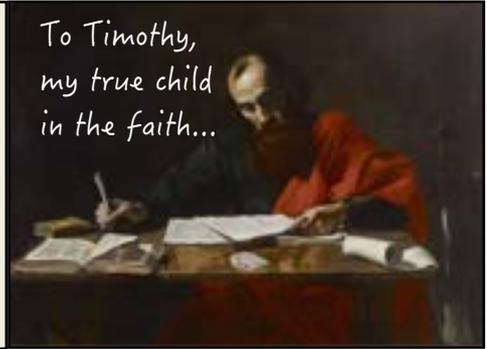


1 Timothy

A Call to Faithful Service

Lesson 12

To Timothy,
my true child
in the faith...



In the letter of 1 Timothy, the Apostle Paul has described all types of dangers that face the church in Ephesus and how Timothy must guard against those who desire to distort the truth. The letter closes with Paul calling Timothy to faithful service.

Fight the Good Fight of the Faith (6:11-21)

After a virtual catalogue of problems which Timothy must combat as he serves the Lord and his church, Paul urges Timothy not to get caught up in that which he battles against. Timothy is to “**flee**” (run away from or escape) these ungodly things such as false doctrine and a love of money and he was to **pursue** (run toward or follow) “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness.”

Paul prefaces this instruction to Timothy by calling him, “O Man of God.” This is an important phrase which describes a Christian who is owned by God and who desires with all his heart to serve and obey God. A man who loves God will flee the ungodly actions of the false teachers and pursue a righteous lifestyle.

Timothy was to “**fight**” the good fight of the faith. The word translated “fight” means to to fight, struggle, often an athletic contest.¹ The picture is not of hand to hand combat against another, but of working, straining, and agonising continuously to perform the task well. The faith is that body of truth that Christians believe and practice as taught within Scripture. Timothy was to expend every effort to live his life modeled on the what is taught within Scripture.



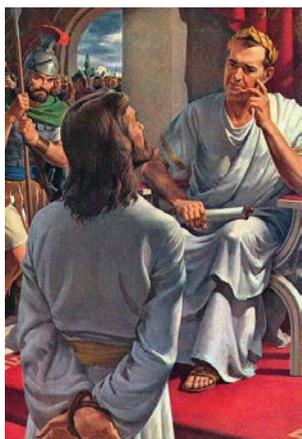
Timothy was to “**take hold** of eternal life” describes both the present blessing of being in Christ and the future hope of an endless reward in the splendour of heaven with Christ. It is to this hope in Christ and the proclamation of this hope (the gospel) that Timothy has been called. Timothy “took hold of eternal life” when he made his good confession of faith in the presence of many witnesses. His confession would have come prior to his baptism and the witnesses must have included family and fellow believers in his home town of Lystra.

¹ <https://www.teknia.com/greek-dictionary/agonizomai>

We note four action words or phrases: 1) Flee; 2) Pursue; 3) Fight; 4) Take hold. Every Christian needs to know when each of these actions is appropriate so that we might live in a way that will honour God and advance his kingdom.

1. Why does one make a confession of faith prior to baptism?

The good confession a person makes before baptism is not a one time utterance of faith and devotion to Christ, but is a solemn promise that Christ Jesus will be our Lord throughout the remaining years of life. It is a promise to live faithfully and godly on earth until we are at home with the Lord.



In verse 13 Paul makes a strong charge to Timothy empowered by the presence of God who is the Creator and giver of life and by Christ Jesus who made the good confession before Pontius Pilate. This charge is stronger than a request or an exhortation and points to Timothy's spiritual responsibility before God. The solemn charge is this: "keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. What confession did Jesus make before Pilate in John 18:37 and how does this relate a Christian's confession prior to immersion?

The commandment in verse 14 probably refers to the call in verses 11-12 that Timothy be righteous, godly, faithful, loving, steadfast, and gentle. Certainly it also refers to his responsibility to teach and preach exactly what is found in Scripture or taught to him by the apostle Paul. The word "unstained" tells us that his life and the message of the gospel is to be untainted by anything that is contrary to the truth and godliness.

3. What is the meaning of the word "reproach" and how is it possible to bring reproach to one's life and the gospel?

4. How long was Timothy to "keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach?"

Scripture teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ will return or appear at the end of time. No one knows the time he will return, but here we are told that it will be at "the proper time." The eternal God alone knows when the proper time for the return of Christ will be.

God is described in beautiful and awe inspiring language in verses 15-16.

