

Fan into Flame

“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:6-7 NIV)

I suspect that most of us have made many New Year’s resolutions over the years. How are you doing on the most recent ones you have made? If you are like me, your resolutions involve attempts to be or do better.

I think these verses from 2 Timothy might be just the encouragement we need. Each of us has been given a gift (or multiple gifts) from God that He wants us to use in His service. The list of possible gifts is long, but as librarians each of us have been called and gifted to serve God in our library position.

Notice that Paul reminded Timothy that the gift has to be fanned into flame. It would seem that the gift that God gives does not automatically remain strong but must be nurtured.

Next, Paul reminds Timothy that God doesn’t give us a timid spirit. The word “timid” is right in the middle of “intimidated.” Don’t be intimidated by whatever is going on around you—“because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4 NIV)

Paul goes on to say that God did, however, give us a spirit of power. Think electrical power for a moment—a spark, a charge, or electrical current. That speaks of life and energy to accomplish whatever God has put before us. Don’t allow your batteries to run

down but continue to recharge by reading God’s word, praying, and listening to His voice.

God did give us a spirit of love. Genuine caring and concern for one another could be one way of defining a spirit of love. I think God would be much better served if we would genuinely love people and life more and complain (read: fuss, fume, and get angry) less.

And God did give us a spirit of self-discipline or self-control. Some translate that as a sound mind. I think we can all do better at controlling our thoughts and our actions.

Remember that our actions are a direct result of our thinking. In writing to the Philippians, Paul says: “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8 NIV)

This year, let us focus even more than ever before on what is positive, pure, and lovely. May we then act accordingly. Let’s fan into flame the gift that God has given us.



—Dale Jensen

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