

9,17,26 2 Tim. 1:3-7 The Downside and Upside of Faithfulness

To help set the atmosphere of this final epistle of Paul (which was written between 64-67 A.D.), I want to read a passage from the last chapter of 2nd Timothy; (2 Tim 4:6-8);

I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

I just wanted to remind us that these are Paul's final words, which means that, like any of us, he would want to make sure that what he wrote contained the truths he believed were extremely important, both for Timothy and for the Church.

I don't know how many Christians over the last 2000 years were allowed to know the timing of their graduation, but Paul did. So, he took advantage of that and gave us 2nd. Timothy as a summation of those things Paul wanted to make sure would be passed on to every generation of this Age, especially the last generation since that is where his prophetic writings would have their fulfillment.

Also, it can be helpful to picture the historical setting that an author was in when he wrote his letter. So, here's an overview of what Paul was experiencing when he wrote 2nd. Timothy;

We learn from the book of Acts that Paul was sent to prison in Rome, charged with endeavoring to incite an insurrection against the Roman government. For two full years he remained a prisoner under guard in his own hired house until he appeared before Caesar, and then he was set free because the charges which the Jews had brought against him were not sustained. As far as we can learn from these early records, he then went on to Spain and preached there for a time. From Spain he retraced his steps and went back to the region along the eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea. He visited a number of churches where he had preached before, and went to Crete and other places not visited previously.

He was arrested again at a time when there was a great persecution against Christians. During the first imprisonment Christianity was looked upon as a sect of Judaism, which was a legalized religion. But shortly afterward the city of Rome was burned down, and by many this was attributed to Nero's own order. Finding that he was greatly blamed for such iniquity he attempted to turn the onus from himself by putting it upon the Christians. He issued an indictment demanding that all Christians should be sought out everywhere in the empire as enemies of Rome and put to death. It was during this persecution that Paul was arrested again, and taken back to Rome and confined in the Mamertine dungeon.

If you visit the city of Rome today you can see that dungeon. You can go down into it, and as you look around at those bare walls and gaze up at the ceiling, where there is just a little hole in the center from which food was dropped down to Paul and water passed through in some kind of vessel, you get an idea of the suffering that he must have endured. There is no window whatsoever through which to look to the outside world. A river passes underneath, and there is a cleft in the floor where you can look down and see the water running. It must have been cold and damp in there at all times of the year, particularly in the winter. As I stood there, I had some little realization of what it must have meant for God's servants in early days to devote themselves to the ministry of the Word of God.

Just how long Paul remained in that dungeon we do not know. Nero died in A.D. sixty-eight, so sometime before that, possibly about A.D. 66 or 67, Paul was led out from his prison one day to the place of execution. There he laid down his gray head upon a great stone, and in a moment the executioner's axe had decapitated him. Paul was absent from the body and present with the Lord.

Sometime during those months, he wrote this letter-the last letter of his that has come down to us. There is always something tender about the last message from one whom we have learned to love. How we thank God for the apostle Paul's ministry. How delighted we would have been if we might

have known him and heard his message delivered from his own lips. Here are his last words to his son in the faith. As we read this epistle we shall find again and again that it is a triumphant message, though it came from a dungeon death cell.

And as we're going to see in 2 Timothy, there is an emphasis on prophecy (on eschatological truths) many of which had begun to be developed and were in infancy in Paul's generation, but were destined to reach their climax in our generation. Since over 1/3 of the Bible is prophetic, it's not surprising that much of what we study would have predictive sections, and 2nd. Timothy definitely does.

I won't go into it now, but you might have noticed that when we go from Paul's first letters (which were to the Thessalonians and the Galatians) to this last letter, Paul himself was growing in his knowledge of Christ and of the Christian life. Things were becoming clearer and deeper as time went on – which is not surprising since Christ is infinite and even when there is no longer any flesh or devil to hinder us, we will continue to learn more of Christ forever.

We may feel like we've stagnated from time to time, but if our prayer and study continue, new light will eventually shine. We're only scratching the surface in this life.

