

## 2 Timothy 3:14-17

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Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0:00] Please take out your copy of God's Word and turn with me to the book of 2 Timothy chapter 3. We may all remember Mother's Day 2019 as the Sunday that it got a little rock and roll at Christ Family Church.

There's a little white stripes going on on the stage, I think. It's good stuff. I commend you guys for that. It's great. Our text for this morning is 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 14 through 17.

As we take a break this morning from our verse-by-verse exposition of the book of Hebrews, it's my intention to be an encouragement to the mothers and future mothers of our congregation.

You may find some challenge in God's Word to us this morning, but I want you to know that I believe that the mothers of our church work hard to excel in the training of their children, and this does not go unnoticed.

Moms, we know you are working at this. I know that your job as mothers can often seem mundane and unending, and that it is always exhausting.

[1:14] So I want you to be encouraged this morning to persist by grace, to train your children as God will use you to yield fruit in their lives.

If you are not a mother or future mother ever planning on being a mother, like you may be a man in the room, I hope that this morning will help aim your prayers for the moms of our congregation.

So with that in mind, let's take a look at 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 14 through 17. Beloved, this is God's Word to us, written for His glory and our good.

We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. Paul writes, In verse 14, Timothy is exhorted by Paul to continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, as opposed to, set up against, in juxtaposition to, the men of verse 13.

Paul says they're evil people and imposters, that will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

[3:00] It's in light of that statement in verse 13, that he's now exhorting Timothy to continue, but you continue in what you have learned and firmly believed.

And then Paul encourages him to faithfulness to those things with the phrase, knowing from whom you learned it.

Paul states that remembering the godly people from whom you learned the truth is a source of strength and of encouragement. Continue in the things you learned because of who taught them to you.

And Timothy learned the truth that he has learned and has firmly believed by being instructed, we see this in verse 15, in the sacred writings, and also we see in verse 16, Paul tells us this is the Scripture.

Timothy had been taught the Bible. But who is it that taught Timothy the Bible? Timothy learned the Scripture from his family.

[4:09] Timothy's mother was a Christian. His father, unfortunately, and as far as we know, was not. And we know this from Acts chapter 16 and verse 1, where Luke writes, Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra.

A disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer. He was a follower of Christ, a believer in the way.

And then Luke writes, but his father, in opposition to, in difference to, was a Greek. He doesn't say that he was a believing Greek.

He's speaking to his ethnicity, to be sure. He just says that he's a Greek. He doesn't include any reality that he's a follower of Christ there. We know later, 1 Timothy 1, verse 2, that Paul became

Timothy's spiritual father.

He adopted him in that sense, where we read, to Timothy, my true child in the faith. So, Timothy was also instructed by Paul in the way of the Lord.

[5:17] A bit earlier in chapter 3 of 2 Timothy, verses 10 and the first part of 11, we can read, you, however, have followed my teaching, this is Paul speaking, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and sufferings.

And so we have Timothy learning from his mother. We have Timothy learning from Paul as a spiritual father, and likely, his grandmother.

You see in the first part of verse 15, and how from childhood you've been acquainted with the sacred writings. And in chapter 1 of 2 Timothy, verse 5, Paul writes, I'm reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

So, God-fearing Christ-following mother, God-fearing Christ-following grandmother, instructing young Timothy in the sacred writings in the Scripture, and then Paul as a spiritual father to him, instructing him in the manner that he should walk.

So, Timothy is instructed. He is trained in the Bible by Paul as an adult, but also as a child, he becomes acquainted with the Scripture.

[6:41] That is to say, Timothy knew his Bible from an early age. God worked saving faith in Jesus Christ into Timothy through the labors of his mother and grandmother.

Recall that when Paul encounters him in Acts chapter 16, he's already there called a disciple. He's already a follower of Jesus Christ.

God has used the work of his mother and his grandmother and their instruction to bring him to saving faith. What an absolute blessing it is that God includes us in his saving purposes toward our children.

