

YOU, O MAN OF GOD, FLEE...FOLLOW AFTER...FIGHT!!!

1Ti 6:11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. [12] Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. [13] I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, [14] that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, [15] which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, [16] who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

In First Timothy, the Apostle Paul addresses young Timothy, left all alone in the great city of Ephesus, a challenging, demanding and dangerous responsibility, to be the apostolic representative to the churches of the city. **If you have ever felt left alone with a great responsibility and hardly had anybody to lean on, you know exactly how Timothy felt.**

First, notice the address, really an unusual title, to Timothy: *But you, O man of God*

In the Old Testament this title was reserved for the prophets, but, in the New Testament, only Timothy is addressed this way. It must have meant a great deal to him to have the Apostle Paul call him "a man of God." That title combines two remarkable concepts:

Man, in his weakness, confusion, blindness and failure, and God, in His majesty, His greatness and power. To be "a man of God" is the greatest title that could be bestowed upon Timothy. Everyone who has the Spirit of God indwelling him has the desire to claim that title for himself - **to be a man or a woman of God, not a man of the world, not a man of the flesh, but a man of God.**

Man in his smallness and weakness, and the majesty, beauty and glory of our God. The glory of Christianity is that those two, man and God (God in man) are combined together. This is the title that is bestowed on Timothy.

- **How does that title fit you?**

Second, *"flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.*

What does a man of God do in a world like ours? There are three imperative verbs here that mark what Paul said Timothy ought to do: First, "**Flee (Run away; shun)** all this"; second, "**Pursue (Follow after; pursue)** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness"; and third, "**fight (agonizomai – to struggle; to compete; to contend; to endeavor)** the good fight of the faith."

The first verb for the man or woman of God is flee! What should we flee? - First, "*flee these things.*" Elsewhere in Scripture we are told to flee certain things. For instance, we are to "flee immorality" always. Peter says, "*Flee youthful lusts which war against the soul.*" (1 Peter 2:11). There are times in our Christian life when the only defense we have is a clean

pair of running shoes! Get up and go; flee these things. **How good are you at fleeing these things?**

Paul is here referring to what he has just covered in the previous paragraph in his word about false teachers. Timothy is to **flee the three characteristics of false teaching:**

The first characteristic is conceit -- taking pride in knowledge and relying upon that as a basis for success. If we are going to be men and women of God we are to flee conceit in any form.

- **How large is your pride problem?**

The second characteristic is "combateness," the love of controversy. Some people love to get an argument going among the people of a church. This is a mark of a false teacher: he always wants to form a faction around an idea he has that is different than everybody else's. That is to be fled from.

- **Do you find yourself liking to argue to get involved in disputes?**

The third thing is avarice, greed, the love of money, the hunger for material gain, the desire to drive a fancy car; have a big house; enjoy the "finer" things of life! Paul tells Timothy to flee these things; they will only create difficulty in life.

- **How important are the material things in your life and in their pursuit?**

The second verb for the man or woman of God is follow after! Paul's second imperative, "**pursue or follow after,**" is most important. He lists six things which divide into two groups -- **the first three relating primarily to God, the second three relating primarily to man.**

The first thing on the list, righteousness, is very important. Paul says, "*Follow after righteousness, godliness, and faith.*" Some of the commentators take this to be righteous behavior, saying that you are to try to live a righteous life.

While that is true, because men or women of God are to be righteous in their behavior. But I don't think that is not what Paul is talking about here. Paul is referring to righteousness, not as behavior, **but as belief.** It is the word of the gospel, that **when you came to know Jesus Christ, He gave you His righteousness;** and, as you understand that this is the way God sees you, **you are no longer guilty, no longer tied to evil, no longer filled with weakness, but made righteous by God.**

This is what gives **a sense of security and stability in life.** If you are always focusing on your behavior, trying to get a sense of worth because you act right, you will end up becoming a legalist, feeling that your behavior is what makes you acceptable before God -- and that is sheer death. But if you understand **that God has already made you acceptable in Jesus Christ when you believed in Him,** and, therefore, that **God loves you with the same love He had for Jesus Himself, because in His sight you are as righteous as Jesus is,** this gives you **a sense of security and loving acceptance.** That is the basis of stability and of proper functioning in life, and that is why Paul puts it first here: Remember, Timothy, to follow after that consciousness that you are already righteous in Jesus Christ.

- **Are you fully experiencing and believing in His righteousness?**

The second word is godliness. This is the word we have seen so many times already in this letter. It means balanced wholeness -- **spirit, soul and body being kept in good health.** These days we see great emphasis on keeping our bodies healthy. Now there is nothing wrong in keeping the body healthy, but it is wrong to spend all your money doing that. What is also needed **is a renewed mind that views life the way God sees it because that is the way life really is; emotions that are brought under control** so that they do not keep you off balance all the time, so subject to moods **that no one knows whether you are going to be in a good or a**

bad mood: and, above all, a spirit that is in touch with the living God, that is not merely living for the visible things of life, but sees a relationship with God himself as the most important factor in life. That is godliness, balanced wholeness.

