

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about an amazing promise of Scripture, and a famous preacher who was a friend of our family. The Scriptural promise is: **“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self discipline.” (2 Tim. 1:7)** The Greek word translated as “timidity” is “deilia”. This is the only time that word is used in the Bible and it means to be a “coward”! If you are a coward, God did not make you that way, for the Spirit of God does not make cowards!

The famous preacher is the late Archie Word. He actually personified “boldness.” Victor Knowles wrote a 600 page biography about Archie titled *Voice of Thunder, Heart of Tears*. (Available at no cost on the internet)

Archie was born in 1901 and lied about his age to enlist in the navy in W.W. 1. He saw battle action and his ship, the U.S.S. South Dakota, was sunk by a German torpedo. While others died, Archie spent a long night in the icy waters of the Atlantic praying the first real prayer of his life. Archie was exceptionally strong. He could stand upside down on his hands and go up and down a flight of stairs. In fact he was the undefeated light heavy weight boxing champion of the navy. After the war he returned to his home in California and graduated from high school at the age of 21. He was so ungodly that he described himself as a “hellian”. Among other vices he was a bootlegger and ran three different dance halls and saloons. He was twice kicked out of business college and spent considerable time in jail. He and three other friends were famous for fighting. They were eager to take on all comers no matter how many. In 1925 his friends were out cruising for a fight, but providentially, Archie was not with them. On that night, they were drinking as usual, and their car was involved in a fatal crash. The wreck left one of his friends dead and another friend, the driver, sent to San Quentin for manslaughter. Later, Archie gave God the glory for not being with his friends on that fateful night.

When Archie became a Christian he became as bold for God as he had previously been for Satan. In fact, he became an evangelist so famous that D.L Moody and Gypsy Smith dubbed “America's Foremost Evangelist.” His slogan “Hear A. Word Preach The Word” earned him a place in *Ripley's Believe it or Not*. Archie literally led thousands to Christ!

Our contact with Archie came through his mother and sister who attending the church in San Jose where Granny and I ministered. In December 1964 I was invited to conduct an evangelistic meeting at Archie's church in Portland. Christmas time was chosen because it was Christmas break at the Northwest College of the Bible where Archie was a teacher. Archie, Lee Turner, and Warren Bell started that preacher training college in 1952 and it continues to this day. Since classes were cancelled for Christmas it gave us an opportunity to evangelize.

In addition to traveling as an evangelist, Archie spent 33 years preaching at the Montavilla Church in Portland, Oregon. Their soul winning and emphasis on evangelism led them to start 9 other congregations in the Portland area. Archie died Nov. 17, 1988 with a half finished sermon outline on his desk. Since Uncle John and Uncle David were also out of school for Christmas, we took all four children with us and had a delightful time as guests in Bro. Word's home. Uncle Steve celebrated his second birthday while we were there. Steve was 2, Mary was 4, David was 6, and John was 8. Uncle Paul was born later after we moved to Missouri.

Archie's boldness for Christ was legendary. It was almost too good to be true! For example, one Saturday night the owner of a dance hall visited his evangelistic campaign and on the way out invited Archie to come to the dance. Archie showed up at the dance hall about 10:00 p.m. and went straight to the podium. He grabbed a mike and asked for a drum roll. He then "explained" that the owner had given him a special invitation, and since he knew Archie was a preacher, Archie "assumed" that he wanted him to preach. He did! This was typical of Archie's boldness in witnessing for Christ!

While Archie preached with a "voice of thunder," he was also was a "man of tears". I still have memories of making house calls with Archie and seeing him weep as he witnessed to the lost.

We still have contact with Archie's family. His niece, Phyllis Faber, married our neighbor Bryce Lanyon and we visited with Bryce just a few days ago. Archie's nephew, Jim Valenta, is a dear friend with whom I spoke by phone just a few days ago. We stay in contact on a regular basis. It is an honor to know anyone in Archie Word's family.

One of Archie's many converts was the late Don DeWelt. Don was converted as a young man in Portland and like Archie Word, he also left a lasting legacy. Don was a husband, father, preacher, evangelist, author, and Bible College professor. He travelled the world preaching the gospel, authored many books, and started College Press Publishing Co. His book "Sweet Hour of Prayer" details his own prayer life which began at around 4:00 a.m. every morning. His desire for Christian unity resulted in a national magazine called the "One Body" and also the Peace on Earth Ministry headed by Victor Knowles. Victor's office is in a beautiful building adjacent to the campus of the Ozark Christian College. It is known as the Don DeWelt strategic planning and prayer center. Don joined Archie in heaven June 12, 1991 at the age of 72.

Christianity is "caught" as well as "taught." Boldness and confidence are contagious! **"The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion." (Prov. 28:1)** Please don't be a coward! Remember! **"God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self discipline."**

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce