

55-01-01.wpd—An Example of Sincere Faith
 Mother's Day, being an example, sharing faith
 2 Tim 1:5

Our journey in Christian faith should attract others to join us.

INTRODUCTION: (Scripture reading, 2 Tim 1:1-5)

—[A woman phoned a friend to ask how she was doing. “Terrible,” she replied. “My head’s splitting, my back and legs are killing me, the house is a mess, and the kids are driving me crazy.” The called said, “Listen, go lie down. I’ll come right over and cook lunch for you, clean the house, and watch the children while you get a nap.... By the way, how is Sam?” “Sam?” the complaining mother gasped. “Who’s Sam?” “My heavens,” exclaimed the first woman, “I must have the wrong number.” There was a long pause, then the mother asked hopefully, “Are you still coming over?”]

—A mother’s work is never done. Her job description is self-sacrifice. Nine months of pregnancy are just warm-ups. Then there’s labor and delivery. I often tell laboring moms that the worst part about labor is that the baby won’t remember and appreciate all her pain and effort. Then, for 18+ years, kids don’t always appreciate all the cooking and washing and housekeeping that she does. Mother's Day might be a great conscience-soother for years of guilt for ingratitude.

—Mother's Day reminds us of all that mothers do. Today’s **text** deals with a very special job of the Christian mother: to share her faith with her children—2 Timothy 1:5, I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. Whether we are mothers or not: **Our journey in Christian faith should attract others to join us.** *What is it about our Christian faith that should make it attractive to others?*

I. Faith in Christ Should Be Faith That Is Sincere

A. The NIV’s “sincere” is “genuine” (NKJ); “unfeigned” (KJV) [from Gk, *anupokritos*: “without hypocrisy,” “without play-acting”]

1. Greek and Roman actors were called “hypocrites” because they wore masks designed to increase the projection of their voices.
2. Jesus used the word *hypocrites* to condemn the Pharisees of speaking loudly about a holiness they did not possess [**Major Osipovich**, a Soviet air force pilot, was to give a talk about peace at his children’s school. To have the day off, he volunteered for night duty, and was the pilot patrolling the USSR’s eastern coast the night of Sept. 1, 1983, when Korean Flight KE007 strayed into Soviet air space. Following orders, he shot down the unidentified aircraft. He was preparing a talk about peace, but his

actions plunged 240 passengers to their deaths, igniting a major crisis in international peace. Talk is important, but actions carry the real weight.]
Christian faith should be “sincere”—“without hypocrisy.”

B. Only a sincere Christian faith draws others to Christ

1. Karl Rahner, a Catholic philosopher, said, “*The number one cause of atheism is Christians. Those who proclaim God with their mouths and deny Him with their lifestyles is what an unbelieving world finds simply unbelievable.*”
2. “Sincere faith in Christ must be a “lived-out” faith (To make it attractive to others, a professed faith must be a practiced faith.)

TRANS: [As a kid, I found that Hollywood can fool you. In the movie *The Robe*, Richard Burton became a Christian. I thought “*Surely he couldn’t play the part without being one.*” Later I learned it was just *acting*. (Interestingly, Jay Robinson, who portrayed the wicked emperor in that movie, *was* a Christian.) In drama, unsaved actors can be cast in the role of believers. But in the drama of real life, true Christians must be “sincere”, *without hypocrisy* or “play-acting,” because all of us are always on stage both *publicly* and *privately*.] *And that’s the point....*

II. Sincere Faith in Christ Will Be Faith That Is Seen

A. [**Ambitious executives** look for positions of **high visibility** (*easily observed*).]

But John S. C. Abbott said, “*Mothers have as powerful an influence over the welfare of future generations as all other earthly causes combined.*” That’s because the place of highest visibility is found in the home:

1. You can hide your true behavior about anywhere except at home!
 2. Christ-like living in the home shows that Jesus really indwells the heart [**Reminder on a plaque:** “*Christ is the head of this house, / The unseen guest at every meal, / The unseen listener to every conversation.*”]
- B. Timothy’s home was interesting: his father was a *Greek* (Acts 16:1) and his mother and his grandmother, who probably lived with them, were *Jewish Christians*. (He could have followed his father’s religion, or lack of it, but was won to a faith he saw lived out.)

TRANS: Paul had an eye for “sincere faith.” He saw that it “lived in” Lois, Eunice and Timothy, not as an external decoration but as a part of who they were. [**During a mother’s birthday celebration,** it came time for the presents. The family sat her down in her favorite living room chair, and one by one, the father and two older children came from the kitchen, each bearing their gifts on a tray, as if they were presenting them to royalty. They considered the third and littlest daughter too young to participate, but she watched this process and devised her own plan. Bringing in an empty tray from the kitchen, she placed it on the floor in front of her

mother and stepped on it. With a giggle of joy she said, “Mommy, I give you ME!”] “Sincere faith” is lived-out and seen in no better way than in giving ourselves to others.... AND finally...

III. Sincere Faith in Christ Will Be Faith That Is Shared

A. When “*sincere faith*” is shared, it has a lasting influence:

1. It acts as a reference point for those we share it with—something they can continually refer to—to see if they’re staying on track.
2. Paul pointed Timothy back to his reference point— 2 Tim 3:14-15. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (Timothy’s mother and grandmother were his reference points in the Christian faith.)

B. When we share our faith, we don't know what fruit will result

1. Someone shared it with Lois and Eunice; they shared it with Timothy, Timothy shared it with many others, **and who knows**, maybe their sharing affected us directly! [Family trees often many missing links—those unknown people whose influence was still important.]
2. Just think about a *family tree* of SHARED FAITH! (*Who* might be on it **in the past**? Where do our names fit **in the present**? What names will follow our **in the future**?)

CONCLUSION:

–Few of us live in Timothy's situation where grandparent, parent and child live together in an extended family. But God gives each of us contact with others in what is called our circle of FRANS (*friends, relatives, associates or acquaintances, and neighbors*).

–Let's be encouraged by the examples of Timothy's mother Eunice and grandmother Lois in their spiritual journeys. Like theirs, **our own journey in Christian faith should attract others to join us.** Our faith in Christ should be *sincere*, a faith that can be seen lived-out in us, so we can share it effectively with others, who don't yet know the Lord.

2 Timothy 1:1-5 (NIV)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.

4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.

5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.