He uses us as the means to bring our children to believe in him. And this is a blessing for us to get to participate in this way. Now, I would never argue that the church does not have a place in the instruction of children.

That is not good for the gathered people of God to diminish the word of God to our gathered children. But I will argue that the responsibility of instructing children belongs firstly, primarily, to the family.

[7:55] Fathers and mothers loving their children with gospel truth. How can I say such a thing with any measure of authority?

In many churches that function today as if the work of bringing children to Christ is entirely the work of the church and the work of the parent is to merely drive their children to gather with said church. There are many Christian leaders today that would strongly even disagree with me that aim most of their ministry at child evangelism and sadly altogether neglect the parent's spiritual maturity.

I can make this claim because God's word makes this claim. And I want to give you just a couple of examples and we're going to do so from the book of Proverbs and I'll run through these quickly.

You're welcome to try to join me if you'd like. Proverbs 22 and verse 6. We read, Train up a child in the way he should go even when he is old he will not depart from it.

[9:00] Proverbs 23 verse 13 and 14. Do not withhold discipline from a child. If you strike him with a rod he will not die. If you strike him with a rod you will save his soul from Sheol.

Now, neither of those two specifically say that this is the job of parents although I think most parents in the room would agree that I shouldn't strike your children with a rod. This is not my place.

But, we can read on Proverbs chapter 29 and verse 17. More specifically here discipline your son and he will give you rest.

He will give delight to your heart. Just a couple of examples of instruction in the Bible for parents to help train up their children.

Charles Spurgeon once wrote, You are as much serving God and looking after your own children and training them up in God's fear and minding the house and making your household a church for God as you would be if you had been called to lead an army to battle for the Lord of hosts.

[10:07] It is a weighty and important task that's been given to us as parents. Mothers, it is a privilege to spend the day in and the day out with your little ones wiping snotty noses and teaching them to share.

We need to be familiarized at all possible as young children with the sacred writings. We would know the gospel truths that we would be able to pick them up when God brings us to faith. But more specifically, right, and we're developing this idea and continue to, how are children trained for godliness? How predominantly and primarily are they trained?

Right? It's not merely through moralistic shaping of our children. It includes that teaching them what is right and what is wrong. But doing that from a place of authority, right, as bringers of God's authority into their lives.

We live in an age where people desperately need to understand authority. Authority is given to us as a good blessing for us, right, not as something to restrict our freedom.

[11:26] Deuteronomy 6, verses 6 and 7, God says, and these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise.

So all the time, right, the good instruction of the Lord is to be taught to our children for their good. Mothers, you provide many necessary things for your children.

Don't stop doing that. There's many things that they need that I know takes a lot of time, right? You keep them clothed and fed, but your children do not need a perfectly clean house.

Stop trying to compete with the Pinterest moms. They're faking it anyway, right? Only that corner of the house is really that clean for that moment.

They don't need wrinkle-free clothing. They honestly don't really even need clean clothes to be totally frank. They don't need the most exciting meals.

[12:34] They don't need to love everything that you put in front of them. In fact, it's probably good if they don't. They do need you. And they need your careful instruction in the scripture, right?

Let the laundry stay unfolded if it means that you're going to neglect spending time in the Bible with your kids, right? Make that, right? Instructing them in the way of the Lord the priority and see if the other things appropriately fall into place.

So our children need the good instruction of the word of God. We never outgrow our need of this instruction by the way. We're always in need of the instruction of God found in the scriptures.

As the scripture is necessary for our salvation and it's also necessary for our sanctification, our continued growth in the Lord.

And let's take a look at both of these as we consider the rest of the text. First, found in the last half of verse 15, we can see the scripture is the power for salvation.

[13:47] As Paul say, familiar with these sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Our children are currently forming a worldview, an understanding, a base on which to build an understanding of the world, a lens through which they will interpret the world around them and their place in it.

We ought to work to build for them a biblical worldview for the glory of God and for their good. The book of Proverbs juxtaposes the way of wisdom and the way of folly.

