Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.

6 For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; 7 for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Timothy must be in a tough spot for Paul to play the “Mother Card...” and the “Grandmother Card!” That’s some serious reinforcements!

5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.

Paul might be sure Timothy’s faith is alive, but it sounds like Timothy is not so sure. Lois and Eunice must have been two powerful women of faith. When you are about to quit, or you are discouraged, you want to remember those who have invested much in you, those who are praying for you, those role models who nurtured you into the faith.

These ladies made it into the Bible, not because they preached great sermons or ran large churches. They made it into the Bible because they influenced Timothy, and Timothy was a protege of the Apostle Paul! So when Lois and Eunice planted the seeds of faith in young Timothy, they had no idea how God was going to use him. They had no idea there would be two letters written to Timothy from Paul that would become a part of the New Testament. They certainly had no idea we would be talking about them on Mother’s Day, May 12, 2019.
So, who would be your Lois, or your Eunice? Who cultivated the seeds of faith in you? For many of us, it was our mother, or our grandmother. But not everyone had, or has a mother, or a grandmother of faith. And that’s OK. God uses a variety of people to influence us in our journey of faith. Whoever that was, or is, they are your Lois, or your Eunice.

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My mother went to heaven in 2005. I can still hear her voice today. Little things she taught me. *Don’t end a sentence with a preposition. Don’t chew with your mouth open. Don’t interrupt others.* Say “Please” and “Thank you.” I use all of that every day! And if I don’t, I can hear Helen’s voice.

But there were other things. *“You’re going to church unless you are throwing up or have a fever!”* (I could make myself throw up, but I never could fake a fever!) So here I am!

Most of the time it was the little things. She got up early and read her devotions. She was fairly quiet about her faith. But she often quoted James 2:17. She paraphrased; *“Faith without works is dead.”*

That’s a pretty powerful mantra. What it says is that it’s not enough to say what you believe. What do you actually do? I’ve thought about that a million times. A relationship with God produces a life of action.

There have been times when I felt like quitting and I would hear that verse, *“Faith without works is dead.”* In other words, what action are you going to take? Or are you just going to let your faith die?

My mother had no idea how many times I thought of that. Seeds planted often do come to harvest.

*  

But another way to look at this is to ask, *“For whom have you been a Lois, or a Eunice?”* What legacy of faith will you leave behind?

I’ve done a fair amount of funerals in my day. One day the obvious struck me. The people who sit on the front rows of your funeral are your family! Not your golf buddies, or your banker. Not your doctor, or your lawyer. It’s your family.

So then my next thought was, *“What have I invested in my family?”* If they get the front rows at my funeral, and most of them have known me longer than anyone else in the room, what impact did I leave on them? What influence?

I bet Timothy had something to say at Lois and Eunice’s funerals. *“Had it not been for these women, I wouldn’t be here today. I wouldn’t know Christ.”* And he may well have missed an incredible life as a leader in the Church, had it not been for Lois and Eunice.
I want my children and grandchildren to have a good life; financial stability, good marriages, healthy kids, nice homes, the best education. We’ll do everything we can to help them achieve all that. But would they ever look back and call us their Lois, or their Eunice — people who planted seeds of faith in them? Would they ever say that about you at your funeral? Would anybody say that about us? It may be the most important legacy we leave behind.

* 

Paul plays the Mother/Grandmother Card. Timothy needs encouragement in his faith. He’s ready to quit and Paul reminds him...

“...of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.”

There are days we all need to hear that, because there are days when it doesn’t feel true. We need to be reminded that we haven’t lost it!

Paul is not about to sit back and lose this young man, so he lays all the cards on the table.

“For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

In other words,

“Get up! Stop whining. The power of God is within you. As great an influence as Lois and Eunice have been for you, you need to rekindle this gift in you. That’s your job.”

Those who have influenced us can only go so far. We are responsible for the gift of God within us. We are to cultivate it, pull the weeds, fertilize and water it. Paul calls on Timothy to do that work.

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So, who is your Lois and your Eunice? Who has been that person of faith for you? It may be several people. I have an unusual ending for this sermon. I’m going to count to three and ask all of you to say those names out loud, with a strong voice of gratitude. It may have been your mom, or your grandmother, or someone else. Whoever it was, we’re going to play their card, and call out their names with thanksgiving to God. One...two...three...! (Congregation responds.)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Congregation; Amen.