

February 14, 2010 PM

## THE SEASON OF SELF-DOUBT

*“I come to you in weakness, timid and trembling.” (1 Corinthians 2:3, LB)*

*“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7, NIV)*

I am currently preaching a series on the subject of “The Seasons of Life.” Tonight I want to look at the counsel Paul gave his son in the faith about self-doubt. He could do that because he had come out of a life of self-doubt himself. This great confident missionary who had had encounters with God like few others, had seasons of self-doubt. We all go through this. He encouraged Timothy to grow through this season.

### Two causes of self-doubt:

- Failure in a job or a relationship or as a parent.
- Success: What do you do after you hit a grand slam homerun? How do you live up to your highlight film?

### Four responses to doubt:

- We listen to our doubt. We become self-critical and despairing. We need to stop calling ourselves names and start calling on God’s name. Stop having a pity-party.
- We try to ignore our doubts. Thomas wanted to ignore his doubts, but Jesus would not let him. We have to admit them and confront them.
- We lie about our self-doubts. We listen to motivational tapes, have positive confessions: “I can do anything!” No you can’t; no one can. Sooner or later we have to admit it’s a lie.

What do we do, how are we to respond? Tell your doubts the truth and act on that truth. It’s not enough to know the truth; we have to act. If you know the truth but don’t act on it,

you will remain stuck in that season. Truthfully this has been a major problem in my life. Living with a low self-esteem is hard. The people who God used most were people who faced self-doubt and overcame it: Moses, Jeremiah, and David.

**I. Paul told Timothy: “You’re influential so be an example.”**

***“Do not let anyone treat you as if you are unimportant because you are young. Instead be an example to the believers with your words, your actions, your love, your faith and your pure life.” (1 Timothy 4:12, NCV)***

**A. There is a “because” for all of us.**

1. Moses couldn’t speak well.
2. Timothy was young.
3. Jeremiah said they won’t listen.
4. For Abraham and Sarah, they were too old.

**B. People may look down on you; we look down on ourselves.**

1. Truth is we are fearfully and wonderfully made.
2. We are God’s masterpiece; trophies of His grace.
3. I can do everything God wants me to do through Christ.

**\*NOTE** You say, “That does not sound very humble.” Listen, humility is not putting yourself down or denying your importance or influence. Humility is not seeing ourselves as less important; it is seeing God as most important and others as more important.

4. When I focus on that I understand God can and will use me.
5. We have people watching us: Kids, peers, family, friends, and we are influencing them.

**\*NOTE** How many have heard the story of conversions because they watched a neighbor consistently living out their faith.

### **C. Ways we are examples:**

1. With our words.
2. Our lives; the way we act.
3. Our love; how we respond to others.
4. Our faith; how we live for God.
5. Our purity: We have a life that compliments my message, rather than contradicts it.

**\*NOTE** The words “My sin hurts no one but me” is a lie. It has profound influence on everyone around you. Paul said, ***“You should follow my example, just as I follow Christ’s.” (1 Cor. 11:1)*** If I follow His example, others will see Jesus in me and be positively influenced.

**II. Paul told Timothy: You are inadequate, so depend upon God.**  
***“Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves but our adequacy is from God.” (2 Cor. 3:5, NASV)***

#### **A. God wants us to learn to depend upon Him.**

1. How many get in the cycle of depending on God then moving that dependency on ourselves.
2. Our answer is to reduce our life to things we think we can manage.
3. We no longer attempt anything that will take us out of our comfort zone.

**\*NOTE** God wants us to depend on Him for what we can’t do alone. For some that means staying married to who you married or loving one of your children; for some it means stepping out in ministry or obeying God with a tithe. It’s not just miraculous events in life.

4. If you don't plant a plant when you bring it home, it may shrivel up and die.

**B. Facing inadequacies depending on God helps us to grow.**

1. It gives us a testimony.

Jesus said, ***"Apart from you you can do nothing." (John 15:5)***

2. Faith grows as you see that God is faithful to work in your life.
3. When you make yourself available, God will use you for significant things.

***"I can do all things through Christ, because He gives me strength." (Phil. 4:13, NIV)***

**III. Paul tells Timothy: You are invaluable, so use your gift.**

***"I remind you to keep using the gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. Now let it grow, as a small flame grows into a fire." (2 Timothy 1:6, NCV)***

**A. We are valuable because we are one of a kind.**

1. We have gifts so don't be an imitator of someone else.
2. We have gifts so don't be a spectator.

***"Do not neglect your gift." (1 Timothy 4:14)***

3. No one can do what God has called us to do.
4. God has a plan for your life.

**B. Our greatest joy is found in serving God by serving people.**

1. That's letting your light shine.

***"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others." (1 Peter 4:10)***

2. As long as you are serving you will always be significant.

**IV. Paul told Timothy: You are incomplete, so decide to grow.**

***"Cultivate these things. Immerse yourself in them. The people will all see you mature right before their eyes!" (1 Timothy 4:15, The Message)***

**A. One reason I feel self-doubt is because I am incomplete.**

1. Use this season to remind yourself to grow.
2. Self-doubt will either drive you to depression or challenge you to grow.
3. God wants to complete us.

**B. The secret of growth is putting forth effort.**

1. The right thing is always the hard thing so it requires commitment.
2. We grow together and we must be willing to let others see you grow.
3. We don't like to allow people to see us grow; we want them to see us full grown.

Our lives can be a lonely experience of failure, or a shared experience of victory. So share with others your feelings.

***“Grow in spiritual strength and become better acquainted with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)***

***“When God’s power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine.” (Eph. 3:20, NCV)***