

# How To Fight the Good Fight

*Pastor Anthony J. Shetley, Sunday, 8/24/25*

When the Apostle Paul neared the end of his life, he wrote these words to his young protégé Timothy:

*“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.”* (2 Timothy 4:7–8)

Paul’s confidence at life’s end was not rooted in ease or comfort, but in the reality that he had faithfully fought the battles God placed before him. He had lived with purpose, endured hardship, trusted Christ, and remained steadfast. And with confidence he proclaimed that the same crown of righteousness awaits all who live with the same aim: loving the appearing of Jesus Christ and finishing the race in faith.

But how do we *fight the good fight* today? How can we, like Paul, be skillful in battle and not waste energy swinging at the air like a boxer missing his target (1 Corinthians 9:26)?

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## Fighting with Skill, Not in Our Own Strength

Paul reminds us that the Christian life is not about random effort. A boxer who swings and misses wastes more energy than one who lands a blow. Likewise, if we try to fight spiritual battles in our own strength, we will grow weary and risk defeat. But when we fight through Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we learn to land effective blows against our true enemy.

And the most powerful punch we have is prayer.

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## Prayer: The Knockout Punch

Prayer is not a backup plan. It is the decisive strike that brings victory.

### Prayer Requires Humility

Real prayer begins with humility. We must admit that we cannot win this fight on our own. James tells us, *“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble”* (James 4:6). To pray effectively, we lay aside pride and throw ourselves completely on God’s mercy and power.

### Prayer Requires Trust

Jesus promised, *“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it”* (John 14:13–14). Paul declared, *“When I am weak, then I am strong”* (2 Corinthians 12:10). Prayer is an act of trust—it is leaning fully on Christ’s strength, not our own.

## Prayer Requires Faithfulness

Trusting God doesn't mean the battle is won instantly. James encourages us to *"let patience have its perfect work"* (James 1:4). Through trials and waiting, prayer strengthens us, deepens our faith, and makes us fruitful. We don't give up—we keep asking, seeking, and knocking (Matthew 7:7–8) until God opens the door.

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## How to Pray with Power

James gives us a formula for victory: *"Submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you"* (James 4:7).

- **Submit to God** – Prayer is our first act of submission. We seek His will, like Jesus did when He prayed, *"Not my will, but Yours be done"* (Luke 22:42).
- **Resist the Devil** – When Satan attacks with lies and discouragement, we resist by standing firm on God's promises. Prayer equips us with strength to fight back.

John reminds us: *"Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world"* (1 John 4:4).

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## The Confidence of Prayer

As we move toward the close of Paul's charge, James also reminds us: we must believe when we pray. Faith-filled prayer carries the assurance that God not only hears us but also answers us according to His perfect will.

The writer of Hebrews encourages us: *"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need"* (Hebrews 4:16).

John echoes this truth: *"If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us... we know that we have what we asked of Him"* (1 John 5:14–15).

No matter our circumstances, we can rest assured: there is always a miracle in the making, because God is the One making the miracle. Prayer is not about our greatness; it is about Christ's finished work that made prayer possible.

James also declares: *"The fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much"* (James 5:16). True, fervent prayer is like a knockout punch to the enemy. It is the decisive strike that ensures we are not swinging wildly but hitting with precision in the Spirit.

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## Fighting to Win

The good fight is won through prayer. Every round we face, every struggle we endure, every temptation we resist—we win when we pray in humility, trust, faithfulness, and perseverance.

So let us take up Paul's challenge. Let us fight the good fight, finish our race, and keep the faith. And when the final round is over, we too will stand with Paul in the winner's circle, crowned with the righteousness of Christ.