

# FATHER POWER

Father's Day. 2 Timothy 1:1-2.

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. June 21, 2026.

## Dismiss the Middle School

### STUDY GUIDE

**As you came in this morning, you should have received a bulletin.** Inside, you'll find a simple study guide you can use in a few different ways: to follow along with today's teaching, to reflect on during your personal devotions this week, or to spark conversation in your small group.

**More resources are available online. [The link is in your study guide.](#)**

**Let's get started on today's teaching ...**

# FATHER POWER

**There is no way to overstate the influence of fathers - for good or ill.**

The late great evangelist Billy Graham said:

*“A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed, and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society.”<sup>1</sup>*

**Today, I want us to explore a biblical model** of godly fatherhood. The Bible contains God’s template for family and fathers, and it is worth following.

Here’s how we’ll proceed.

- First, we’ll look carefully at an amazing passage in 2 Timothy.
- Then, we’ll apply its principles to dads today.

**I believe we’ll be encouraged by this teaching.** And it will give all of us dads a helpful pathway to godly parenting.

**Let’s begin with our Bible passage: 2 Timothy 1.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://billygrahamlibrary.org/10-quotes-from-billy-graham-on-fatherhood/>

## 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-2

**2 Timothy is a letter written by the apostle Paul** to his closest friend and co-worker, Timothy. Paul had sent him to the church in Ephesus because it was in turmoil and needed a strong, faithful leader.

But Timothy hit the wall. Trouble-makers resisted his leadership, and he grew fearful and discouraged. Paul's letter was intended to coach him and encourage him to fulfill his mission in Ephesus.

**The letter's opening sentences are spiritually** and emotionally powerful, and that's where we'll focus our attention today.

As we read, take notice of the relationship between Paul and Timothy. Paul regarded himself as Timothy's spiritual father and Timothy as his beloved son.

Let's read:

### 2 Timothy 1:1-2 (CSB)

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, for the sake of the promise of life in Christ Jesus:*

*2 To Timothy, my dearly loved son.*

*Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Now, let's take a moment to unpack the passage** before we look at its application to today's fathers.

## 2 TIMOTHY 1: PERSPECTIVES ON PAUL AND TIMOTHY

### 1. PAUL WAS CHRIST'S REPRESENTATIVE - verse 1

Paul identifies himself as an **“apostle of Christ Jesus by God’s will”** (v. 1).

**In Bible times, apostles were representatives or ambassadors** given full authority to speak on behalf of their sender. For example, the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem sent out apostles with letters to scattered Jewish communities.

**Jesus appointed apostles**, men who represented him and carried his message to the world. Mark’s Gospel tells us about it:

*Mark 3:13-15 (CSB) Jesus went up the mountain and summoned those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, to send them out to preach, 15 and to have authority to drive out demons.*

Sadly, **Judas**, one of the original twelve apostles, betrayed Jesus and killed himself. **Matthias** replaced him in Acts 1 (verses 23-26). And then, three years or so later, a Jewish rabbi named Saul was converted, given a new name (Paul), and appointed as an apostle (Acts 9). He was God’s **“chosen instrument to take Jesus’s name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites”** (Acts 9:15). Charles Spurgeon commented on Paul’s apostolic authority:

*“Hence Paul always speaks very boldly. He never asks leave of anybody. If he is an apostle by the will of God, he exercises his office without fear” (Charles Spurgeon, Sermons, vol. 62, sermon 3531)*

Paul described his apostolic mission: **“For the sake of the promise of life in Christ Jesus”** (verse 1).

**“For the sake of”** is a purpose statement. Jesus Christ appointed Paul for a specific purpose: to share the promise of life in Christ. What is that?

**The promise of life is this:** When we turn from ourselves and our sins to follow Jesus, he raises us from spiritual death, **separated from** God, into new life **with** God (Romans 6:4-11; Ephesians 2:4-5).

Paul writes:

*2 Timothy 1:10 (CSB) ... our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Jesus promised life to those who believe:

*John 10:28 (CSB) I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.*

*John 11:25 (CSB) Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live.*

When he returns, Jesus will raise us into new, indestructible resurrection bodies to live forever with God in the new creation (1 Corinthians 15:35-58).

That’s the promise of life.

**Paul was a great man,** but his message is even greater. The whole world, including our children, needs to hear the message of life in Christ.

And that’s where Timothy comes into the frame.