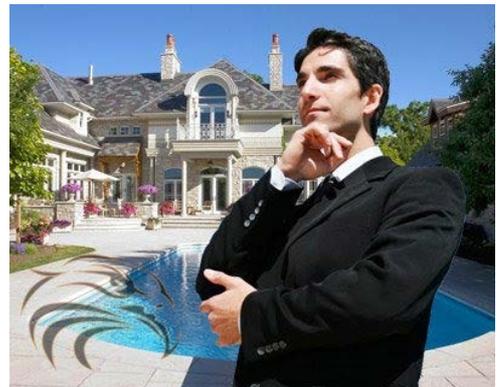
1. He is blessed or worthy of blessing and praise from his people.

2. He is the only Sovereign. All earthly leaders derive their power from the people, their position, or by force. God is Sovereign or holds all power by the nature of his being as the eternal Creator.
3. He is the King of kings. He is came before all other kings, exists after all other kings, and has power over all other kings. (See also Revelation 17:14; 19:16)
4. He is the Lord of lord. No one can compare with his authority or his holiness.
5. He alone has immortality. He is the preexistent and eternal God who is intrinsically immortal. Man was created and can only live eternally as life is given to him by God.
6. He dwells in unapproachable light. He glory of God is so intense that no man can see God and live. Don DeWalt comments: *“When Saul of Tarsus beheld but momentarily a little of the effulgence of the presence of God, he was blinded and thrown to the ground.”*²
7. No one has ever seen or can see him. God is spirit and is invisible.

To such a one describe in just majestic language Paul can only say, “To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.” The word amen signifies agreement with what has been said and serves as the conclusion to this doxology.

Paul moves to new topic and gives Timothy the instruction to charge the rich not to be haughty or to set their hopes on their wealth, but on God. As earlier in our lesson, the word “charge” is more than a suggestion, but rather is a command.

To be haughty is to be prideful. The one who places his hope in his wealth often believes that he has “earned” what he has and that he and is of more worth than those with less earthly treasures.



5. How much money or possessions does it take to be rich in the eyes of our neighbours? How does this perspective change when we take into consideration the view of all the inhabitants of this world?

6. Why are riches described as uncertain?

There is nothing necessarily wrong with wealth, but it is in one’s attitude to wealth. Christians are not to love money or place their hope in it. We must understand that whatever we have and in whatever measure we receive comes from our gracious God and has been given to us to enjoy.

² DeWalt, Don. *Paul’s Letters to Timothy and Titus*. Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1961, p. 123.

7. According to verse 18, in what four ways are the wealthy to use their riches?



The important assets of any person, no matter their earthly bank account, is their heavenly treasure for it is in eternity in heaven where real life is found. If the wealthy person uses their wealth to do good and help others they are laying a good foundation for the future and their life in heaven. Imagine the good that wealth could accomplish if used to finance mission work, help those in need, and other noble purposes.

Paul closes this letter to Timothy urging him “guard the deposit entrusted to you.” This one phrase is a summation of the entire letter. God and Paul had made an investment in Timothy and they should expect a good return on his investment.

The rich were to use their financial deposits to further the kingdom. Timothy was to use his spiritual deposits to advance the kingdom. The terminology used in verse 20 is legal language “referring to something placed on trust in another person’s keeping.”³ Timothy had been entrusted with the faith (the body of teaching found in Scripture).

Part of the way Timothy is to guard the deposit entrusted to him is by avoiding the endless babbling of the false teachers and their so called knowledge. This false teaching has led some from the faith. Accepting teaching which is not in accordance with Scripture is called “swerving from the faith.” This places these people in jeopardy for their eternal life in heaven unless they repent.

The final phrase of this book is “Grace be with you.” Grace is the undeserved or unmerited favour of God. This grace is needed by everyone who desires to find salvation, serve and please God, and spend eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ. What an apt ending to from Paul to Timothy his son in the faith.

Practical Application

1. When we make the good confession and promise our lives to Christ we are making a lifelong commitment to flee from ungodly attitudes and actions, to pursue a godly lifestyle, to fight the good fight of faith as revealed in Scripture, and to take hold of eternal life in the way we live now and in the the hope we hold for the future.
2. Christians should regularly read if not memorise 1 Timothy 6:15-16 to reflect on the power, glory, and majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. God has made investments in the lives of all Christians. Some have earthly wealth to use in a godly manner, and a few will serve as evangelists like Timothy, but all in Christ have been blessed with the forgiveness of sins, fellowship in the church, the hope of heaven, and the body of truth found in Scripture. Let us make every effort to give a good return on the precious spiritual investments he has made in our lives.

³ Smith, James E. *Exhortation Epistles*, Lulu, p. 134.