

2 Timothy 1:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Analysis

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. This verse provides theological foundation for rekindling Timothy's gift. "Spirit of fear" (pneuma deilias, πνεῦμα δειλίας) denotes cowardly timidity that shrinks from duty and danger. The Greek deilia (δειλία) describes fear that paralyzes, causing retreat from God's calling when facing opposition. This cowardly fear doesn't come from God—it originates in unbelief, self-focus, or satanic intimidation. Revelation 21:8 lists "the fearful" first among those excluded from God's kingdom.

Instead, God gives "power" (dynamis, δύναμις)—supernatural ability to fulfill His calling despite obstacles, the same power that raised Christ from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20). "Love" (agapē, ἀγάπη) is self-sacrificial covenant love that seeks others' good above personal safety. "Sound mind" (sōphronismos, σωφρονισμός) denotes self-discipline, prudent judgment, mental/emotional stability—Spirit-given capacity for wise, measured responses rather than panic.

These three qualities work together. Power without love becomes tyrannical; love without power becomes sentimentality; both without sound judgment become dangerous. The Spirit produces all three simultaneously, enabling faithful ministry despite opposition.

Historical Context

Timothy's timidity had multiple sources. He was young (likely thirties, but young relative to elder responsibilities), physically weak (1 Timothy 5:23), and apparently timid by temperament (1 Corinthians 16:10-11). The Corinthian church's intimidation of Timothy during a previous visit had caused Paul to warn them to put him at ease. Nero's persecution meant Christians faced arrest, torture, and execution. Many Asian believers had deserted Paul (1:15). False teachers aggressively opposed sound doctrine. Ancient Ephesian culture, dominated by the temple of Artemis, intimidated Christians. Leading a church in this environment required extraordinary divine courage.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What specific fears—of rejection, failure, suffering, man's opinion—tempt you to shrink back from fully obeying God's calling?
2. How can you practically rely on the Spirit's power, love, and sound mind in situations where fear usually paralyzes you?
3. In what areas do you need to repent of cowardice that chooses comfort and safety over faithfulness to Christ?

Interlinear Text

οὐ	γὰρ	ἔδωκεν	ἡμῖν	ὁ	θεὸς	πνεῦμα	δειλίας	ἀλλὰ
not	For	given	us	G3588	God	the spirit	of fear	but
G3756	G1063	G1325	G2254		G2316	G4151	G1167	G235
δυνάμεως	καὶ	ἀγάπης	καὶ	σωφρονισμοῦ				
of power	and	of love	and	of a sound mind				
G1411	G2532	G26	G2532	G4995				

Additional Cross-References

Romans 8:15 (Spirit): For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

1 John 4:18 (Love): There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Galatians 5:22 (Love): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

John 14:27 (Parallel theme): Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Luke 10:19 (Parallel theme): Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Acts 1:8 (Spirit): But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Zechariah 4:6 (Spirit): Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Proverbs 2:7 (Parallel theme): He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

Proverbs 8:14 (Parallel theme): Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

Romans 5:5 (Love): And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.