



## *An Open Letter to Pastors and Lay Leaders*

*(From One Who Has Been There)*

Or: *“Lessons from the Top Ten Mistakes I Have Made in Ministry.”*

### *Part Three: Enlisted: Fan the Flame*

Paul, writing from his prison to young Timothy, can be found in 2 Timothy 1:1-11

<sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

<sup>8</sup> So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, <sup>10</sup> but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. <sup>11</sup> And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 1[1]

Paul knew his time was at hand; he said so in 2 Timothy 4:6-8. Yet his heart is with young Timothy. He had sent him into a difficult area, for the city of Ephesus was a strategic commercial center made famous by its dedication to Diana, the goddess of fertility. The temple structure was one of seven wonders of the ancient world and its economy was centered on sorcery and the practice of magic. Those first century inhabitants of the city were notorious for their immorality and dishonesty, they took pride in being volatile and divisive. It was a tough assignment for young Timothy who was working there by himself. Here is a young, shy, retiring intern thrust into the mouth of the lion and his task is to organize lay-leadership from this group of newly converted Ephesians. He was assigned the task of training spiritual leaders from this group, made up of former worshippers of Diana.

What advice would you give to this young man? Paul’s council to Timothy is found in verse six:

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. Fan the flame of the gift of God.

*How do you do that?*

**“This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish little clod of ailments and grievances. Complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no “Brief Candle” to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment,**

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1[1] *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

**and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.  
(Shaw 1972 page 84)**

Next Week: *Equipped Part One: Become Equipped*

*Blessings, Ken Crauford*