Now, let's read chapter 1, vs's 3-7, and we'll go from there;

I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

How do we serve God with a pure conscience when we know from 1 Jn. that we all sin consistently and that if anyone says he doesn't, he (quote) "Lies and the truth is not in him" (1 Jn. 1:8). The answer is 1 Jn. 1:9; "If we confess our sins, He is faithful

and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The experience and confidence of a clear conscience isn’t based on our assurance of self-righteousness (key word being “self”), it’s based on believing that God will do what He says He’ll do. When we walk in open, honest transparency before the Lord, we can know that our conscience is “pure” – our fellowship with Him and our growth in Him can continue in spite of our imperfections.

Paul was also aware of what he calls Timothy’s “genuine faith” and he knew that Timothy’s grandmother and mother were significant influences on him. I once read that the majority of Christians trace their salvation experience to childhood – to either their parents or to a Sunday school teacher. Children are immensely more open to the gospel than adults because of their tendency to believe what the adults closest to them tell them. Which is one reason our Lord said in Matt. 19:14; “Allow the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Open hearts are receptive to instruction. No matter what our age, it will always be a combination of childlike faith and teachability that sustains our spiritual growth. The one thing most likely to stagnate us is the belief that the knowledge we possess, at least in part, became ours through some degree of personal intelligence; that we were in some way instrumental in “figuring it out”.

But “power, love and a sound mind” are gifts God works into us on the basis of grace, not merit. And right before Paul reminds Timothy of that, he exhorts him to “stir up” the gift of grace *he* was given to use it to teach others what Paul had taught him.

We’re going to spend some time on these things, because besides laying the foundation for where Paul took Timothy in this letter, this internal mindset of childlike faith (not “childish”, there’s a difference) child-*like* faith, coupled with a deep-seated knowledge of our personal inadequacy to know anything of real value apart from the gracious revelation of the Holy Spirit, are the only characteristics that put us in a true position of spiritual receptivity.

Like we saw in a previous study, God teaches the humble and blinds the proud. He must break us of all self-dependence and self-expectation before He can teach us the things of God which are impossible for the natural man, the Soulical man, to understand.

(1 Cor. 2:11-15) No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is rightly evaluated by no one. For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

In writing this to the Corinthian believers, Paul is primarily addressing the fact that born-again Christians can approach the School of Christ depending on the same resources the unbeliever uses to understand things – his mind and his emotions. But, as Paul says to them, it is "impossible" to understand (to "receive") spiritual knowledge if our minds (our intellect; maybe we could say, "our natural brilliance") is what we're depending on. Spiritual knowledge, the knowledge of what the Bible actually means in every verse, can only be understood by direct revelation of the Spirit.

As soon as possible after our salvation, the enemy re-directs us from dependency on the Lord for all things in life, to dependency on our own diligence in study and intellect to discover spiritual realities and what Paul calls "the eternal purpose of God" in Eph. 3:11.

When you and I sit down to study the scriptures or listen to someone teach them, our mindset is either one of expecting and hoping to understand what you're reading or hearing because you're using what you've always used to understand anything – your diligence, objectivity, and concentration. In other words, your disciplined mental capability.

Or, our mindset is one of prayerful dependency and expectation on the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit to lead us into all Truth coupled with the realization, personally, that *without* the Spirit's revelation of the true meaning of what we're studying, no amount of effort we put into this will have any effect at all in discovering genuine spiritual knowledge.

And as I mentioned, the enemy has no problem with intellectual Biblical accuracy because he knows that a "mental" Christianity, however accurate it may be theologically, is a dead Christianity and only a living Christ within us imparting living spiritual truth can pose any threat to him.

Over time, if we approach our learning with the right mindset (*only* if), our spiritual senses will be exercised and trained to distinguish natural from spiritual, and truth from error at a level that both protects us personally and also protects those who believe us.

(1 Tim. 4:15-16) Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will deliver both yourself and those who hear you.

If we can't learn how to learn in a way we've never learned before, we will never learn anything of spiritual value. Again, 1 Cor. 2:14; "But the natural man (including the Corinthian believers ruled by the old man) does *not* receive the things of the Spirit of God . . . nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

It couldn't be more clear or definitive. There are two approaches a Christian can take and only one results in spiritual understanding.

Contemporary Christianity is all about the "natural" approach and as a consequence it does not understand what the Church actually is as those born of the spirit; a new creation with new resources and capacity. It simply functions as an organization using the Bible as a blueprint for attitude and action; so, although the theology may be sound (but usually isn't) there is little to no spiritual life, because that life comes only through taking the spiritual approach, not the natural approach to learning.