And what is the beginning of wisdom? Fear of the Lord. It's understanding rightly Him as creator, God, and us as creation. This is why this is stated.

Having a proper worldview lends us toward wisdom. We want our children to walk in the way of wisdom.

Proverbs 2.6 says, For the Lord gives wisdom. From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. And what is the Bible? But the very words of God.

[15:04] Paul tells Timothy that the Scriptures are able to make you wise. Here in verse 15, specifically for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

It is the Scripture that tells us the story of the world in which we live. Our children need to understand that we have a creator God who made all things, who spoke it by His power out of nothing.

We weren't and then we were. And then He ordered it under His good rule. He gave very simple instruction.

Things to do and things to not do. And Adam and Eve were meant to live in this world and to go forth and to multiply and live under the good rule of God forever.

But it didn't last for very long. One of my post-glory questions will be how much time actually passed from Genesis 1-1 to the beginning of chapter 3.

[16:11] Was it only a couple days? I want to hope they did a little better than that in the garden. But it doesn't take long in the biblical narrative. For Adam and Eve to do the very thing they were commanded not to do, to say to God that they wanted to be like God, they rebelled against Him, they became His enemies.

And He justly and rightly punished them for it. Our children need to understand that they live in that fallen world. That they have inherited the sin nature of Adam.

That they are guilty before God. That they are rebels before Him. If you have held children for very long, you know. I've seen people walk out of this room already this morning that are going, sin.

Voddie Baccham has famously said, a contemporary pastor has famously said, do you know why children are so small when they're born? And people go, you know, why?

He said, because if they weren't, they would kill you. The first time you didn't give them something that they wanted, seen the rage of a baby. And thankfully they're so cute, so we don't want to do the same.

[17:27] They're broken. Right? My children are broken. They're enemies of God. They need reconciliation to our Creator, God, because it's good for them.

It's loving kind that God would even give them a way to be restored to Him. So they need to understand redemption. We don't always use these types of words with our children.

They need to understand that in order for them to be accepted by God, all of the penalty for their sin needed to be erased. It needs to be stricken from the record.

But beloved, they also need to understand that that's not enough. That's not a full presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Just to say that the record was canceled is not enough. That only brings them to neutral with God.

God requires that we not be His enemy, but He also requires that we be obedient to His command, that we show ourselves to belong to Him. We cannot do this because of our nature.

[18:31] And so we need the perfect nature of Christ. Our children need to understand that we are found righteous in Jesus. That His righteousness is imputed to us.

It's given to us. There's a great exchange that happened on the cross as Jesus hung for the sins of the world. There was a trade that happened. We gave Him our guilt.

He gave us His righteousness. And therefore, we're justified before God. We're counted as righteous. No longer guilty, but being perfect law keepers because Jesus kept the law perfectly.

Our children need to understand this. And oh, what a work it is to help them understand this. I have tried every imaginable way to explain this to my children.

I'm going to continue to do that very thing. To plead with them to understand not only the person, but also the work of Jesus Christ. What it accomplished for us.

[19:35] And our children need to have their minds drawn to to be enthralled by the final restoration that will one day take place. Christ will return and He will judge the world and He will set all things straight.

We want to aim our children to that bigger and higher reality. Yes, the world lives in a cursed and broken state, but one day God's going to make it all new again.

Our children need this worldview to fit everything else that they're going to learn into creation, fall, redemption, restoration. And these things are important for us to understand rightly.

You ask many people in the church today, what is the gospel? And you will get a varied and wide range of answers. And many of those answers will be partly right, sometimes they'll just be totally wrong, but mostly partly right, but incomplete.

Full biblical narrative answer to that question. Creation, fall, redemption, restoration. And allow me to caution you at this point to not jump at the first opportunity your child offers to lead them to faith in Christ.

[20:49] When you present the gospel in some form or fashion, it kind of makes sense. When you say to a young person, heaven is a great place and hell is a horrible place.

And here's a thing you should do to have the one and not the other. They're not dumb. It's not a complicated choice to make.

