

Dickens

Digest

October 2020

God-given Spirit

2 Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." There are a couple of ways to consider this verse. Either the "spirit" referred to here is the Holy Spirit or it is referring to the attitude. Of course, the Holy Spirit helps us have the right attitude. Either way, we have all been facing trying times in both the ministry, family, social and political context. It is no different here in Brazil, but we praise the Lord for giving us His Spirit and the attitude that His work still must be done. Other than most people walking around in masks, life is pretty much getting back to normal here. Schools remain shut down for the most part, but we have been able to hold our regular services for a while now and our people are beginning to return. Like most churches, we still have some stragglers some of whom use the "pandemic" as a reason to stay away, and we have some who have legitimate reasons. We praise the Lord for those who are coming faithfully and participating in the ministries. We will start back up our Sunday School on November 1 and we are anticipating having a good turnout. Even in the midst of all that is going on, we have had visitors come to the church services that we

are holding on our front porch. Some weeks ago, the church decided to give up the building that we were renting and transition to holding church on our front porch. This is the next step in getting our building built and puts us now within a couple blocks of where the church building will be opening doors to reach the neighborhood close by. Our front porch gives us much more space to hold services and the people seem genuinely pleased with the move. Joel Smothers continues to progress in his learning of Portuguese, and has been helping teach and preach a little more, and will begin teaching once a month in the youth Sunday School.



We have a young man (Lucas) and his family in the church right now who has been called to the ministry, so we are investing time in him to help his development. Our prayer is that the Lord lead him in the right direction. This past Sunday, we baptized a family of three who began to visit the church just before Covid began. The "spirit" God has given us is His sustaining Spirit.

Prayer Requests

- ◆ Protection from Covid19
- ◆ Evangelism, discipleship in changing dynamics
- ◆ Smothers Family Language Training
- ◆ Church families/couples
- ◆ Lucas and his call to ministry



In Other News

Cynthia has struggled this year with her health a little, and has become a "reluctant" vegetarian (she can't have milk, eggs, or gluten). We seem to have discovered that she is both gluten intolerant and animal milk intolerant and possibly eggs cause her problems. This causes some diet changes for her, but we seem to be finding our groove where all of this is concerned. She commented the other day, "Have you ever thought about how much of our food contains milk or eggs?" God has been gracious and her health has improved significantly with the dietary changes. We are trying to get the kids back into the routine of school. Morgan continues seminary classes, but recently began an apprenticeship with a mechanic in our church. He has already helped repair our vehicles on a couple of occasions. These are things definitely not taught in Bible college.





Kidz Korner - By executive decision (that would be me the benevolent dictator father), kidz korner got interrupted because, well, I said so, and I wanted to share something from Cynthia's heart that touched me. Don't worry! No children were offended by the preemption of this section.

In Her Words - Cynthia Dickens



Sometimes I notice details. Sometimes I worry I don't notice enough details. Sometimes Joel thinks I notice too many details. And sometimes I, perhaps unconsciously, choose not to notice details at all ... for a variety of reasons which my mind is only just now exploring. The short version goes like this ...

I think that paying attention to some details can make me too attached to things. For example, if I revel in details that I love, it makes me miss them more when they're not there. So it's easier - debatably healthier - for me, at least, not to notice or focus on them.

I, also, think that paying attention to some details can make me critical. For example, if I pick out certain details that annoy/hurt me, I tend to ponder them in a way that sours my attitude and others around me. So it's easier - probably healthier - not to notice or focus on them.

In the long-term, sometimes this unconscious choice to not notice or focus on details makes me feel forgetful, especially when someone brings something to memory that obviously marked their mind and seems like it should have marked mine ... but didn't. And maybe I really DO have a memory problem. (I suppose time and later medical examination will prove or disprove that!) :P But in this moment I can say that ... most of the time, when something is recalled that I don't remember, I'm a little glad that I don't remember it - whether it was good or bad. Because, unfortunately, I think I'm the kind of person who might let those good details make me wistful and unsatisfied or those bad details make me cranky and worried. I shouldn't. I know. I should simply joy in the good and be thankful that the bad has passed ... or something like that. But you don't mind my honesty, right? ;) Oh, and just to be clear, these thoughts are not meant to put down detail-oriented people. Nope. I know many, many such people who, with a God-honoring spirit and actions, pay attention to and remember nearly every detail. Boy, am I thankful for people like that!

But I said all of this to work around to what God wanted to remind me of ...

I'm so glad that, unlike mine, God's memory and detail-recall are perfect. He knows every little detail about me, even down to how many strands of hair I have (not many - LOL!)! He loves the details of who He made me to be and chooses not to forget me even at the risk of His heart breaking, if I walk away from Him. But He, also, chooses to forget my sin completely only because of the details of Jesus' sacrifice and my faith in Him. Neither side - the details of who I truly am nor the details of Christ's death - would seem conducive to God the Father's happiness.

Side #1 - Because He loves me, He REMEMBERS every detail of who I am - even the vacillation between hanging onto the Lord, when I think I need Him, and pushing Him away, when "I got this!"

Side #2 - Because of Jesus Christ, He FORGETS my sin - how does One forget that which demands the sacrifice of the holy blood of One's only Son??

But the two sides are one. I may not understand how, but honestly, I'm awfully thankful that I don't. See, if God acted according to my understanding, He'd have forgotten and discarded the details of me long ago. (After all, logic dictates that that would be easier on God - and, based on psychiatric advice, even healthier.) But though I may not always manage to display to others, as I should, the details of God's love for me and for them, He is still lovingly patient with me. So when my remembrance of details or lack thereof worries me, I try to put it in God's hands and trust that He will encourage IN me the details that draw me closer to Him and those that will exhibit Him, through me, to others. I also, trust that He'll work to help me sweep away those details that might just hold me back. Yeah, I reckon it's best to just leave the details to the One Who can handle them all!

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