As I've said (way too repetitiously), this is the explanation of the global end-time apostasy of the Church. A natural "form of godliness" without the Life of the Spirit expressing the Life of the Son of God. Christians showing the world Christianity instead of Christ.

It's simply where we are in history and Paul saw this coming 2000 years ago. That's why *he* was also 'way too repetitious" in seeking to drive this home while there was still time.

As Sparks put it once;

If you know anything about spiritual pressures and spiritual conflict, if you know anything about the antagonisms and oppositions of the powers of evil, you know quite well that the primary object is always to raise up the natural man. It's the truth. To provoke you on that side of your being as a child of God, to assert and take the natural ground. Do you understand that?

The spiritually educated Christian understands this; the carnal Christian does not. There is no spiritual discernment of a teacher or book in the natural or emotional realm of examination. But as Paul said, the "spiritual man" discerns all things. His examinations are accurate.

Here's a personal crisis around this that one commentator on 1 Cor. 2 had;

I remember so well when I came up against this truth many years ago. I will say this to try and make sense of what I'm wrestling with this afternoon. I came to the realization of this fact, about what I was *really* after, both as for my own knowledge and understanding and value, and good, and ability, and for my ministry, what I was really after could never be possible, never be realized along the lines of any of my own natural capability. I studied and studied and studied. I can see myself now, before I was married, in my own lodging, with my Bible set up before me while I had my meal. And I remember studying various books and articles, and having to get up from my meal and take a walk around the block to get my head steady, dizzy with all of it. And that's the sort of thing I was doing, trying to understand God, trying to find something for my own spiritual good. And at last, I had to say

“I’m not getting there, I’m not finding what I’m after, it’s alluding me”. And then I re-read 1st Corinthians Chapter Two prayerfully, “. . . the natural man cannot”. I had previously thought that Paul was speaking only of the unbeliever, but then it became obvious within the context of this writing, that Paul was addressing Christians. He said, in chapter 3 vs. 1; “I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal (as unto “natural”). You are born of the Spirit, but you are living and trying to grow as if you were born only of the flesh. And the point was, with all his effort “. . . the carnal or natural man cannot”. Period. He doesn’t get through, there’s a barrier. But what a tremendous thing it was to me when at that time I saw that the Holy Spirit is given for us and that *He* has all the capacity for knowing His own things and everything about God, the deep things of God. And if only I have the Holy Spirit, all that God wants me to know, I can know. I tell you from that day to this, this has been an incredible advance in my life; the Holy Spirit is the capacity for seeing what (quote) “No man has seen, nor heart conceived, and what has never entered into the heart of man.” I knew, beyond doubt, that the Holy Spirit is *the* capacity of all that God wants where we’re concerned.

It's not that I doubt whether Timothy understood what Paul was writing; as important as this is, I’m sure this wouldn’t have been the only time Paul discussed this with him. But *because* of its importance and because of the enemy’s plan to remove spiritual sight from God’s people, Paul is including this in his final letter, along with some specifics of what this ‘removal’ will result in, and look like, which we’ll see in chapter 4.

And when I say “remove” spiritual sight, I mean what Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 4:4 when he said, “. . . ; whose minds the god of this age has blinded. . . ” And in 2 Tim. 4:4, “. . . they will turn their ears away from the truth.” Not away from theology, not away from a mental apprehension of the doctrines of the Christian faith (although that often happens too), but away from the Truth as it is in Christ – away from true spiritual reality.

If you think this whole thing is just another important principle to understand and that I'm making too big a deal of this, consider what Paul adds in his exhortation to Timothy after warning him about these things;

(2 Tim. 4:2) Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

There are very few things in Paul's writing that attach this level of urgency and compulsion to them. For those who understand the purpose of God's Church being that of the full development of mature spiritual men and women, and that to avoid his own judgment and destruction Satan knows that it will a remnant of *those kinds* of people whom God will use to bring about that destruction.

Right now (and every day) in your life and mine, the enemy will focus more on replacing spiritual with natural in the deception of the Church than on any other single strategy in this warfare.

