

**I Am First Baptist Church:
I Will Partner with My Church to Lead My Family to Christ
2 Timothy 1:3-7, 13-14**

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Text Introduction: Today, we wrap up a series called “I Am First Baptist Church.” In this series we have considered 5 commitments to make toward the church. As we have been saying, these commitments are not so much things to do, but instead attitudes to hold. Thus far, the 5 commitments have been:

1. I will be functioning church member.
2. I will be a unifying church member.
3. I will not let my church become about me—that is my preferences and desires.
4. I will pray for the leaders (pastors) of my church.
5. I will treasure my church.

Today, we put the family and the church together and consider this attitude: I will partner with my church to lead my family to Christ (and discipleship). Consider the text of 2 Timothy 1.

Text: ³ I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience as my ancestors did, when I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day. ⁴ Remembering your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy, ⁵ clearly recalling your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois, then in your mother Eunice, and that I am convinced is in you also.

⁶ Therefore, I remind you to keep ablaze the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.

¹³ Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard, through the Holy Spirit who lives in us, that good thing entrusted to you.

Introduction: We don’t know a lot about the childhood of Jesus. Only Luke mentions anything other than the birth and early life of Jesus. Luke gives us just a glimpse into the family of Jesus when he tells us, “Every year His parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival.” (Luke 2:41)

The other writers of the New Testament don’t give us a lot about the role of the life of the church in the family. There is a clear reason for this—the church is just in her infancy. But, what the Bible does tell us a great deal about is the role of the parents in instilling faith in their children. Think of it this way: Don’t you want to pass on to your children all that is important to you.

Two of my favorite texts from the Old Testament are these:

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9 ⁴ “Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. ⁷ Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

⁸ Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. ⁹ Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- Joshua 24:15 “As for me and my family (house) we will serve the LORD.”

So, as a follower of Jesus Christ, understanding the importance of the church in your relationship to Him as we have addressed over the course of these last weeks together, our commitment should be to lead our family to love the church. In other words, we could take all five of these other commitments and now say that it is our duty to teach our children these things.

We must have as our commitment to partner with the church to lead our family to Christ and in discipleship.

The Church and the family are partners in leading others to Christ.

The Partnership Identified:

In Paul’s letter to Timothy, we get a hint of the partnership of the family and the church in the spiritual formation of Timothy.

- 2 Timothy 1:5-6 clearly recalling your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois, then in your mother Eunice, and that I am convinced is in you also.⁶ Therefore, I remind you to keep ablaze the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands.
- Acts 16:1-5

Then he went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek. ²The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him. ³ Paul wanted Timothy to go with him, so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, since they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they traveled through the towns, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for them to observe. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily.

Reggie Joiner, former Children’s Pastor under Andy Stanley, wrote a book about children’s ministry in the church. Now, before you go buy the book and believe that we need to do everything in that book, let me quickly say that there are parts of that book that I am not in agreement. However, with the bottom line thesis of the book, I agree. Joiner encourages churches and family to “Think Orange.”

Think Orange:

Yellow (the church) + Red(the family) = Orange

He chose the color yellow for the church because the church is to be a light. He chose red for the family because hearts are often depicted as red and every person needs the love of a family that only a family can bring.

So, think orange. The church and the family are not in competition. We are partners. Each has a vital role in the spiritual formation of every person.

The Partnership Imperative:

The imperative can be summed up with just one word: **Sincerity!** The church and the family must be sincere. We must be consistent. Our children are going to learn by what we do, not what we say.

You have heard the numbers on those raised in the church who leave the church. There are those who have written as to why. The interesting thing is that some of these reports contradict each other. So, what is the answer? I believe the answer lies in integrity of the home and the integrity of the church.

The next generation will only be reached with integrity. This generation sees right through that which is not authentic. In short, we must practice what we preach. That's how our children will be reached.

Joe McKeever effectively writes about this principle.

After establishing a parent's credibility, nothing convinces a child of the reality of God and Jesus Christ like seeing the parents living out their faith. James Dobson recalls from his childhood times when the family would be on an automobile trip and his father would recite the latest chapter of Scripture he had memorized while his mother sat on the other side of the car with an open Bible, checking him out. Not a word was said to little Jimmy in the back seat, but he saw and learned this was important stuff. Mom and Dad really believe this.

Learning most often is more "caught" than taught.

The Partnership Instructions:

We get two wonderful little instructions in our passage before us today.

- **Give away what you believe.**

The Deuteronomy passages teaches us that this must be both spontaneous and scheduled. This instruction applies to the home and to the church.

- **Guard what you have believed.**

This applies to what we have learned both at home and in the church.

I've heard far too many parents espouse a philosophy about raising their children that suggests something like this: "I don't want to force my children toward a relationship with God. I'm letting them

find their own way.” You are right to anticipate that you cannot force your children, but to not guide them is absolutely absurd. I heard a story one time about the British poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge that serves as a great example. Once he was in a discussion with a man who firmly believed that children should not be given any formal religious education. They would be free to choose their own faith or no faith at all. Coleridge did not disagree, but instead inviting the man over to see his garden—a very neglected garden. Upon seeing the garden, the man replied, “You call this a garden? There’s nothing here but weeds.” “Well,” Coleridge said, “You see, I did not want to infringe upon the liberty of the garden in any way. I was just giving the garden a chance to express itself.” (From *Daily Walk*, March 28, 1992.)