

I have been reflecting on the July multi-family camp I participated in. Sharing my experience and process is usually the easiest for me to get down on paper. My reluctance (fear) of writing this article was greater than usual. I was experiencing a “writers block” regarding the spiritual component for the article. This morning I prayed for more specific direction in my practice and ministry. I am getting ready to make a decisions on several projects. A book publisher for Christian Parent Wisdom. Starting a support conference call for parents. Whether to continue writing my own book, Spiritual Connection. And how to market Great Behavior Breakdown classes. The “writers block” was broken during church today. God still answers prayer. My pastor spoke on 1 Timothy 1:1-11 today.

I will talk first about my own personal process at the multi-family camp. I experienced my usual resistance to go. The resistance comes from the conscious level as well as unconscious level. Being gone for six days takes a lot of preparation time to tie up loose ends. After coming back, it some how seems like the loose got untied. Then there’s the fear of what I am going to have to face in myself while at camp. What unconscious layers of fear and trauma are going to be revealed to me about me? Knowing that at the end of this process I will feel much better does not take away the fear. When I arrived in Virginia, it was 100° in the shade plus the humidity. As always, I was graciously welcomed by Bryan’s family. I feel like I am a part of his family. I was also fortunate enough to have time to connect more with Helene Timpone and her family.

During the process of the camp, abandonment seemed to jump out at me. This may have been due to having children involved with their families. It may have been due to that’s what I needed to take a look at myself. Possibly both. During camp, the focus was kept simple. Love versus fear. That’s the stress model in its simplest form. However, sometimes the simplest things can be very complex. The question becomes, how do we keep our focus on love? “The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” 1 Timothy 1:5. The world we live in provides many distractions. It is full of fear and challenges. There is much idolatry. There are many material things. There are many, many focuses on the external. By focusing on love, we become open to the see what God has for us. That was easy to do for Adam and Eve in the Garden. That is, until sin entered in. It has been a struggle for man ever since.

I became more aware of my own abandonment issues. The past two months, I had been in the process developing a more emotionally intimate and vulnerable relationship in my life. The tip of the iceberg had already started to appear before I hit camp. During camp, the iceberg itself showed its ugly face of fear. Fortunately, I was able to have some private mat time after hours. I also had great loving support from the staff that Bryan had assembled for this event. When I came home, my processing was not over. I wish it could be that simple. Leave Virginia, come home, and I’m done. But that’s not the case. Getting home at 2 AM in the morning didn’t help. I spent the next day grieving and sobbing. I allowed the Holy Spirit and close friends to support and to minister to me. I believe that I was emotionally regressed to a very early age. At least that’s what I felt like on the inside. At times the fear and pain were almost immobilizing. I asked my prayer warriors for specific prayers. I focused on Joshua 1:5 “....I will never leave you

nor forsake you.” A day or so later I felt renewed, refreshed and healed.

Let’s look at the three things in 1 Timothy 1:5. The first is love which comes from a pure heart. The challenge is for each of us to search our hearts. We then need to clear out whatever blocks love. The most obvious of these blocks are usually anger and resentments. Forgiveness is always the key to this. Luke 6:37 “. . . Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” The biggest block for me was the fear of abandonment that I still carry around. It’s at our cellular level and unconscious. I knew it was there. It was revealed to me at a deeper level. I know that many times I need help in becoming aware of what my issues are. I try to be mindful. I try not to ignore when my feelings are triggered. However, I still have some old conditioning which keeps me from going to those hard places. I believe it is important to have God involved in the healing process. That is why I pray daily, Psalm 51:10, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” God revealed to me what I needed to know at a deeper level. He guided me and provided the support I needed from others and the Holy Spirit to heal. My “steadfast spirit” was a return to regulation and freedom from fear.

The stress model tells us not to focus on the external. The external is behavior. The world and religion pulls us to the external. We have behavior management plans and punishments. Focus on behavior leads to more shame. We have rituals and legalism. Jesus tells us in Matthew 23:36, “Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.” The stress model tells us to focus on the internal. Focus on the two primary emotions. Love and fear. God said that David, the Psalmist, was a man after His own heart. There are numerous references in the Bible of David calling out to God. “My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.” Psalm 84:2. I believe this was because David, although a sinner, was able to be honest with God. David came before God to seek forgiveness and healing. True faith is expressed from and pure heart. This is an internal expression. Our faith is our expression, either verbally or behaviorally, of the love inside us. Otherwise we are walking in fear. I see this as another “spiritual connection” between the stress model and the Bible.

Next month I will write about the last two things in 1 Timothy 1-11. Love coming from “. . . a good conscience and a sincere faith.” I covet your prayers for me regarding the decisions mentioned earlier that I am facing. Hopefully I will have more information on the parent support conference call. As Heather Forbes says “Press on”.

Walk in love and peace.

In Christ,

Ken Thom LPC

