



Encouraging the Discouraged

2 Timothy 1:3-7

1. Express Your Thankfulness (verse 3)
2. Desire Your Relationship (verse 4)
3. Remember God's Work (verse 5)
4. Remind of God's Gifts (verses 6-7)

Every profession has its own unique challenges and struggles. Those who work in the factories often deal with the boredom of the routine work and the long days that come with it. Those who work in jobs requiring manual labor deal with the physical exhaustion that comes at the end of each day. Those who work the night shift deal with the difficulties of sleeplessness. Those who work in management deal with the stresses that come in managing people. Those who in upper management deal with the stresses that come with making a profit. Those who work in sales deal with the disappointment of hearing many people say "no" to their product. Those moms who at home with children deal with the exhaustion that children can bring.

The same is true with the ministry. Those in the ministry face their own peculiar dangers. In his contribution to the book *Reforming Pastoral Ministry*, Art Azurdia shares some of the temptations that are particularly strong in the ministry of the gospel. He writes, ...

To be sure, the minister of the Gospel is vulnerable to trials and temptations distinct to his calling:

jealousy ("Why are his gifts more esteemed than mine?")
bitterness ("Why does the congregation criticize everything I do?")
fear ("Will they leave the church if I teach particular redemption?")
depression ("Will this church ever grow?")
grief ("Why have there been so few conversions?")
frustration ("Why does the board appear to distrust my motivations?")
doubt ("Why has God caused such suffering in the life of this family?")
anxiety ("How will we ever afford to send our children to college?")
sexual indiscretion ("Why does it seem that my wife is not as responsive to me as other women in the church?")
despondency ("Why doesn't the congregation love Jesus with greater fervor?")
desperation ("Have I rightly discerned my call to ministry? [\[1\]](#))

To some point or another, I have faced most of these temptations as a direct result of the ministry, certainly, some stronger than others. Before I was in ministry, I worked in the secular world and only faced a few of these temptations, and they were weak at best. But, since taking on the role of a full-time pastor, these things have become very real. In great measure, I believe that it's the nature of ministry.

But, at the root of all of these temptation that Art Azurdia describes seems to be an underlying discouragement with their ministry. Discouraged by the lack of gifts, which leads to jealousy of others. Discouraged by the criticism that comes, which leads to bitterness. Discouraged by the lack of doctrinal unity, which leads to fear that people will leave the church. Discouraged by the lack of numbers in the church, which leads to depression. Discouraged by the lack of souls being saved, which leads to grief. Discouraged by the lack of relational unity in the church, which leads to frustration. And so on. But, discouragement is at the root of it all.

I remember hearing one former pastor tell the joke, "If you speak with three pastors, one will be discouraged, one will be ready to quit, one will be successful, and he is no help at all to the other two." Now obviously, it's a joke. It's not really the case. But, the joke does represent a slice of reality. Ministers of the gospel face a peculiar challenge, I believe, to discouragement.

I believe that such was the main difficulty of Timothy, after whom the book of 2 Timothy is named. If you haven't done so already, I invite you to open your Bibles to the book of 2 Timothy. We began this wonderful little letter last week, when I developed a working theme for this book, "Fan the Flame; Fight the Fight." That is, "Fan the flame of the ministry. Don't be discouraged. Don't be ashamed at the suffering involved. Trust in the power of God to help you through. Fight the fight of the ministry. Don't quit. Be willing to suffer as Jesus did. Fulfill your ministry until the end."

This morning, we are going to get into the first part of the theme, "Fan the Flame," by looking at chapter 1, verses 3 through 7. In these verses, we will see Paul helping the discouraged pastor to find the power to fulfill his ministry. Let's read these verses now, ...

2 Timothy 1:3-7

I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.

For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

The title of my message this morning is "Encouraging the Discouraged." Fundamentally, this is what's going on in these verses. Paul is seeking to help Timothy to find the strength to continue in the ministry.