## 2. TIMOTHY WAS PAUL'S SPIRITUAL SON - verses 2

*2 Timothy 1:2 (CSB) To Timothy, my dearly loved son. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Paul did not lead Timothy to saving faith in Jesus;** that happened before they met. However, Paul took him under his wing and mentored him (Acts 16).

Timothy grew into Paul's trusted fellow missionary, and he thought of him as a **dearly loved** spiritual - not biological - **son**. That's because Paul was the man who had the greatest spiritual influence on Timothy.

**Paul wanted the best for his spiritual son.** That's why he opened the letter with the blessing: *"Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."* We could paraphrase that as: "Timothy, I wish you all of God's resources, help, protection, and love that flow from Jesus."

**Paul disciplined and encouraged Timothy in the Lord** until he became a mirror image of Paul - same character qualities, same message, same mission.

Listen to what Paul wrote about Timothy to the church in Corinth:

*1 Corinthians 4:15b-17 (CSB) ... I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 Therefore, I urge you to imitate me. 17 This is why I have sent Timothy to you. He is my dearly loved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you about my ways in Christ Jesus, just as I teach everywhere in every church.*

**Paul's impact on Timothy's life was immense.** It was positive, encouraging, and spiritually fruitful.

## FOUR QUESTIONS FOR GODLY PARENTS

Now, let's take what we learned about Paul and Timothy's relationship and apply it to fatherhood today. Here are four questions for fathers or parents to answer:

1. **Do I belong to Jesus?** Paul had a new name to remind him of the day he met Jesus and turned to him as Lord and Savior. Do you have such confidence? Do you know for certain that you are in Christ through faith?
2. **Do I live as an ambassador of Jesus?** Do your words and lifestyle represent the will and ways of Christ? Are you a model for your kids to follow? Pastor Joel Beeke writes: *“Though children learn from what we say, they learn even more from who we are and what we do... Besides the Bible, the way we live our faith from day to day is the most important book our children will ever read.”*<sup>2</sup>
3. **Do I live on mission for Jesus?** You are like a prophet in your home, responsible for reading and teaching the Bible to your kids and pointing them to the promise of life in Christ. Find a way to have a daily time with the family to read the Bible and pray together. You can be the best pastor they will ever have, their spiritual father. You can pray for them by name and ask the Lord to give you the opportunity to lead them to faith in Jesus.
4. **Do I love my children deeply?** Do I want God's very best for them? Do I sacrifice myself for their good? Am I present and available to them? Do I speak encouraging, life-giving words to them? Do I pray for them and ask the Lord to pour out grace, mercy, and peace on them? Am I gentle and compassionate with them? Am I affectionate and protective? Do they know that I love them because they see my love in action and because I tell them over and over?

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<sup>2</sup> <https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/children-are-not-looking-perfect-parents>

## WHAT IS GOD LOOKING FOR?

**God is not looking for perfect parents,** and our children don't need us to be perfect or to pretend to be.

No, God is looking for parents and fathers who are on **mission**; parents who teach and model the Christian faith.

And God is looking for parents and fathers who are **present**, who give their time, prayers, and energy for the good of their kids.

They need us to point them to the perfect Father in heaven and to the promise of life in Jesus Christ, their Savior.

**Let's pray for all the fathers. They need it.**

# PERSPECTIVES ON FATHERHOOD

Written with AI assistance.

Nobody hands you a manual when you become a dad. You hold that baby for the first time and think, Now what? The pressure is real — and so is the temptation to measure yourself against impossibly perfect standards. Here's the good news: God doesn't ask you to be *perfect*. He asks you to be *present*.

Joel Beeke, one of today's most respected pastors and authors, has written that "children are not looking for perfect parents." What they are looking for is a dad who loves God, loves them, and keeps showing up. As Beeke puts it, "Besides the Bible, the way we live our faith from day to day is the most important book our children will ever read" (<https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/children-are-not-looking-perfect-parents>).

So what does biblical fatherhood actually look like? Beeke draws on a beautiful framework rooted in Christ Himself: fathers are called to serve their families as prophets, priests, and kings.

As a prophet, you bring God's Word into your home — through family worship, reading Scripture together, and teaching your kids to love Jesus. As a priest, you intercede for your family in prayer. Beeke asks pointedly: "If you do not pray for your family, how can you say you fear the Lord?" And as a king, you lead not with a heavy hand, but with sacrificial, Christlike love — protecting and guiding those entrusted to you" (Beeke, *How to Lead Your Family*, 2025).

The best part? You don't do this in your own strength. Beeke reminds us that "it is never too late to find grace and mercy from the great Prophet, Priest, and King."

Dad, lean into that grace — and lead.