

**Ancient Advice for a Modern World: Foundations for Life**

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2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:5

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I had one of my mother's recipes out the other day.

- It's a simple recipe,

- not very many ingredients

- and I have been making it for a long time.

- Now - - the first time I made this dish,

- I followed the recipe exactly.

- It said "Add one stick of butter".

- I added one stick of butter.

- Most of my mother's recipes started with one stick of butter,

- so I didn't think anything of it.

- Now - - as I have learned more about cooking,

- as I have built a healthier lifestyle for myself,

- I have discovered that I can change and adapt

- this and other recipes

- to maintain a healthier lifestyle

- while at the same time still enjoying

- some of the dishes I have always loved.

- So for example, I've learned that this dish really only needs

- two tablespoons of lite margarine instead of a stick of butter

- to turn out just fine.

- When I first started cooking,

- I would never have changed a thing in one of my mother's recipes.

- I just didn't know enough about what I was doing,

- to even know what to change,

- but as my knowledge and experience has grown,

- adapting the recipe to fit new circumstances

- is something I am comfortable doing.

- Whenever we have knowledge and experience,

- Whenever we have guidance and instruction,

- Whenever we have reference materials or an example from which to work,

- we are usually more confident in facing a new, changing or difficult situation, - - -

- which is why I think the author of Timothy instructs the people of God,

- instructs us to - -

“Continue in what you have learned and firmly believed.”

- and reminds us that

“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching,

- for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

- so that everyone who belongs to God

- may be proficient, equipped for every good work.”

- (2 Timothy 3:14, 16-17)

- We live in a constantly changing world.
  - It can be a struggle to keep up with
    - all the discoveries and innovations,
    - the problems and conflicts that arise.
- We need a frame of reference to work from.
  - We need a foundation to build upon.
    - We need a guiding principle to help us make sense of it all
      - and the good news the author of Timothy is reminding us of today
        - is that we have that foundation for our life
          - in the living Word of God proclaimed scripture.
- In essence he's saying,
  - You may face challenges today,
    - that you never dreamed were possible,
      - but continue in what you have learned of God and firmly believed.
- Everything may be changing around you,
  - but God's love for you,
    - God's presence with you,
      - God's promise for your future
        - is constant and unwavering.
          - Let that be an anchor for you
            - in the midst of a turbulent world.
- And not only does he remind us to stand on the foundation

- of our faith in God,
    - but he also reminds us
      - that we have been given the gift of scripture
        - to help us as we build a life of faith in the world,
          - build a life of faith
            - upon this foundation of God's love for us.
  - We have been given the gift of Scripture
    - to show us an example of how other children of God
      - have handled problems in their lives of faith.
  - We have been given the gift of Scripture
    - to instruct us about God's love and faithfulness
      - and equip us with resources for following Jesus.
- We have been given the gift of Scripture
- to be both a source of reference,
    - and a source of inspiration.
  - Which means that the more familiar we are
    - with God's Word in Scripture,
  - the more we take time to read the stories
    - of God's relationship with God's people,
  - the more we see the overwhelming compassion of God,
    - made human in Jesus Christ,
  - the more we witness the struggles and faithfulness

- of those early disciples,
- the better equipped we are
  - to live each day in the world,
  - the better equipped we are
    - to adapt to the unique situation of our lives faithfully,
    - the better equipped we are
      - to know and to share God's love.
- It's like my mother's recipe.
  - When I first started cooking,
    - I didn't know enough to make any changes.
  - As I grew in my understanding of ingredients and healthy living,
    - I used my experience,
      - I used what I had learned,
        - I used the examples I had seen,
          - applied it to this recipe
            - and discovered a way to meet my goal,
              - of a healthier dish that
                - maintained the tasted I enjoyed.
  - Well - - when I first discovered
    - Jesus loves me,
      - When I first heard the story of Jesus born in a manger,
        - When I first heard the horrible, hopeful news

- that Jesus died on a cross and then rose from the dead
- to save us,
- I didn't really know what that good news meant for my life.
  - I didn't really know how that good news
    - could bring wholeness to a broken world.
  - I didn't really know the strength God's love
    - could given me in a time of need.
- But that love of God for me and promise of Jesus
  - was a foundation.
    - A foundation that was built upon and nurtured
      - through Sunday School,
      - through worship and preaching,
      - through service projects and prayer,
      - through classes and workshops,
      - through the witness of fellows Christians
        - and perhaps most importantly
          - through my interactions with
            - the living Word of God
              - revealed in Scripture.
- As the author of Timothy urges us,
  - I have continued in what I believed and thanks to God's Word,
  - I have begun to understand of who God calls me to be.

- I have grown in my ability to see God's presence and guidance in times of need.
  - I have experienced healing in times of pain and loss.
    - I have discovered hope when things seem darkest.
      - I have been equipped for my life
        - as a child of God in the world.
- And the good news is, - -
  - my experience isn't unique.
    - God doesn't say - "I love you, but
      - I'm certainly not going to give you any help to navigate the world."
    - No - God says,
      - "I love you!"
        - "You are mine."
        - "Here's my Word in Scripture
          - to help you make sense of life."
- And while there is no promise in Timothy,
  - that God's Word revealed in scripture will anticipate
    - and answer in an easy, straight forward way
      - every problem that you might face in life,
- The good news we hear this morning is that
  - God's Word revealed in scripture is God's gift to all - -
    - a gift to help us know the depth and strength of God's love for us,
      - a gift to give us guidance as we face the difficulties of the world,

- and a gift to help us discover the right way forward
- when we go astray.

In other words,

- God's Word revealed in Scripture gives us the proper foundation,
  - the helpful education and instruction,
    - the resources and examples we need,
      - to adapt the recipe to fit today's world.
- God's Word revealed in Scripture gives us the proper foundation,
  - the helpful education and instruction,
    - the resources and examples we need,
      - to help us discern where God is leading us.
- God's Word revealed in Scripture gives us the proper foundation,
  - the helpful education and instruction,
    - the resources and examples we need,
      - to faithfully address the complex problems of life.

So I encourage you this week and every week,

- to take some time and explore this gift of Scripture we have been given.
- Go back and reread a favorite passage.
  - Pick up a devotional book.
    - Download the Daily Toolbox devotions from our website. - -
  - Invest some time in exploring what God has to say
    - and I think you will discover

- what a wonderful gift and resource scripture is
  - to remind us
    - of God's generous love
  - and to help us
    - find the right recipe for living faithful lives
      - in the midst of a confusing world.