If he can reduce the Church to a combination of milk-based, mentally apprehended doctrines and experiences, and eliminate the pursuit and understanding of the importance of spiritual life and growth, he can at least delay his own destruction. That gives him an extreme life-or-death motive for the successful development of the Christian religion as being no more than a spiritually powerless "form of godliness".

We know that God will have His remnant; and that they will judge both Satan and the world with a rod of iron, but until that happens, what we've talked about will remain Satan's primary focus and strategy in his attacks on the Body of Christ.

I apologize for any excessive repetition about this "soul vs. spirit" emphasis in Paul's letters, but on numerous occasions I've had people who have been listening to me teach these things for years and they recommend books, authors, churches and pastors who are operating in the natural, not the spiritual realm of things; so, I can't assume those who recommend these pastors and authors can see that the emperor has no clothes.

I know all of this takes time, experience and practice – and that's fine. Anyway, like I said, I apologize if my repetition is annoying. I'm sure for some it is; but it's too

important, and it's repeated too often in the apostles' letters, to simply set it aside when I know that for some, the light just hasn't come on yet. I can't predict God's timing, but I know that I don't want to see anyone who's been willing to study these things with me, to put up with me, get pulled into a "form of godliness" that could potentially derail them from full conformity to Christ.

It may just be that my communication skills are blurry at best; but regardless of what's happening with me, all I can do for now is strongly encourage all of us to pray about these issues of natural vs. spiritual, and to take a Berean approach – to thoroughly examine with *much prayer* for insight regarding anything and anyone that crosses your path and claims to represent the thoughts of God, because those thoughts may look and sound awesome, but they may or may not contain the element of spiritual life which is essential if spiritual growth is going to result.

Now, Paul also tells Timothy about what some might call the "downside" of faithfulness. By that, I mean what happens to people who remain faithful to teach and live what God has called them to. We could take months to review the lives of the Old Testament prophets who said things like ". . . here am I, send me", not fully realizing what that would imply in their lives and the suffering they would experience from those who were violently resistant to their message.

Christ was not crucified because of His overwhelming popularity.

All of these prophets got their message from God and besides the gracious offer of forgiveness, those messages also included the not-so-subtle implication that forgiveness was desperately needed. This is what happened when these men had what the Bible calls "spiritual insight" or "spiritual interpretation" and they found themselves addressing those who don't.

Spiritual interpretation is the interpretation of everything from a spiritual standpoint. It's bringing in the spiritual implication of things to the people and helping them understand the full meaning of God's message. If you read through the major and minor prophets of Israel, you'll see that this was the primary work they were all doing.

The same thing is happening now, under the new covenant, and it's just as unpopular in our time as it was under the old covenant.

Listen to these comments by Sparks;

I am quite sure that those who have any knowledge whatever of the times, spiritually, will agree with me when I say that the crying need of our time is for a voice of interpretation. There never was a time when there existed so extensively the need for the ministry of explanation. One does not want to make extravagant statements or to be extreme in one's utterances, but I do not think it would be either extravagant or extreme to say that the world today is bankrupt of real ministry in this sense- a voice that interprets the mind of God to His people. It may exist in some small degree here and there, but in no very large way is that ministry being fulfilled. So often our hearts groan and cry out, that the mind of God about the present situation could be brought through, in the first place to the recognition of His people, and then through His people to others beyond. There is a great need for an interpretative voice in our time.

Here's another writing on this from another angle, not sure who the author is;

We find that the prophets arose as a reaction from God to the course and drift of things among His people; a call back, a recovery, re-declaration, a re-pronouncement of God's mind, and a bringing into clear view again of the thoughts of God. The prophets stood in the midst of the stream- usually a fast-rushing stream- like a rock; the course of things broke over them. They challenged and resisted that course, and their presence in the midst of the stream represented God's mind against the prevailing course of things. In the Old Testament, the prophet usually came at a time when things were spiritually bad and anything but according to the Divine mind; the state was evil, things were confused, mixed, chaotic; there was much deception, division and falsehood, and often things very much worse than that. Here is the thing to which their work relates- the original and ultimate purpose of God in and through His people; and when you have said that, you have got right to the heart of things.

