

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday November 9, 2022 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



HONORING GOD – A DEVOTIONAL “Fight the Good Fight” *How To FIGHT The Good Fight of Faith Every Day* *1 Timothy 1:18, Various*

We are going to be taking a bit of a break from our study this evening. What I want to do this evening is give you a devotional thought from Paul, in his words to Timothy. I want to share with you what is one of Paul’s favorite phrases or analogies that he give... and not just to Timothy, but it is a favorite analogies of Paul’s that he uses throughout his New Testament letter as we will see.

Paul writes in 1 Timothy 1:18 these words, *“This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight.” (NASB)*

By

Interestingly, Paul will repeat this same call to Timothy (and to us) at least two more times in his letters to Timothy.

In 1 Timothy 6:12, Paul says... notice it with me, *“Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”*

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul echoes a similar refrain when he says in 2 Timothy 4:7 (this time about himself and his own life)... he writes, *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”*

Let me tell you some obvious we can say about this fight Paul is talking about that we need to get our head's around up front

3 Obvious Points About the Good Fight:

- (1) **It is a good fight** – It's not a bad fight from the place of wrong, evil or wickedness. It's not a corrupt fight, with corrupt motives and evil intent. It's a good fight, fought from the position of right and good, and it is needed. And not only that we have been giving every thing we need to fight the fight "good."
- (2) **It is a fight** - In other words, no "pussy-footing" around here... not playground sparing here. It is a fight... a real fight. Make no doubt about it. When you become a Christian you are in for a fight... the fight of your life.
- (3) **We are to wage it** – We are not to sit passively on the sideline and either pretend there is no fight going on, or to refuse to get involved in the fight. To do either is to not only neglect your Christian responsibility and calling, but to most surely be defeated in your Christian life.

What is the good fight and how do we fight it?

WHAT IS THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH?

- To fight the good fight of faith means to stay faithful to Jesus for our entire lives, through trials, tribulations, and difficulties
- To fight the good fight of faith means holding fast to God
- To fight the good fight of faith means battling against our sin
- To fight the good fight of faith means striving to love those around us
- To fight the good fight of faith means we pursue righteousness
- To fight the good fight of faith means we seek to love God with all our hearts
- To fight the good fight of faith means we live godly lives, and ultimately, lay hold of the eternal life God promises us

HOW TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

First of all, it is important to know that God, in His great love and compassion... His mercy and abundant grace, has provided with everything we need to "fight the good fight" He calls us to. It is important to know that God would not call us to a fight, if He didn't equip us for the fight. So the same one who we hear over and over in Scripture, telling Timothy (and us) to "fight the good fight," also tells us that what we have been given to fight with... **(READ: Ephesians 6:10-18)**

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to

withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

3 Important Truths About The Fight We Are In:

- (1) We do not fight in our own strength**
- (2) We do not fight with our own resources**
- (3) We do fight from a place of victory**

Now, with that said let's think about this good fight and how to fight it... how are we to do what Paul is telling Timothy to do... "fight the good fight."

5 Ways Christians Are Able to Fight the Good Fight:

- (1) By the power of the Holy Spirit** - The Holy Spirit gives us the power to fight the good fight of faith. He is our source of life, strength, and wisdom. More importantly, he empowers us with the ability to persevere through our trials, tribulations, and troubles. The Holy Spirit strengthens you when you're weak, convicts you of sin, and gives you the power to resist temptation. Not only that, but he comforts you in your trials, guides you into truth, and works to conform you to the image of Jesus.

In Romans 8, Paul tells us the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. Romans 8:26 says, *"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. Romans 8:26 (ESV)"*

Ultimately, it is the Holy Spirit who keeps us fighting for faith even when we're at our weakest moments. He gives us the power to seek after God, battle against temptation, and live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. And when we are so weak that we don't even know what to pray, the Holy Spirit himself intercedes for us.

- (2) By staying faithful to Jesus** - We fight the good fight of faith by staying faithful to Jesus for our entire lives. We are called to be faithful disciples of Jesus, for he is both our righteousness and example.

In Matthew, Jesus called his disciples to take up their cross and follow him. He said in Matthew 16:24-25, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it"* (ESV).

How do we stay faithful to Jesus? By seeking to consistently stay close to him and deepen our relationship with him. As we get to know more and more of who Jesus is, we learn to love him and be faithful disciples. And as we get to know more about ourselves, we come to realize how much we need Jesus in our lives. Jesus said that if we abide in him, we will bear much fruit for God. He said John 15:9-10, “As the Father loved me, I also have loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love” (ESV).

