, vs 14. Timothy had a teachable spirit—and learned from Paul.

What about us? Do we have a **teachable** spirit? Are we willing **to learn** from others? Do we value **counsel?**

Not only does humility involve transparency and a teachable spirit, it also involves...**3) Trust in God’s Word**

Pretty safe to say that a **humble person** will trust in God’s Word—and a **proud** person won’t! And it’s also safe to say that if you **don’t trust God’s** Word, your life will be hypocritical! Example: ‘I believe God loves me and Jesus died for me, but I really need money so I’m going to cheat on my taxes in order to get a larger refund!’

And just as we need to **trust God’s word** in order to have an unhypocritical faith, we also need to trust in God’s word to **guide us in our parenting!** We’re in chapter 3, notice what it says in vss 16 and 17. I think you’d agree that if the Word of God fully equips me **to be a Pastor**, it will also fully equip you to be a good **parent** and/or **grandparent!**

Not only that, God’s Word says that “heart work” is His work—and we need to trust Him to do it!

How can we have unfeigned faith—faith without hypocrisy—**that continues** right up until the day we die—or the day Jesus comes back to get us? First, we need to have **saving faith**. Second, we need to have **humility**. Third, we need to put in...**C. Hard work**

Good things don't happen **by accident**—it requires effort and hard work! The same is true when it comes to having a **consistent walk with God**. Our nature is such that “the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mark 4:19). We have to work hard at fighting against that tendency because if we don't, **the thorns will come**.

The same goes with **parenting**. We have to work at being consistent—and we have to be **intentional** about teaching our children God's Word! **Deuteronomy 6:6-7** “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: ⁷And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

Lastly, let's consider... **3. What does unfeigned faith do**

What are the **benefits and blessings** of having a Christian life that is without hypocrisy—besides hearing, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant”?

A. It serves as an example to others

Did the unhypocritical faith of Timothy's grandmother and mother have an impact on Timothy? It sure did—and that is why God had it recorded here for us in His Word! But it also provides an **example for us**.

Many of you know that I get a **daily email** from the NY Times. Some of the information is worth **reading**; some, not so much! Why do I care if so-and-so **had a mini-piano strapped to his back** as part of the outfit he wore to the 2025 Met Gala?

They did have some thoughts on Mother's Day, though, that I thought were rather interesting: **“Parents play a long game:** They invest time and love, and then they wait up to 30 years for the results. Assessing progress can be difficult, but those once-a-year cards that children deliver on Mother's and Father's Day can serve as a kind of performance review.”

Look at that last sentence again (re-read). My initial reaction was, “Really?! The best way to assess your “performance” as a parent boils down to a once-a-year card?” As I thought about it a little more, there is a sliver—but only a sliver—of truth to that statement. Proverbs 31:28 “Her children arise up, and call her blessed: her husband also, and he praiseth her.” So we should honor...and respect...and let our mothers know we love them and appreciate them and are thankful for them.

But the **real assessment** of your parenting—in my opinion—is what kind of parents **your children** are! Most of you know that my wife and I are both **first-generation** Christians. That means the torch wasn't **handed down** to us—**we lit it!** To the best of my knowledge, all 5 of my children are saved. How well **they carry** the torch and how serious they are about passing it down to their children is still **a work in progress**. But...some of them **are doing well**—and one in particular attends church here. And—IMO—she is doing **an incredible job**—even if my grandson wondered (at one point) whether or not his Pastor-Poppa believes in God!

Not only does a consistent, steady, unhypocritical life serve as an **example** to others, it also...

B. Serves as an encouragement to others

--I think you're in Chapter 3; flip back to Chap 1 and notice again what it says in vs 5. Paul reminded Timothy of the unhypocritical faith of his grandmother and mother to encourage him—and also to encourage us!

--I'm sure I'm not the only one who is saddened when hearing about what I refer to as Christian “casualties”—someone who once walked with God (or at least seemed to) but are no longer doing so.

--On the flip-side, though, isn't it a blessing when you **cross paths with**—or are reminded of—people you have known for quite some time, and they are **still faithfully following the Lord**? I've shared with you before that my wife and I met in Eau Claire and we lived there a number of years. South of Eau Claire is a little town called Rock Falls. Pastor Dan Whitehead has been the Pastor there for over 50 years!

That, my friends, is an example of faithfulness!

--Two weeks ago, I went to Marshfield to visit Linda in the hospital. While in Marshfield, I had lunch with a friend that I've known for roughly 35 years. We went to church together for probably 10 years—and even went to Canada fishing a few times. As we said our good-byes, he gave me a man-hug and with his eyes glistening he said to me, “Thank you for being faithful to the Lord; it is such a blessing to me!”

--Faithfulness matters, doesn't it?

--Notice what it says in **vs 3**: “I thank God...when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee...”

Do people thank God on account of your faithfulness?

What is unfeigned faith? A walk with God that is unhypocritical...and consistent...and stands the test of time.

How we can have it? We need to have saving faith...and humility...and put in hard work!

What does **it do**? It provides an **example** to others—especially those that are close to use—as well as an **encouragement** to others to “keep on keeping on.”

So what would God have us do in light of what we've heard this morning?

1. First, are you truly born again and a child of God? You cannot live the Christian life if you are not born-again!

2. Second—if you are a child of God—what does your “life of faith”—your life as a Christian—look like? We cannot pass our faith down to our children—or grandchildren—**in our will!** But we are passing an example—**good or bad**—down to them!

Is it full of **hypocrisy**—or is it genuine...and sincere...and “the real deal.” I'm not talking about being sinlessly perfect, but I am talking about wanting to live a life that pleases God—and being repentant when you fail.

3. How desirous are we to have this kind of faith? Are we **humble enough** to be transparent and teachable? Are we **hungry enough** for a God-pleasing life that we work at it? It won't happen by accident—the garden won't grow by itself!