

“FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH”

I TIMOTHY 6:11-16

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INTRODUCTION

What should a “man of God” do in a world like this one? A world full of false teachers, lovers of money, people of depraved minds and deprived of the truth, full envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction. A world that promotes the philosophy that “godliness is a means of gain.” A world full of the accompanying evils of the love of money and full of people who have wandered away from the faith. A world full of people who have “pierced themselves through with many sorrows and pains? **Is it even possible to be godly in such a world?** Everywhere one turns he confronts sin, rebellion, corruption, ungodliness. How can one be pure? How can one have victory?

In the passage before us Paul gives Timothy the answer. In this passage Paul gives Timothy **5 commandments**, **3 motivations**, and **1 ultimate source of absolute confidence**.

YOU MUST ACCEPT THE DIVINE CHARGE AND FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH.

I. FIVE COMMANDMENTS TO “THE MAN OF GOD”

[Identifying the ‘man of God’]

[Stress on **YOU**—first word; you, in contrast to all these others!]

A. Flee from these things (11).

- cf. Joseph—from Potipher’s wife and David—from Saul
- Note that Nehemiah would not flee from his enemies’ threats—Neh. 6:11; such fleeing would be cowardice.

B. Pursue after other things: (11).

1. Righteousness
2. Godliness
3. Faith
4. Love
5. Perseverance
6. Gentleness/meekness

C. Fight the good fight (12).

1. This “fight” has reference to *athletic competition* more so than warfare.
 - We get our term “agonize” from the verb and “agony” from the noun.
 - Success requires strong discipline and even much pain in order to succeed at athletic endeavor.
 - Paul at times refers to wrestling, boxing, or running a race.
2. This fight is motivated and enabled by **faith**—the ‘fight of faith.’
3. This fight is “good”—noble, worthy, high quality and character.

D. Get a Firm Grip [“lay hold on”] of **eternal life**.

1. This eternal life came through divine calling and usually through a human messenger.
 - We cannot earn our eternal life, but we can and must “get a firm grip on it.
 - The possession of it and assurance of it sustains us through all we experience.
 - Otherwise, we take our eternal life seriously and live our lives totally for Christ!
2. Upon receiving this eternal life we made a good confession at our baptism.
 - The Greek says literally: “Confessed the good confession.
 - The confession is of a noble Savior and an amazing salvation.

- The confession is “saying the same thing as” God says concerning our sin, our destiny, our substitute, and our resulting salvation and righteousness.
 - The “many witnesses” before whom Timothy confessed would be the entire congregation with its leaders.
 - **Note that none of this is done in a vacuum but in the context of the local church!**
- E. Keep the Commandment (14) [identity of this “commandment”—all his life and service. All it involves]
1. This commandment is the object of a serious and authoritative “charge” (v. 13).
 2. The Charge is given in the presence of some significant witnesses.
 - God the Father
 - Christ Jesus
 3. The commandment is to be kept “without stain.”
 4. The commandment is to be kept “without reproach.”
 5. The commandment is to be kept until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Then, and only then, can we “relax.”
 - “Appearing” is **epiphany**—visible manifestation of Him in all His splendor and glory.
 - Two other words in the NT mean “unveiling”—revelation, *apocalypse*—and “presence”—*parousia*.
 - This appearing of Christ will happen in God’s own time—the exactly proper time and season that He has determined (15a).
 - Nothing man can do will hasten it or hinder it.

These are some **heavy** commandments for “the man of God.” But, Paul does not leave him without proper motivation; Paul give at least **3 motivations** for the man of God:

II. THREE MOTIVATIONS FOR THE MAN OF GOD (13, 14)

- A. God gives life to all things—and your eternal life.
- B. Christ “testified the good confession.”
 - Note that the verb is “testified”, not “confessed” as with Timothy.
 - Jesus’ confession was also **GOOD**.
 - He testified with both words and with life; especially His sacrificial and substitutionary death.
 - In doing so He was truly the first **Martyr**—meaning of the noun from the word “witness” or “testify.”
 - He can enable the man of God to maintain a good confession and to keep the command.
- C. The Father brings about the appearance of Jesus Christ at the proper time.
 1. Faithful servants will be rewarded.
 2. All servants will be properly evaluated.
 3. Deliverance from opponents and opposition and trouble will occur.

Moreover, in addition to these **three motivations** for the man of God, he also has **one source for absolute confidence: THE ONE TRUE GOD OF THE DOXOLOGY** (15b-16).

III. ONE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE (15b-16)

- A. The Sovereign—our word “dynasty.”
 - He exercises sovereignty in his own power.
 - He is the “blessed” Sovereign.
 - He is the **only** Sovereign; all others are counterfeits.
- B. He is the “King of all who are kinging”.
- C. He is the “Lord of all who are lording”.
 - In Revelation Christ is called such twice: “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

- Examples exist both in scripture and secular literature of earthly kings being given or taking these titles.
 - Only God in reality may be called such.
- D. He **Alone** possesses immortality.
- The word indicates the “not dead” One, or the One not capable of dying.
 - He only possesses such as an inherent part of His nature.
 - Any human who attains immortality gets it from Him—even for the body (I Cor. 15:53-54).
- E. He is Transcendent—dwelling in **unapproachable light**.
- Ps. 104:2 says He clothes Himself with light as with a garment.
 - Man cannot come near to Him—cf. God on Mt. Sinai and the guard around the mountain.
 - As pure light He is absolutely **pure** and spiritual in His nature.
 - He is genuine light, truth, righteousness.
- F. He is Invisible—“Whom no man has seen nor can see.”
- He is revealed in His Son: Jn. 1:18.
 - He said, “No one can see Me and live”—Ex. 33:20 to Moses; I Jn. 4:12; Jn. 6:46.
 - Col. 1:15 and I Tim. 1:17 call Him “invisible.”
- G. Honor and Eternal dominion—eternal power—are His.

CONCLUSION

YOU MUST ACCEPT THE DIVINE CHARGE AND FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

You have a God who is sovereign; he is “the King of kings and the Lord of lords.” He alone possesses immortality. He is transcendent, dwelling in unapproachable light. He is the invisible One whom no one has seen nor can see. To Him is all honor and eternal dominion.

What more motivation do you need? How about the fact that God gives life to all things and gave you eternal life? His Son as the first Martyr has “testified the good confession”; He has sacrificed Himself for our sins and risen from the dead. Moreover, Jesus is coming again; the Father will bring Him at just the right time.

Therefore: **Flee** from wickedness, worldliness, and corruption.
 Pursue after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, gentleness.
 Fight the good fight of faith.
 Get a good grip on the eternal life that you have in Christ.
 Keep the commandment--the contents of the Christian faith, the sum of the deposit, the Gospel as the rule of life for the believer to which you “pledged yourself at your baptism and of which you are a trustee.

Wake up! Agonize! Flee! Pursue! Be faithful till Jesus comes. Get a grip on what really matters about your eternal life. Jesus is coming with your reward! Are you ready?