We've been looking at the difference between an academic understanding of the Bible and a spiritual understanding. We can study Ephesians, for example, and analyze it and outline the Church and the Body of Christ and remain blind when it comes to really understanding what those terms mean.

Then one day, whether through a teacher or even just directly in personal study, God does something deep within us and we really see the Church, we see the Body of Christ as God sees it, and now Ephesians makes sense, and the Church makes sense.

Those are two completely different worlds; one may have been technically accurate - even fascinating, but something was missing and we might have felt that. If someone asked, we could have stated the truth of all that was in Ephesians, but we didn't know what was *in* that truth – we knew, but we didn't *really* know.

I'll give you an author's example of what happens when you see the Church as the Body of Christ instead of simply a localized expression of Christianity.

The church is not an institution; it is not an earthly system; it is not something national; it is not sectarian; it is not denominational, interdenominational, or undenominational. The church is a Person- it is Christ and it is the extension and expression of that Person- that is the church. It is not a hierarchy at all; it is Christ manifest! And the extension of Christ, of the Person- that is, a people in whom Christ dwells, in whom Christ is Lord, and over whom Christ is Head- that people and no other, is the church. It is not a name- far better to avoid all names. When you put names on something, you bring it to earth and divide it from all others. It's not a name; it is not a tradition. It is not a place, and it is not a form. It is a people whose basis of life and sum-total of life is Christ Himself!

This church is not something that you can see in its entirety; it is not apparent. It is no use going here and there looking for it to find it. You may find a greater or lesser approximation to it here or there; but you will not find this church in fulness anywhere on this earth. Most of the church is in heaven. But wherever you find Christ in men and women, there you have the

church at least in its foundation, and *the spiritual value of the church depends upon the measure of the Christ expressed (repeat).*

Now, to the natural mind, that is vague, its somewhat ethereal or theoretical, but not clear. To the spiritual mind, there *is no other Church* in the Bible. Christ living in and expressing His Life through His second body is the Church – everything else is man-made, not God-made; but very few people can discern the difference.

So, you can see that there is a huge difference between the natural and spiritual view of this thing called the church. The natural view focuses on its buildings, organizations, spreadsheets, its name or designation (1st. Baptist, 2nd. Baptist, 3rd. Baptist) with founding members and donors who have plaques on the wall, fund raisers, and board members whose job is to replicate all of that someplace else through what's called "church planting".

The spiritual reality is that churches are born by the movement of the Spirit of Life, not by demographic studies and planning. The organized Church can't understand anything that's not organized.

The spiritual understanding is that the Church is a spontaneous expression of Christ's Life planted and grown by the Holy Spirit in the members of His Body. It has no attachment to this world at all because unlike the organizations which *are* of this world, the Church is *not* of this world just as Christ is not of this world. Our citizenship is in heaven because that which is born of the flesh is flesh and makes sense to the mind of the flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The Church is Christ Himself as Head of a new humanity in expression and in life.

So, it *definitely* matters whether we define things by the natural mind or by the Spirit. It's the difference between that which is of God and that which is a human-engineered counterfeit.

During a discussion after one of our live stream studies, one of the guys there said that he'd been an elder at a church for most of his adult life, and even in their "leadership training" classes, they were never taught the things that we are learning in the pastoral epistles. Some of it might be subjects that aren't touched

on very often, but I think the real issue is not additional principles that are neglected, but the difference between the natural and the spiritual.

As I mentioned in our study on the final apostasy of this age, this is what the bottom line of that apostasy is really all about. It's the enemy moving the church into a state of examining all things through the soul instead of through the spirit. Christianity has become a mental and an emotional religion rather than a spiritual Life.

Sometimes when you try to explain the gospel to an unbeliever, you've probably noticed that even though what you're saying makes sense to you and is simple to understand, for some reason their eyes glaze over and not only do they not believe you, but they don't seem to understand what you're saying. This is the same thing that happens when you talk to a Christian and try to explain things that are only understood spiritually, they may understand a little of what you've said on an intellectual level, but they have no idea what's meant (really meant) by what God wrote.

Now, another thing about this idea of prophetic interpretation being proclaimed by prophets and others who saw by the Spirit is that on the surface it seemed harsh and unfair that prophets never stopped their work among God's people when things became relatively commendable; things that were comparatively good. But the prophets weren't 'comparative'; they didn't grade on the curve – they were singular, because God's purpose was singular; it wasn't relative. God will get what He wants to get. He may not get it in the majority, but He always has a remnant that will see it through.