By way of outline this morning, I could talk merely about what Paul did. However, I want to make it immensely practical for all of us this morning. I want to give you four ways to encourage the discouraged. Paul was seeking to encourage the discouraged. You can do the same. If you take some of the principles of what Paul did, you can be a Barnabas, a "Son of Encouragement."

1. Express Your Thankfulness (verse 3)

That's what Paul did to help encourage this discouraged pastor. We see this in verse 3: "I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day." He is saying, "Timothy, I am thankful to God for you. I am constantly remembering you in my prayers -- night and day. A day doesn't go by, but that I'm not praying for you. A night doesn't go by, but that I'm not praying for you. You are on my heart. And I am thankful to God for you."

Expressing your thankfulness to God for others is a great way to encourage people. Those who are discouraged often lose sight of the big picture of life. There is something about their circumstances that have got them down. But, when someone comes along and says, "I'm thankful to God for you," it can make a big difference. It can help them to see that there's more to life than their particular problems.

And Timothy had his problems. That's why he was so discouraged in the first place. There were those in the church who resisted Timothy at every step (3:8-9). There were those in the church who were teaching false doctrine (2:17-18). There were those in the church who held to a "form of godliness," but were not genuine (3:5). There were those who wanted to "wrangle about words" and thus ruin the hearers (2:14). There were those who engaged in "worldly and empty chatter," which was leading to further ungodliness in the church (2:16). There were those who were quarrelling with Timothy (2:24). There were those who were deceiving others in the church (3:13). And that's just in the church.

There were those in the community who were against him (4:14-15). Alexander the coppersmith "vigorously opposed the gospel" (4:15). He was facing pressures from within the church. He was facing pressures from outside of the church. To all of this, Paul writes, "Timothy, I am thankful to God for you." Particularly, he says, "I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did" (verse 3).

Whenever there is a phrase in the Bible, know that it's not there by accident. It is always a good question to ask, "Why is this phrase here?" There's not a loose phrase in all the Scriptures. It's all there for a purpose. So, what's up with Paul mentioning his clear conscience? What's up with Paul mentioning the forefathers? Now, I can't get behind the mind of Paul with entire certainty. But I do know why Paul is in prison. He is in prison because the Jews are angry with him, contending that he is blaspheming the Lord. The trials that he has faced have all been focused around Paul's claim that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. The Jews say that He isn't. Paul claims that He is! The Jews consider Paul to be a heretic who ought to be killed! That's spelled out clearly in the book of Acts; you can read it yourself.

And here's Paul, in his prison, going over in his mind again and again and again why he's there. He's there because he is trusting in Jesus. He's doing so with a pure heart. There's nothing in his conscience which is doubting or uncertain. He's convinced that he has pure motives. The reason why Paul is convinced of his purity in these regards has to do with the fact that he is following what the Old Testament Scriptures say. He is convinced that he is serving the same God that the Jews have always served.

While on trial before Felix, the governor, in front of the Jews who were accusing him, Paul says, "This I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the prophets; having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men" (Acts 24:14-16).

Before Festus, he claimed the same thing: "I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar" (Acts 25:8).

Before Agrippa, Paul sang the same tune, "Having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22-23).

While in Rome, Paul was "trying to persuade [the Jews] concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets" (Acts 28:23).

Paul's message was clear -- I'm proclaiming what the Law and all of the Prophets longed for: the Messiah! Jesus has come. He lived a perfect life. He died upon the cross for our sins. He has risen from the dead, according to the Scriptures. He appeared to many (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Through Him, we preach the forgiveness of sins. "This is why I'm in jail. This is why I'm soon to die. But, I have no regrets. My conscience is clean. I will die a martyr's death." Those were Paul's circumstances. He was in prison -- a dirty, stinky, filthy, unsanitary dungeon. He's lonely (4:11). He has been deserted (1:15; 4:16). He is cold (4:13). He is soon to die (4:6). You get a sense of his sufferings by the way that he describes himself.