- **How balanced is your life with regard to your spirit soul and body being kept in good stead?**

The third word is *faith*, or faithfulness, that is, a loyalty to God, an awareness that you have already committed your life to Him. When you became a Christian you decided to follow God, to obey His word and to walk in His way. That is your basic commitment for the rest of your life; you never intend to change. When a young man or a young woman or an older man or woman), has that kind of a relationship, he or she becomes a steady, dependable, exciting person. There is nothing more exciting than the living God.

- **How committed is your life to Him? Are you constantly acting in faith on His invisible reality?**

Then follow **three words which have to do with the way Timothy treats people:**

The first of these words is *love*. How many times in Scripture do we have the exhortation that the mark of a true Christian is that he is a loving person! "Owe no man anything," Paul says in Romans, "but to love one another," (Romans 13:8). Here in this very letter to Timothy, Paul opens with the words, "the end of our endeavor is love out of a pure heart and faith unfeigned," (1 Timothy 1:5). I do not think there is anything that shocks me more than to suddenly ask myself in the midst of a conversation, "**Am I acting in love? Is my tone of voice loving,** or is it sharp, caustic, filled with anger and hostility?" Many times I have to realize **that the love that God has given me is not coming through at all.**

Yet, this is the mark. Above all else in our relationship with people, **the sign that we have really been touched by the Spirit of God is that we are becoming loving people.** Is our home becoming a loving home, where we relate to each other with attitudes of concern for the others' welfare? That is also **the mark of a growing church.** Large numbers don't tell a thing. Some of the cults can fill the largest halls but numbers do not mean the church is growing. It is when the people are growing in love that you have a church that is alive.

- **Are you, am I really acting in love toward others?**

The second word is *patience or steadfastness*, endurance, staying in there, refusing to give up. That is one of the most contagious things in life. When things get tough and somebody says, "I've had it. I'm not going to try anymore, it is amazing how quickly people pick up that note and say, "Me too. It's not worth it." Soon people all around you start quitting. On the other hand, it just one person will say, "**Sure it's tough, but let's keep going. God is with us.** If we continue we're promised victory, somebody else will pick that up and it will spread like a beautiful contagion through an entire congregation. **Unwillingness to quit is the mark of a Christian man or woman of God in the midst of a world that has gone wrong.**

- **Are you an encourager to continue, or a model of quitting when the going gets tough!**

The third word is *gentleness or humility, meekness*. The one thing Jesus instructed us to learn from Him—"*learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart*" (Mt. 11:29)

Paul says, "Pursue these," that is, make a mental list of these qualities. There are only six of them. Ask yourself every day, "**Is this happening in my life?**" There is no more practical guideline in the Scriptures than Paul's word in Second Corinthians, "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith*" (2 Corinthians 13:5). Something every Christian ought to do every day is take a quick mental checkup and ask himself, "**How am I behaving? What's**

happening in my life? Where is it all coming from?" This is especially true if you want to affect the day in which you live.

- **Does the characteristic of gentleness, describe you?**

The third verb for the man or woman of God is *fight*: "*[12] Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*"

The true nature of the Christian life: **it is a battleground**, and you will **never be given much of a breather**. Don't expect much of a breather, we are exposed all our life to a malevolent and ruthless enemy who knows exactly how to get at us, how to discourage us, how to make us angry with each other, how to plant seeds of hostility and unrest between a husband and wife, in a family or in a community, and he is always doing that. The battle is fought right there.

Paul tells us how to fight the good fight of faith. "*lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*" " This similar to Ephesians 6, where Paul says, "*Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, and stand in the evil day,*" (Ephesians 6:11). To "put on the whole armor of God" and to "take hold of that eternal life" are one and the same thing. **That armor is Jesus Christ -- His strength, His wisdom, His love, His gentleness, His peace appropriated in your life; He is in charge of what is happening to you, and you rest on that fact. That is the way you fight the good fight of faith; that is the way you take hold on life eternal.** This is what happened to Timothy.

Remember that word in First Corinthians 1:9, "***God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***" (1 Corinthians 1:9). That is what we are called to. It is what Brother Lawrence called, "**practicing the presence of Christ.**" **Do you do that?** At all times, whatever you are doing, do you practice the presence of Christ? -- reminding yourself **that He is with you, empowering you and teaching you how to react, bringing to your remembrance things that you need to know about relationships and then obeying Him.** This is the way you fight the good fight of faith and lay hold of that eternal life to which you have been called. That is the secret of the Christian life.

- **Are you practicing the presence of Christ, reminding yourself that He is with you?**

So the man of God does three things in life:

He flees certain things;

He follows after the qualities listed; *righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.*

He fights the good fight of faith by taking hold of the provision of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Crown Him (Majesty) – Chris Tomlin

Verse 1: Crown Him with many crowns/ The Lamb upon His throne/ Hark? How the heavenly anthem
drowns/ All music but its own/ Awake my should and sing/ Of Him who died for me/ And hail Him as thy
matchless King/ Through all eternity

Chorus: Majesty, Lord of all/ Let every throne before Him fall/ The King of kings/ O come adore/ Our God
who reigns forevermore

Verse 2: Crown Him the Lord of life/ Who triumphed o'er the grave/ And rose victorious in the strife/ For
those He came to save/ His glories now we sing/ Who died and rose on high/ Who died eternal life to bring/
And lives that death may die

Bridge: All hail, Redeemer, hail/ For He has died for me/ His praise and glory shall not fail/ Throughout
eternity.