We want to be so careful that we don't give our children false assurance. Be so careful that they actually are placing believing faith in Jesus Christ.

We also don't want to overcomplicate that. But we should be exercising some caution. Many, as I mentioned, churches are all about child evangelism.

Every year I get tons of promotions from our denomination to put on vacation Bible schools, to do them super well. This will be the chance. This is the opportunity. This is the...

[21:46] And a couple of years ago I got a stat as an enforcer to that which said children are 70% more likely to respond to a gospel invitation before they turn eight.

This was the promotion for this. And I wouldn't throw statistics out the window altogether, right? But this was the reason they were saying we should do this work because they're 70% more likely to respond to a gospel invitation before they turn eight.

You know what else happens on average at the age of eight? Children stop believing in a particular jolly elf that comes down a chimney and fills stockings at the same time.

So at the age of eight children become less gullible. And we want to be careful that we're not preying upon that. Is it possible for a child to come to faith before eight?

Sure. But we just want to be very, very careful in the process of sharing the good news with children. The call of the gospel is repent and believe, not repeat after me.

[22:54] It's repent and believe. Our church has unapologetically reformed soteriology, which means if our children are to be saved, they will be saved by God's grace alone.

Sola gratia. This is good news for parents. This is really good news for parents who want their children to make professions of faith that persist, to make real professions of faith that persist to the end, that God is in control.

Thomas Watson, a Puritan, once said, this is on your bulletin if you happen to have one, God's decree is the very pillar and basis on which the saints' perseverance depends.

That decree ties the knot of adoption so fast that neither sin, death, nor hell can break it asunder.

That said, God uses and has always used means to accomplish his saving purposes.

So, moms and dads, we want to faithfully teach the gospel to our children that they might believe.

[24:09] A number of years ago, I went to a large conference called Together for the Gospel. It's in Louisville, Kentucky, every other year. And there were some 10,000 church leaders and seminarians from Southern Seminary there.

Rather a large crowd. And it's kind of a warm-up thing to the conference. A pastor named Mark Dever got up and was just asking questions about how people had come to faith in Christ.

So they were having us stand when he said, how was it that you came to faith in Christ? And he had gone through a couple of options. And then he said, how many of you came to faith in Christ because your parents taught the gospel to you in your homes?

And if you've ever been in a stadium where it's quiet and everybody stands and the chairs flip up because you're all packed in way, way too tight, it was almost deafening the amount of those people who stood.

It was 85% of that group. And their parents were used of God to share the gospel with them and God saved them.

[25:16] So we play an incredibly important part in this. It's not dependent upon us, but we're used as a tool in the mighty hands of God to see our children come to faith.

And so we should do it all the more and all the more confidently because of this reality. We should be like Paul in Romans chapter 1, verse 16, where he said, for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Right? We would see our children come to faith in Christ. So Paul exhorts Timothy. Continue in what you have learned. Don't be like those men who have abandoned the faith.

Continue in what you have learned and firmly believe knowing from whom you learned it and from childhood you were acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Scripture is also powerful for sanctification. Verse 16 and 17 teaches us this, that Scripture is breathed out. God is its very source.

[26:24] And because of that, it is sufficient. It's profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. And then in verse 17 Paul says that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

It is what we need to be trained in godliness. Our labor as parents is to raise men and women, not merely boys and girls.

We want to think with the end in mind. And we should want our children to grow up to be children who honor the Lord with all that they feel and all that they do and all that they say.

Our children will seek instruction. If you are not instructing them, they will find some path to follow. They are going to find it on TV.

They are going to find it with their friends. Eventually, someday, they will find it in the philosophies of their school. As adults, they will continue to do this very thing if they have not been given faithful instruction, faithful grounding in the Scripture.

[27:42] This is why the Oprahs and the Dr. Phillips and the Tony Robinsons of the world are so very popular. People are saying we need instruction. We need help for how to walk in the world.

But only the Bible is competent to this task. Only the Bible is competent to the task of training our children in faith and godliness. And it is sufficient for this task.