And yet, Paul has a thankful heart. That fact alone ought to encourage Timothy's heart. "If Paul can give thanks to God where he is and what he is experiencing, then certainly, I can give thanks to God in my circumstances as well." You compare the circumstances surrounding Timothy with the circumstances surrounding Paul, and it can easily be argued that Paul had it worse. Paul is in prison, soon to be martyred for the faith! Timothy was in a church with problems. And yet, Paul was thankful.

That helps to bring perspective. That helps to bring encouragement. And notice how Paul says "thanks." He's not thanking Timothy. He's thanking God. He's not thanking Timothy for what he has done. He's thanking God for what God has done through Timothy.

There is a world of difference between the two. Thanking a person for what they have done is well and good, but puts pressure upon them to do some more. It hints toward a conditional love. But, thanking God for His work in their lives rejoices in God's grace. It directs the attention to God's working in our lives. It shows that there is something bigger going on than the current trials you are facing.

And by the way, you can look long and hard throughout Paul's epistles and never find Paul thanking anyone. Whenever Paul is thankful, He's always thankful to God for others. "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all" (Rom 1:8). "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:4). "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you" (Phil. 1:3). "We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you" (Col. 1:3). "We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers" (1 Thes.. 1:2). "We ought always to give thanks to God for you" (2 Thes. 1:3). "I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers" (Philem. 1:4).

Now, that's not to say that you shouldn't "thank" anybody for something that they have done. It is only right and appreciative to thank those who have given you gifts or have served you in some way. But, I would encourage you to work at inserting "God" after your thanks, whenever appropriate. "I thank God for what you have done for me. I thank God for what you have given to me. I thank God for your kindness to me." Such statements will bring a depth and clarity to your giving of thanks. And never underestimate the power of a word of thanks in the lives of others. Writing a note of thanks has a wonderful way of encouraging others. Thankful people are enjoyable to be around. Children that are thankful are especially enjoyable. Our house has been filled with many children this week. There is one in particular that was always ready with a word of thanks. It was a blessing to us, and so enjoyable!

So, do you want to "Encourage the Discouraged"? Express Your Thankfulness (verse 3)! Secondly, ...
2. Desire Your Relationship (verse 4)

When someone is discouraged, you put your arm around them. You spend time with them. You let them know that they are important to you. That's what Paul is doing here. Obviously, he is limited by being in jail by and Timothy being many miles away. He can't put his arms around Timothy. But, he can express his desire to do so. This is what he does with the words of verse 4, "longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy."

This verse is packed with emotion: longing, tears, filled with joy. Here's Paul, longing to see Timothy. It's difficult to communicate the intensity of emotion in this word in it's original meaning. It describes a deep desire, intense longing, a craving. It can be an intense good longing or an intense bad longing. In 2 Timothy 2:22, the word is translated of a sinful desire as "lust." Paul has a deep (pure) longing to see Timothy one last time before he is martyred.

In chapter 4, we see Paul pleading with Timothy twice to come. "Make every effort to come to me soon" (2 Tim. 4:9). And, "Make every effort to come before winter" (2 Tim. 4:21). Perhaps sending Tychicus to Ephesus (4:12) has something to do with making the way smoother for him to come as well. He can take up some of the responsibilities for Timothy. At any rate, Paul knows that a visit from Timothy would be a tonic to his soul. When Timothy comes, Paul knows that he would be "filled with joy" (verse 4).

And you all know what this is about. If you haven't seen a good friend for a while, when you finally get to see them again, it's a time of joy! On our recent vacation to California, we had several such visits with friends. We hadn't seen them for a while, and our reunion was joyous.

