

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

1 Timothy 6:11-21

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TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Look up "conceit" at Dictionary.com. What do you learn?
What is it about money that tempts us to have an excessively favorable opinion of our ability or importance?

What perspectives does James 1:9-11 give which can help rich people (ie, us) be humble?
What evidence do you see in yourself that indicates that **you** have that perspective?

Circle the words "get rich" (6:9), "rich" and "richly" (**3x** in 6:17-18). What are Paul's main points?

Why do riches **seem more reliable** than God sometimes? What wisdom does Proverbs 23:4-5 give?

- Read 1 Timothy 6:20-21. **In what way** is "guarding the gospel" the **opposite** or the **antidote** to "worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called 'knowledge'"?

How often do you find yourself engaged in "worldly and empty chatter"? Do you start it or join it?

- Read 1 Timothy 1:18 and 6:12, and 2 Timothy 4:4. Define "the good fight" in your own words.

Paul was confident that he'd faithfully fought the good fight—**how** can we **know** if **we** have too?

Describe a time when you fought opposition to affirm and defend Christian doctrine. How did it go?
Were you adequately prepared? What additional **equipping** do you need?

Application-Challenge

Jesus really is returning, so...

- Persevere in your faith!
- Use your wealth to bless others.
- Protect and defend the gospel.

Need help "fighting the good fight of faith"?

Go to: **TCC.ORG**
Keyword: **EQUIP**

Take One Step: What is one small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week?



Sermon Summary

As we approach the end of our study of Paul's first letter to Timothy and the church at Ephesus, we will consider Paul's final exhortations to Timothy. Paul begins by urging Timothy to persevere in his faith as he waits for Jesus' return. Verse 12 best summarizes Paul's final words to Timothy: "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." When Paul says, "Fight the good fight of faith," he employs the Greek term "agonizomai." Our English word "agony" comes from it. It was commonly used to describe athletic struggles—the willingness to persevere and endure pain in order to emerge triumphant. In this case, the athletic event is the life of faith as played out in a faithless world.

In v. 13-16, Paul essentially says to Timothy, "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus that you keep the commandment until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Which commandment is he talking about? He appears to be referring to the command to "fight the good fight—to hang in there, to persevere." Paul issued this same charge to Timothy earlier in the letter, and there referred to it as a command (1 Timothy 1:18-19).

As Paul drew his letter to a close, he returned once again to the topic of materialism. Earlier in this same chapter, Paul argues that we need to pursue godliness along with contentment. Godliness, he tells us, is something that we must fight for. And one way we fight for contentment is by giving away some of our wealth to help others. Here, Paul is completing the argument he started at the beginning of the chapter (vv. 17-19). There is nothing wrong with being wealthy. The problem comes when wealth possesses us. It is not money, but the love of money that the Bible condemns.

Here in three verses, Paul gives us a powerful course on stewardship. There are two negative commands and two positive commands. Let's consider first, the two negative commands. We find them in the first part of verse 17: "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches..." God is much more interested in your character than your bank account. In fact, when you die, you can't take your money with you, but you can take your character. Here is the other thing about money. You can have today and it can be gone tomorrow. It happens. Don't fix your hope on the uncertainty of riches. What positive things are we to do? We are to fix our hope on God (who richly supplies us with all good things to enjoy) and do good to others by being generous and ready to share.

When it comes to wealth, we need to recognize that God is our ultimate supplier. Our hope is to be in Him. In the final analysis, we have little to do with it. The Bible says that it is God who gives us the power to make wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18). It is ironic isn't? That in the midst of enjoying the good things God makes possible, we forget to honor and thank him. We put our hope not in God, who is the source of our wealth, but in the wealth itself. Paul is saying, "Don't do that. Put your hope in God who richly supplies you with all things to enjoy." It is in him that we should put our hope. But we need to take this a step further. Most of us have more than we need. God wants us to be generous with that excess. He wants us to use it to bless others. In other words, when it comes to wealth, we are not to be reservoirs, hoarding stuff for ourselves. Rather, we are to be conduits of God's grace to others.

That brings us to the close of this letter, where Paul makes his final appeal to Timothy. He essentially says, "Timothy, protect and defend the gospel. Don't get sidetracked by silly speculations and the opposing arguments of these false teachers who think they are so smart. They are not only leading others astray, they are lost themselves because they have rejected the gospel" (vv. 20-21).

We, too, must be cautious lest we find ourselves drifting away from the Bible's teachings—especially those outlining the centrality of Jesus Christ to salvation (John 14:6). Above all, we are each called to protect and defend the gospel message throughout the remainder of our days on this planet.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Thirty-three times in this brief letter Paul uses the Greek words translated as "faith", "faithful", "believe", "believers", "entrust", or "trustworthy". Do you think he might be trying to tell us something?! As we wrap up our study of this book, let's look at six pairs of Paul's teachings about the life of faith.

Monday—

<i>Don't do this with your faith...</i>	<i>Instead do this with your faith...</i>
1 Timothy 5:8	1 Timothy 4:9

- To "deny" is to contradict. Is there **any** teaching of the Christian faith that you reject?
- To "accept" is to appreciate. The teaching in 4:8 deserves **full** appreciation/acceptance. Do you?
- What change must you make based upon today's "Do" or "Don't"?

Tuesday—

<i>Don't do this with your faith...</i>	<i>Instead do this with your faith...</i>
1 Timothy 6:10	1 Timothy 6:11

- To "wander" is to err. Is there **any** teaching of the Christian faith in which you likely are mistaken?
- To "pursue" is to "follow hard after". What evidence is there that you are pursuing correct doctrine?
- What change must you make based upon today's "Do" or "Don't"?

Wednesday—

<i>Don't do this with your faith...</i>	<i>Instead do this with your faith...</i>
1 Timothy 6:21	1 Timothy 2:15

- To "go astray" is to be seduced away. Is there **any** teaching you're being pulled away from?
- To "continue" is to abide, to remain. Are you willing to continue in politically **incorrect** doctrines?
- What change must you make based upon today's "Do" or "Don't"?

Thursday—

<i>Don't do this with your faith...</i>	<i>Instead do this with your faith...</i>
1 Timothy 4:1	1 Timothy 6:12

- To "fall away" is to "depart from" or "revolt against". Is there **any** teaching that you resist?
- To "fight" is to strive and agonize for something. **For which** truth are you aggressively contending?
- What change must you make based upon today's "Do" or "Don't"?

Friday—

<i>Don't do this with your faith...</i>	<i>Instead do this with your faith...</i>
1 Timothy 5:12 (Note: Here the word "faith" is translated as "pledge".)	1 Timothy 3:9

- To "set aside" is to "consider of no value". Is there **any** teaching you think is a "throw away"?
- To "hold" is to "keep fast". What are you doing to "secure", to "nail down" truth which is being attacked?
- What change must you make based upon today's "Do" or "Don't"?

Saturday—

<i>Don't do this with your faith...</i>	<i>Instead do this with your faith...</i>
1 Timothy 1:19	1 Timothy 1:19

- To "shipwreck" is to irrevocably break up. Do you have a healthy fear of walking away from the faith?
- Here "keep" is same word as "hold" (3:9). **How** will you securely nail down **your** faith?
- What change must you make based upon today's "Do" or "Don't"?