It contains within it everything we need to know. Any other good books that we promote, there's a couple of wonderful books out in the book note on mothering and on fathering, are just aiming us at the Scripture.

They're just helping us to understand what the Scripture teaches about this topic or any other. Moms and dads, we must be faithful students of the Bible ourselves, that we might be faithful teachers of the Bible for the sake of our children.

And that doesn't have to be an overwhelming task for you. That can simply start today. Open up the Scripture and learn something from it and then turn and impart what you're learning to your children.

[28:53] Try to speak it in the simplest possible terms you can without diluting it as truth at all. I still fly so high for my kids sometimes and then I think, can I say this any simpler?

I don't know that I can try to explain the Trinity to anybody but much less a five or six year old. You can only make it so simple.

So our children and we need the Scripture to lead us to the gospel for our salvation and for our sanctification. So I want to close with an encouragement to you from history.

I'll commend this book. It's called Devoted. It's by a man named Tim Challey. The subtitle is Great Men and Their Godly Moms. It's got a lot of really neat examples of the way men throughout church history were served faithfully by their mothers, moms especially.

This would be a great one to pick up and to read. Husbands, you could order on Amazon right now for your wives. I think it would be good for their souls. I want to tell you a little bit about a man named John Gresham Machen.

[30:04] Late 19th century, early 20th century Christian. Became a Christian rather young in his home. His mother faithfully worked with him and taught him the scripture as well as his father, but this book is not about the fathers of these men.

His mother's name was Mary, but went by the name Minnie. I don't know why, but this book tells us that she did and refers to her as such.

And Gresham Machen was tempted by the liberal theology of his day. He had gone away to school where he encountered liberal theologians who were whimsical, who were kind to him, and he was tempted to begin to forsake the inerrancy and the authority of the scripture.

And his mother was aware of this. He had shared this with her and was talking out these things with her, and I'll pick up reading at this point. Minnie wrestled with growing anxiety over her son's doubts.

But because she was rooted in scripture, she knew better than to panic and confront her son in fear or anger. Relying instead on the grace of God, she chose to provide him with comfort and steadfast love.

[31:25] She wrote to him, quote, But one thing I can assure you of, that nothing that you could do could keep me from loving you. Nothing. It is easy enough to grieve me.

Perhaps I worry too much, but my love for my boy is absolutely indestructible. Rely on whatever comes. I'm sorry, rely on that whatever comes.

And I have faith in you too and believe that the strength will come to you for your work, whatever it may be. And that the way will be opened. Pulled back by his mother's love, along with the counsel of other godly mentors, Gresham's crisis was soon quelled and he returned to the sound doctrine in which he was raised in the Presbyterian Church.

One of Gresham's biographers would write, No one ever seriously rivaled his mother in her capacity to satisfy his need of deep spiritual sympathy or in her hold upon his affection and admiration.

With God's help, the combination of training and tenderness won her son back to his roots. He soon took up a position at Princeton teaching New Testament and became well-liked and highly respected among both faculty and students.

[32:43] This is a long time ago Princeton. Non-liberal Princeton. He would teach at Princeton until 1926, though his time there would be interrupted by overseas service during the First World War, but liberalism would continue its ascendancy, forcing him to take action.

In 1929, he would take the lead in founding Westminster Theological Seminary, and in 1936, a new denomination, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Because Gresham was a lifelong bachelor, his mother would remain the closest woman in his life until her death in 1931.

This was the most grievous event he had experienced, for no one had held him in greater esteem than his mother. No one had been so unswervingly loyal to him. Perhaps no one had been so impacted by him.

She once wrote to him, I cannot half express to you my pride and profound joy in your work. You have handled in a very able manner the most important problem of the age, and you have given voice to my own sentiments far better than I could myself.

On the day the family laid her to rest, Gresham wrote, My mother seems, to me at least, to have been the wisest and best human being I ever knew.

[34:05] May we be a church that produces faithful mothers and fathers who will impart with great charity and patience the wisdom of God to their children.

Let's pray.