Paul is longing for this. His emotions are high. And he recalls a time when Timothy's emotions were high as well. Paul writes, "even as I recall your tears." We aren't exactly sure of what occasioned these tears. These are tears of pain. Perhaps Paul was referring to the time in which they departed from each other. It may have been the time when Paul was with those Ephesian elders at Miletus when Paul gave his last counsel to them (as recorded in Acts 20). When the elders realized that this very well may be the last time that they would see Paul, "they began to weep aloud and embrace Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again" (Acts 20:37-38). Or, it may have been another time when they needed to depart from one another. Perhaps Paul was referring to the tears that have come through the trials of the church. When you love deeply, you can be hurt badly. When attacks come, they hurt.

I know of these ministry tears. I have cried when people I loved have left this church. When one man left the church to head back home to California, I was heartbroken. On several occasions, I was in tears on Sunday morning in the pulpit. Those of you who were here in those days remember my pain. When another man left the church, I remember not being able to preach because of the emotion within me. I remember trying to preach, but the sorrow overcame me.

I have cried at the trials of the church. In my first decade of marriage, Yvonne never saw me cry, as I wasn't in full time ministry. But, in the second decade of marriage, I've been in full time ministry. She has seen me in tears on several occasions.

These are the pains of ministry. And Paul knew that Timothy was experiencing these pains, and it gave him a heart to write this letter to see him. And Paul's words of desiring to be together must have been an encouragement to Timothy.

Thirdly, if you want to "Encourage the Discouraged", ...
3. Remember God's Work (verse 5)

This comes in verse 5: "For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well." With these words, Paul is remembering Timothy's testimony of saving faith. These words draw us back to the time when Paul first met Timothy. They are recorded for us in Acts 16, ...

Acts 16:1-3

Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Now, we can't say this for sure, but it appears as if Timothy's father was not a believer. He is identified as a "Greek." Apparently, we wasn't a follower of the law -- Timothy hadn't been circumcised. And, Paul's emphasis upon the faith of the women in Timothy's family (in 2 Timothy 1:5), leads us to believe that Timothy's father was not a believer. Yet, Timothy had found faith in the Messiah.

This ought to be a huge encouragement to those of you who are raising children with unbelieving fathers. I know that this is the case for some of you. Your husbands are not believers. In some cases, they aren't even around your home. In other cases, they live with you, but aren't engaged with your children on a spiritual level. Take encouragement this day in the life of Timothy.

Apparently, his father had little or nothing to do with his own spiritual upbringing. He was trained by his mother. He was trained by his grandmother. In verse 3, Paul had looked back at the faith of his "forefathers." In verse 5, Paul is telling Timothy to look back to the faith of his "foremothers." And they weren't passive. No, they were very active in Timothy's life. Turn over to chapter 3, and verse 13, ...

2 Timothy 3:13-15

But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Verse 13 helps us to see the difficulties that Timothy is facing. "Yes, evil is around you at every step of the way. But you don't have to succumb to the evil of those around you. You should keep the course that has been yours from your youth. You were taught the Scriptures. These laid the foundation for you to come to faith in Christ Jesus. Consider well the faith of your mother and your grandmother and continue in their way, not the ways of your father."

And so, believing mothers with unbelieving fathers, teach your children in the ways of God. With an unbelieving father, you have some obstacles to overcome in the lives of your children. It takes some work. It takes some dedication. It takes a lot of teaching and instruction and guidance from you. But take heart in Timothy. Show your children God is more glorious than your particular difficulties in your marriage. And never underestimate the power of the Scriptures in the lives of your children, even with a spiritually absent father.

And so, ladies, with spiritually absent husbands, don't despair. But keep training your children in the ways of the Lord. And trust Him to do His work. It's not an easy work, but it bore fruit in Timothy's life. May it bear fruit in the lives of your children as well.