We could use Jeremiah to illustrate this, there came a time when the king seemed to recover things, and he had a celebration of the Passover, and the crowds came. Jerusalem was full of energy and it was obviously a good thing. But Jeremiah sensed something was still not right. It became apparent later that this celebration was just an outward event, meaning that the hearts of God's people hadn't changed, the high places weren't taken down.

So, Jeremiah's original prophecy against Judah had to stand. He couldn't go along with a partial or apparent recovery. He was inwardly forced to hold true to God's full purpose.

A prophet can't accept as final what is only comparatively good. He can be grateful for any change he sees, but he can't settle into that while what the Lord is after is still unreached. Prophetic ministry involves complete faithfulness to the thoughts of God. He can't accept anything less or different than what the Lord has shown him.

For us, it's not about the Mosaic Covenant, it's about bringing the Church to a full, complete understanding of God's purpose in Christ and His specific call on this generation.

The advantage of being a part of what we'd call prophetic ministry is knowing what you are supposed to do because God has shown you what's needed most at your time in history; the disadvantage is that you will be rejected by nearly everyone you minister to; which is another thing we see as being universally characteristic of the prophets in the Bible.

And those prophets were far from perfect, we all are, but because of God's call on them and because of where their hearts were in relation to Him, He sovereignly overruled their mistakes and used them to teach them something more about Him and His ways. He didn't allow their mistakes to derail them.

The Lord desires that each one of us get to the place where we can honestly say, "I have seen what the Lord wants; I know what's He's after." That allows us to not only to pursue that personally, it also enables us to avoid deception, because then we can also see the things that are *not* what He's after; that becomes clear also.

You've probably noticed when you read the prophets that God's preparation of them for their ministry was severe. He stripped everything away from them; both the things of the world and the things of religion, so they would have nothing left but Him.

Some people might call this the "downside" of faithfulness, and it's true that there's nothing especially pleasant about what we have to go through to be shaped

into someone who can spiritually interpret what's around us, but the upside is so great that it completely eclipses any so-called downside. It's just that to commit to what we've been called to will cost us our lives in countless ways. Here's another author's take on this;

We must come to the place where we say: 'Lord, I am set upon all that you mean in Christ. I am set upon that, and I am not going to allow other people's prejudices or suspicions or criticisms get in the way; I am not going to allow any man-made system to hinder me; I am going right on with You for all Your purpose. I am going to do violence to everything that would get in the way.'

How easily many lives are side-tracked, simply because they are not desperate enough! They are caught in things which limit- things which may be good, that may even have something of God in them, but which none the less, are limiting things, and do not represent a wide-open way to all God's purpose. The only way for us to come into all that the Lord means- not only into what we have seen but into all that He has purposed- is to be those who say, 'By God's grace, nothing and no one, however good, is going to stand in my way; I am going on with God.' If you take that position with the Lord, you will find that God meets you on that ground

That is what I believe Paul meant in the passage we read earlier from 1 Tim. 4;

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

We know enough about Paul to know his experiences of the “downside”; his suffering was immense; but we also know the upside, and that lasts forever. I know for most people the “forever” realm doesn't seem that important, but I can promise that when we get there, it will. That's what kept Paul going when most would have quit.

One final way to explain the difference between mind and spirit: You probably remember in John 5:40 when Jesus reprimanded the Pharisees for searching the scriptures thinking that the verses themselves were the source of true spiritual life, but they wouldn't come to Christ Who is life. As important as it is to know the correct interpretation of any passage in the Bible, there is something even more important than that; and that 'something' happens when the Holy Spirit shows you how that verse you just correctly interpreted reveals something of the Person, the character of Christ, so that now, you have a better knowledge of Who Christ is. That's the goal of studying the Bible. It's not simply to know the Bible better and become more accurate in your hermeneutics; it's getting increasing glimpses of Who God is and what He's like as a Person. That's why faith comes by "hearing", not just memorizing, the Word of God. When we know the Person the scriptures have brought us to, faith is increasingly a natural response. Who wouldn't trust Someone like that? Hope that makes sense.