

For a few years, I compiled information on the Indermark family tree. I charted the obligatory *who begat who and when and where*. Such details can be interesting, but only to a point. What breathes life into those factoids are stories and images handed down that help graft us into long-ago branches. The Old Testament records a variety of family trees. Luke and Matthew provide intriguingly different sets of Jesus' family tree. And then, there is Timothy.

There are two New Testament letters that bear his name. But what was the family tree from which the life and faith of Timothy branched out? For starters, 2 Timothy 2:5 names both his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, a Jewish Christian located in what is now south-central Turkey. "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice." Timothy's faith took root in theirs.

But Timothy's family tree was not limited to blood lines. There is another branch from which Timothy's faith sprung. Paul begins his second letter to Timothy with this: "to Timothy, my beloved child" (1:2). Paul clarifies the depth of his relationship with Timothy in his letter to the church at Philippi: "I have no one like him who will be concerned for your welfare . . . how like a father with a son Timothy has served with me" (Phil 2:20-21).

It is no slight of Lois and Eunice to acknowledge Paul in Timothy's faith lineage. Then again, it is no slight of my parents and grandmother to include Lillian Schaeffer in my faith's moorings. Lillian superintended my Sunday School's Primary Department. Lillian informed me as I neared the ripe old age of 11 that I should be a minister. Others trace the moment of "call" to a burning bush or a Damascus Road. Me, I'm good with Lillian planting a seed that eventually took root. And there are others, too many to fit into this space, who form my faith's family tree.

For Reflection and Action:

*Imagine your faith's "family tree:" who would be on it; for what specific reasons?
Who would you hope might look back and name you in their faith's family tree; why?
What might you do or say now to nurture or challenge the faith of such a one?*