John MacArthur tells the story of the time he was involved in the process of a well-known ministry in the United States, who was searching for a leader. I believe that it was the Moody Bible Institute, looking for a president. He said that eight names were presented as potential candidates for this very public position of leadership. After reading over the eight names, he said to the gentlemen in the meeting, "Do you see a common denominator in every one of these names?" After a moment of silence, he continued, "Did you notice that every one of these eight names that you men have collected are men who had a well-known godly preacher for a father without exception?" Now, it wasn't that they had sought out looking for the son of a well-known preacher as the one to take this important place of leadership. Rather, it speaks of the benefits of having a heritage of godly men. Such men "stood out above their peers as unique." [\[2\]](#)

I do not believe it to be an accident that the Lord has greatly blessed John MacArthur, a 5th generation pastor. Nor do I believe it to be an accident that the Lord greatly blessed Charles Spurgeon, who came from a godly line of pastors as well. God is partial to a godly heritage. "The lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, To those who keep His covenant And remember His precepts to do them" (Ps. 103:17-18).

Look at the word that God did in verse 5, "For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well." Timothy had a "sincere faith." That is, an "unhypocritical faith." That is, a faith that was pure and had nothing to hide. Paul says, "I am sure that this faith is in you."

Now, again, when there is a phrase in the Bible, you need to think about why such a phrase is there. Why is Paul telling Timothy, "I know that your faith is genuine"? I believe that it's an indication of the troubles going on in Timothy's heart. He is so discouraged that he is even doubting his faith. He is doubting whether he really believes in God and the gospel. Paul comes along and writes, "Timothy, you are the real deal. I have seen evidences of the genuineness of your faith."

Paul didn't elaborate here as to how he knows that Timothy's faith is real, but I'm sure that if pressed, Paul wouldn't have said, "I remember when you prayed a prayer to receive Jesus as your savior." Rather, he would have said something to the effect of this, "I remember when I came to Lystra and first met you, you embraced Jesus and I witnessed your genuine faith. I witnessed your faith when we travelled together to Philippi and Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 16-17)." I saw your trust in the Lord to guide us in all things. We faced some difficult things. Do you remember when Silas and I were thrown into prison? I didn't see you waver in your faith. Instead, you stood close beside us in our distress. I remember when I was banished from Berea, I told you and Silas to remain there to follow up on the ministry. It wasn't easy. The Jews had come to stir up the crowds against us (Acts 17:13). And yet, I heard of the ways that you endured in your faith. I remember when you joined up with me in Corinth. You and Silas faithfully labored in the workplace, giving me a third of your income, so that I might preach

the gospel. In Corinth, I feared for my life, but by faith, you stood with me. Timothy, I know that your faith is genuine because of the ways that I have seen the Lord working in your life."

What Paul did here with Timothy -- noticing the working of God in his life -- you can do with others. Notice the work of God in the lives of others, and tell them about it. Tell them of the ways that you have seen their faith in action. Tell them of the ways that you have observed their boldness in speaking of the gospel. Tell them of the times they were a blessing of God to you. Tell them of the ways you have witnessed their love for others. Tell them of the evidences of God's working in their lives. And then watch to see the encouragement that your words are. As I have done this with others, I have seen faces light up with joy.

Do you want to "Encourage the Discouraged"? Finally,
4. Remind of God's Gifts (verses 6-7)

Look at verses 6 and 7.

2 Timothy 1:6-7

For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

Verse 6 is where I have derived the first part of the theme of 2 Timothy: "Fan the Flame" (as the ESV says). God has given you some gifts. Blow on them. Let the fire of God burn in your bones.

In order for a fire to burn, you need three elements. You need fuel (to burn). You need heat (to ignite). You need oxygen (to continue). If you lack any of these, a fire won't burn. As the fuel burns, it creates the heat to continue the burning. But, without oxygen, a fire will merely simmer. Paul told Timothy, "God has given you the fuel to burn white-hot for Him. But, the heat isn't in your life. So, get the oxygen on the fire of your life, and watch it burn for His glory."

