

Fan Into Flame

By Cheri Fish

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 God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:6-7).

Opening Activity

Light a candle and set it in front of the group. Then ask each member of the group to come forward, one at a time, and while raising up the candle, quietly or publicly ask God for one gift, either for herself or for someone she loves.

When my daughters were in Girl Scouts, we went camping and had to build a bonfire. Obviously we couldn't just light a match and *voilà* — we had a blaze! We had to lay a foundation of fine tinder, such as shavings from dried twigs and pine needles, and then crisscross a few larger dried twigs on top of that. After lighting this tinder bed we fanned the small flame to help it take hold. As the fire grew we continued to add larger pieces of wood and before we knew it we'd have a good blaze!



This analogy came to mind when a recent discussion of leadership took place. So many of us hear the words, “We need leaders” — and go into a panic! To get past the initial —“What me a leader? No way!” — we need to look at what the Bible says about the gifts God has given us to use in leadership roles.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, open our hearts and minds through Your Holy Spirit, that we may fully understand Your Word and apply it to our lives with joy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Laying the Foundation

Discuss: What gifts does God give to people for service in the church? **I Corinthians 12:8-11, 27-28** outlines some of the gifts that God gave the church in Corinth.

Discuss: What gifts for service in the church do you see in yourself? What gifts for service in the church do you see in others?

Just as in building a bonfire, we need a foundation. In **2 Timothy 1: 6**, according to St. Paul, what does he tell Timothy is his foundation to be fanned into flame? What is that “gift of God” given to Timothy in verse 6?

We too have been given that “gift of God”. When did we receive that gift?

Acts 2:38-39

John 3:5-6

Titus 3:5

The Foundation is Laid — Now Fan Into Flame

Once we have been called by God to use the gifts He has given us, what does He expect of us? (**2 Timothy 1:7**)

Timidity (fear):

What do the following passages promise us about being timid or fearful?

Joshua 1:5

1 John 4:18

1 Peter 3:13-15

Spirit of Power:

In **2 Timothy 1:7** Paul tells Timothy God has given us a spirit of power. What happened when the disciples received the power of the Holy Spirit? (**Acts 1:8**)

Love:

2 Timothy 1:7 also says we receive a spirit of love. True Christian love is ignited by the Holy Spirit. See **Galatians 5:22** to see how the flame is strengthened through the fruit of the Spirit.

The Spirit of love demonstrates God’s love through us. How is this love described in **I Corinthians 13:4-5**?

Self-Discipline:

What are other words or descriptions of self-discipline?

Titus 1:8

Titus 2:2

I Timothy 2:9

What does God promise us in the following passages?

James 1:5

Romans 8:37

1 John 1:9

Isaiah 41:10

Isaiah 14:27

When our motivation is waning and our enthusiasm lacking what does God promise?

Isaiah 42:3a

John 14:16

Ephesians 3:19b

God empowers and strengthens us daily through the means of grace, which are God’s Word and sacraments, so that the flame of service will continually burn brightly in us. What does **I Thessalonians 5:14** encourage leaders to do? How does that apply to us?

Finally, what does Paul warn Timothy against in **I Timothy 4:14a**? What may that say to each of us?

Look at God’s Spirit as one of God’s GIFTS

The power of the Holy Spirit is **G**od-given. • The Holy Spirit empowers us to use our gifts **I**ntentionally in service to Him. • Keep fanning the **F**lame through faithful use of the Word and Sacrament so it continues to burn brightly. • “God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.” Be **T**imid no more! • Find daily **S**trength in the Word and Sacrament, which equips us for service to Christ!

G – God-given

I – Intentional

F – Flame burning brightly

T – Timid no more

S – Strengthened daily through Word and Sacrament

Prayer

Heavenly Father, through Your Word let the power of the Holy Spirit burn brightly in our lives, showing You as our true Leader, as we boldly and confidently serve You. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Closing Hymn: “The Gifts Christ Freely Gives” (*LSB* 602) or “Christ Be My Leader” (*LW* 365, *LSB* 861) or “Renew Me, O Eternal Light” (*LW* 373, *TLH* 398)

Cheri Fish lives in Bay City, Michigan, with her husband, Dale. She is a part-time school music director at St. John–Amelith, Bay City, where she is an LWML member. Cheri presently serves as VP of Organizational Resources for the Michigan District LWML.