We can fight the good fight of faith by abiding in Jesus and keeping his commandments. It is a daily struggle to seek holiness through repentance, forgiveness, and faithfulness to God, but it is through the struggle that we stay faithful to Jesus. In 1 Timothy 6:12 Paul says “Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession” (HCSB). We fight the good fight of faith by holding fast to Jesus and seeking to deepen our relationship with him. The good news is that even when we feel that our grip on Jesus is faltering, he will never lose his grip on us. In John 10:28-29, Jesus says, “No one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.” Even when you are weak, Jesus is strong. Even when you feel like you’re stumbling, Jesus will never let you go.

- (3) By being obedient to God’s Word** - We fight the good fight of faith by being obedient to God’s Word. Jesus says in John 14:15, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (ESV). It is through loving and obeying God that we come to know him more intimately. Knowing what pleases God, we seek after it. We don’t do things just because they benefit us; instead, we do them because they bring us closer to God and help us honor his name. Being obedient to God’s Word also means fighting against temptations that come our way. The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and discernment to recognize sin for what it is, and through the power of the Spirit, we must choose to resist the temptations in front of us.

Again and again, the Psalms talk about the wonderful benefits that come from obeying the commands of God. In Psalms 1:1 it says, “Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord.” In Psalms 119:33 it says, “Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; let me observe them with you.” In Psalms 119:114 it says, “You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.” Again and again, we see how obedience brings us closer to God. We can fight the good fight of faith by obeying God’s Word.

- (4) By remaining faithful to Jesus’ church** - We fight the good fight of faith by remaining faithful to Jesus’ church. In Hebrews 10:23-25, it says, “Let us hold fast the confession

of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

The church is our spiritual family made up of those who have been born again. The church provides opportunities for us to learn more about God’s Word, be encouraged by fellow believers, and grow closer to God through worship and prayer. God never intended for us to live the Christian life on our own. When we stay close to God’s people, our faith in Jesus is strengthened.

There are many distractions and temptations that can lead us away from God, but through community with other believers, we have support to help us stay strong in Christ. In **1 Corinthians 15:58**, it talks about how being faithful to the body of Christ helps us grow closer to Christ. It says, *“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain.”* When we regularly gather with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, we become more steadfast and motivated to do good works which please God. The more steadfast we are, the more we will fight the good fight of faith.

(5) With prayer and Bible study - We fight the good fight of faith by praying and studying God’s Word. When you read God’s Word regularly, your faith grows stronger. When you are faced with challenges in life, you remember the promises of God and they encourage you to keep going. Reading Scripture regularly brings us closer to God and provides strength to walk in ways that please him. **Psalm 119:11**(KJV) says, *“Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.”* What does that mean really... to hide His word in our heart? Listen to it in the English Standard Version... **Psalm 119:11** says, *“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”* One way that David fought the fight of faith was by storing God’s word in his heart. When he did this, it helped him fight against sin and please the Lord.

In Hebrews, God’s word is described as a double-edged sword. **Hebrews 4:12** says, *“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”* When we read God’s word, he uses it to convict us, bring us clarity, instruct us in righteousness, and encourage our hearts.

When we pray, it’s not always about asking God for something or getting answers from him right away. In **1 Thessalonians 5:17**, Paul says that we should *“pray without ceasing.”* In addition to regularly reading God’s word, we should also seek him through prayer. Prayer should be a part of our daily lives, talking to God throughout the day about everything that is going on, giving thanks for blessings, lifting up requests, praying for

wisdom, etc. When we consistently pray, we stay in close communication with God, lifting our burdens to him and being strengthened by him. In Philippians, Paul encourages the readers to turn to prayer the moment they feel anxious or worried. He writes in Philippians 4:6-7, *“The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God”* (Philippians 4:6-7). Through prayer, we give our anxieties to God and he gives us the peace that passes understanding.

WHY FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH?

BECAUSE ETERNAL LIFE IS AT STAKE!

Why is it so important for us to fight the good fight of faith? Because it is how we receive eternal life from God. Now, to be clear, our good works and fighting for faith don't earn us eternal life. It's a free gift from God. But, to inherit the free gift of eternal life, we must remain faithful to God until the end. In Matthew 24:12-14, Jesus says, *“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*

So fight for your faith! Hold fast to the gospel of Jesus, pursue God through Bible study and prayer, and regularly meet with other believers. And ultimately, be encouraged that even when you feel weak, God is strong. Jesus is holding on to you, and nothing can take you from his hand.

BIBLE VERSES ABOUT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

Matthew 10:22, *“And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”*

Hebrews 10:39-40, *“But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.”*

James 1:12, *“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.”*

2 Timothy 4:7-8, *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”*

1 Corinthians 9:24-25, *“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”*

James 5:8-9, *“You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. Do not grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged.”*

1 Corinthians 15:58, *“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”*

2 Thessalonians 3:3-5a, *“But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.”*

Hebrews 12:1-2a, *“Therefore let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us... Looking to Jesus...”*