Also, a fire needs tending. If you have a fireplace, you know what I mean. You leave the logs there for a while and they burn pretty well. But, after a while, they need to be stirred. They need to be poked. They need to be prodded. This is typical of our lives as well. Paul's counsel to Timothy was to prod the fire. Paul's counsel was to stir up what God has given. We have all been given gifts. But, our natural tendency is to let things sit, to wither down and die. But we need to constantly kindle the flame, the gift of God which is in us. How do we do that? I think it is through the Word of God and prayer. These are like the fresh input, the oxygen, to kindle the flame.

Now, Timothy had a supernatural gift. It says here that it came to him through the laying on of hands. It is also spoken of in 1 Timothy 4:14, "Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you." We don't know exactly what this gift was, but it was a supernatural gift, a special enablement for Timothy to be set apart for the ministry of the gospel. Perhaps Paul was referring to the same things in verse 7, ...

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

What was given to Timothy has been given to all believers. Notice the one negative and the three positives. God hasn't given us one thing. And, God has given us three things.

We have **not** been given a spirit of **timidity**. Timidity is often also translated as "fear". He has not given us a nature of shrinking back; He has called us to be bold! We are to be bold like the early church. Darryn read for us earlier from Acts 4. That is how we are to be bold. Acts 4 verse 20 speaks of how they could not stop speaking of what they had seen and heard. Proverbs 28:1 says that "the righteous are bold as a lion."

Many people, when they read verse 7 and hear Paul exhorting Timothy away from a timidity, they try to characterize Timothy as this super-shy, super-timid man. I don't think that is the case. I think Timothy is struggling with something that everybody struggles with. I was meeting with some other pastors this week in preparation for a pastor's training conference we are having at the church this week. We will be going through 2 Timothy in our study. And, as I was reading and discussing these verses, I remarked that I often feel like a Timothy. I can be extroverted in some respects, but I feel that in many ways I am an introvert; I am timid; I am not as bold as I need to be. One of the pastors in the meeting is one who is a very bold man. Our personalities are almost polar opposites. He is bold; he tells it like it is; he is out there in your face. I was encouraged that he said, "I feel like I am Timothy, too." There are other aspects of Timothy that he could point to that described him at times -- ready to wrangle about words (2:14) and quarrelsome (2:24). It was helpful to me to see that others feel the tendency to be ashamed of the gospel as well as me (1:8). It also made me realize that maybe we don't have a perfectly clear picture of Timothy because all pastors are to be "a Timothy". And he wants all people to be "a Timothy".

We are all called to be bold. But, we are all timid and ashamed. We don't always speak up. We are ashamed of the gospel. In verse 8, which we will get to next week, Paul says, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God" (2 Tim 1:8). And in verse 12, "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Tim 1:12). And again in verse 16 with Onesiphorus: "The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains;" (2 Tim 1:16). Onesiphorus was not ashamed to follow Paul's teachings which Paul was imprisoned for.

The last part of verse 7 speaks of what God has given us. A spirit of power, of love, and of discipline.

This **power** is an enablement, an ability from God. 2 Peter 1:3 says that, "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence." We have been given everything we need! There is nothing more that we need. We have all we need to live a life of godliness through Christ Jesus.

God has also given us **love**. Love is crucial to the ministry, as we all minister to other people. Love people! I am learning to love. But, it's not that I need to love. God has already given me the love, and I need to share it with others.

He has given us **discipline**. Your translation may say, "self control" or "sound judgement" or "soberness". I say that all of this is needed in ministry. There is so much to do. There is so much opposition and conflict. Like 2 Timothy 2:24 says, "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome", but be self controlled and not be self-interested. It is not that I need to generate this discipline or self control or sound judgement. God has given it to me! And, he has given it to you as well through Christ. He has given us these things for the ministry.

So, if you want to "Encourage the Discouraged", Express Your Thankfulness (verse 3), Desire Your Relationship (verse 4), Remember God's Working (verse 5) in the past, and Remind of God's Gifts (verses 6-7) for future ministry.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on August 21, 2011 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Reforming Pastoral Ministry, page 179.

[2] http://www.gty.org/resources/Sermons/55-1_Motivating-a-Spiritual-Son