

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
365

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will feature 2 Tim. 1:7: **“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self discipline”**. The Greek word translated as “timidity” is “deilia”. It comes from “deos” which means “fright”. It refers to “cowards” and is never used in a good sense in the Bible. Yes! **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10)**. Yes! It is godly to fear God, but it is never godly to be a coward.

California Civil Code 1710.2 requires someone selling a home to disclose to the buyer if anyone has died in that home within the past three years. Reporting the death on the TDS, or “Transfer Disclosure Statement”, is of particular importance if the death was violent as the result of a crime. The reason for this is obvious. Many people are afraid of ghosts. Regardless of what they may “say”, most people believe in God and also believe in life after death. In fact, the book of Romans states that **“God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20)**. There is a God shaped vacuum in every human heart. Regardless of what people “say”, they intuitively know there is a God. So Civil Code 1710.2, like a lie detector test, provides insight into what people really “believe”, regardless of what they “say”.

In the course of conducting evangelistic campaigns in Idaho it was my privilege to spend a month with the late Wesley Tuttle. Wesley was a child prodigy who had his own radio program at the age of 14. He was selected by Disney to do all of the yodeling in the original movie “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”. He was one of the first three recording artists signed by Capital Records and his song - “Detour, There’s a Muddy Road Ahead” sold over a million copies. When Wesley became a Christian he felt led of God to cancel all his contracts with Capital Records, the movies, Las Vegas, his TV program, and every other secular venue. While realizing that God leads others to do differently, he prayerfully devoted the rest of his life to exclusively singing for the Lord and laying up treasure in heaven. It was an honor to spend so much time with him.

One evening over supper Tuttle began sharing about the late Errol Flynn. Flynn was a famous actor in a previous generation. He was tall, athletic, and handsome and took Hollywood by storm. His dissolute life style, however, led to his untimely death when he was only 50 years old. He was noted for making up his own rules with a drink in his hand and a swagger in his voice. Tuttle said that Flynn’s mansion was known as his “sin house”. It featured a bar, casino, and secret passages with two way mirrors and peep holes. This enabled Flynn to spy on his guests in their most compromising moments. Tuttle said that one guest was so outraged when he discovered that Flynn had been spying on him that he physically attacked the voyeuristic actor and almost beat him to death.

Flynn died in 1959 and his mansion was purchased by Stuart Hamblen. Hamblen had himself been an outrageous sinner addicted to alcohol, and drugs. His conversion to Christ, however, not only delivered him from these addictions, but gave him the courage to witness for Christ in an environment where it was not cool to be a Christian. In fact, Hamblen was fired from his job for refusing to advertise alcoholic beverages. After receiving Christ he composed the song “It is no Secret what God can Do”. This became Stuart Hamblen’s signature song.

Solomon said, **“The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion” (Prov. 28:1)**. This beautifully describes the way Hamblen moved into the “sin house”. He was bold as a lion. He was not timid or afraid about what had gone on in that house before. He knew that light drives away darkness and that if you resist the devil he will flee from you. Therefore Hamblen boldly transformed the “sin house” into a Gospel center. All alcoholic beverages were removed from the bar and it became the show case for hundreds of Christian records and copies of Christ honoring sheet music. With the help of God every room in the house was purged of evil and dedicated to Christ. Truly, **“God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self discipline”**.

A group of atheists in England raised \$113,000 for an ad campaign to promote adtheism. They put signs on busses that read: *“There’s probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life”*. Atheist Richard Dawkins contributed \$9,000 to the project. Isn’t it interesting that the possibility that there is a God causes atheists to worry. Regardless of what they profess, many atheists wouldn’t want to purchase a house where someone had been murdered within the last three years. Dawkins “boldly” flaunted his materialism by saying: “The universe we observe has ... no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. ... DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music”. Regardless of what Dawkins “says”, he still seems to be “worried” that God might hold him accountable for “dancing to his DNA”.

Atheist Stephen Hawking ridiculed believers by saying: “Heaven is a fairy story for those afraid of the dark”. Christian Professor John Lennox responded: “Atheism is a fairy story for those afraid of the light”. The argument cuts both ways. Many atheists have an unhealthy fear of God. Dr. Thomas Nagel shocked the evolutionary world with his book “Mind and Cosmos”. The sub title of the book is “Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False”. “Thinking people”, like Nagel, question how physical evolution can produce a non-physical mind. Nagel even went further and confessed to his fear of religion . He wrote: *“I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God and, naturally, hope that I’m right in my belief. It’s that I hope there is no God! I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that.”*(The Last Word” by Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997)

Please! Do not let the devil deceive you. There is a God and He **“did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self discipline”**.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce