



“A MAN OF GOD”

1 Timothy 6:11-12

Theme: *Faithfulness to God requires intentionality.*

Introduction: “How are you?” We say this so frequently as a casual greeting that we barely wait long enough for a response. When we hear this question, we typically say “good” regardless of what is happening in our lives. This typifies a general approach to life that tends to suppress thoughts that touch on the defects, flaws, and sins that cause us to be so deformed from the image of Christ when we ought to be conformed to that image.

Our text today addresses the necessity to confront ourselves with our need to change – to be transformed into a greater likeness of Christ. Instead of being a “brow-beating,” Paul lovingly exhorts us through Timothy to do what is necessary, by God’s grace, to progress in faithfulness to Jesus Christ. He shows us things we can do to be even more faithful than we have already achieved. Essentially, he shows us that **“Faithfulness to God requires intentionality.”** There are four emphases found in these verses that guide our thinking about how we can be a man or woman of God:

- I. **A Man of God Avoids Corruption – 6:11a**
 - II. **A Man of God Aspires to Virtue – 6:11b**
 - III. **A Man of God Adheres to the Faith – 6:12a**
 - IV. **A Man of God Acquires Assurance of Life – 6:12b**
- I. **A MAN OF GOD AVOIDS CORRUPTION – 6:11A**
 - A. **Our Vulnerability to Falling**
 1. Paul urges Timothy to vigorously avoid the mistake we often make in assuming we are “above” falling.
 2. The corruption that results from the **“love of money”** is something to which each of us is vulnerable – cp. **Luke 12:15**.
 3. The “all sorts of evil” that results from “the love of money” in the previous verse must be deliberately avoided - **“But flee from these things ...”**
 4. We cannot think we are “above” such vulnerability – cp. **1 Corinthians 10:12; 2 Peter 3:17**.

B. Our Vigor in Flight

1. The term “*flee*” [φεύγω] – conveys that we must “seek safety in flight” – it has the notion of disappearing – “to cease being visible, vanish, disappear”¹
2. We must not allow a casual attitude toward corruption – temptation of any sort – but must avoid corruption by vigorously eluding the dangers of corruption by fleeing – cp. *1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 10:14.*
3. Fearing the power of corruption – especially financial greed – is avoided by purposefully fleeing in the opposite direction of contentment and genuine godliness – cp. v. 6.

II. A MAN OF GOD ASPIRES TO VIRTUE – 6:11B

A. Our Devotion to the Ambition

1. No one will ever be godly by focusing on what they should not do.
2. If you are going to flee corruption, it is necessary to “*pursue*” [διώκω] the right things.
3. This word describes a rapid and decisive movement toward an objective and is even used to describe the chasing of those being persecuted – cp. *1 Corinthians 4:12.*
4. There is devotion to chasing down virtue – we must deliberately put effort into the formation, by God’s grace, of the very virtues of Christ to become Christ-like – cp. *Philippians 2:12-13.*
5. It is necessary to “*pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.*”
6. We cannot merely put off ... without putting on – cp. *Ephesians 4:22-24; Hebrews 12:1-2.*

B. Our Direction for the Ambition

1. Paul provides the target for our pursuit – toward what are we to run?
2. We are to pursue the likeness of Christ Jesus Himself – that to which God has predestined us.
3. Specifically, God’s Spirit led Paul to mention seven features of Christlikeness we ought to intentionally “*pursue:*”
 - a) “*righteousness*” [δικαιοσύνη] – the quality of practicing “judicial responsibility” or behavior observable by everyone around you that

¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1052.

conforms to God's expectations and His very nature.

- b) *"godliness" [εὐσέβεια] – a theme of this section describing an inward piety or quiet, private desire to respect and honor the Lord – it describes a heart of worship as the motivation of all we do.*
- c) *"faith" [πίστις] – although it could refer to confident trust in the Lord, it seems more likely it refers to the ability of others to trust us – faithfulness, reliability, fidelity, and commitment to the Lord.*
- d) *"love" [ἀγάπη] – the choice to prefer the welfare of others over your interest; an emulation of the sacrificial devotion of the Lord to sinners.*
- e) *"perseverance" [ὑπομονή] – the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, challenge, disappointments, deprivation, or persecution.*
- f) *"and gentleness" [πραΰπαθία] – appearing only here in the New Testament, it is coupled with "perseverance" as describing the enduring of those causing the need to persevere.*

4. The very attributes exhibited by Jesus are what we desire to pursue – which is why faithful preaching will exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and seek to inspire others to seek conformity to Christ – something each of us must strive to intentionally influence to do.

III. A MAN OF GOD ADHERES TO THE FAITH – 6:12A

A. Our Contention in the Faith

1. These things are difficult to maintain – we struggle to ward off the schemes, lures, and direct assaults of the enemy to draw us away from the simplicity of faith in Jesus and the sufficiency of the Word.
2. This third imperative is a bit different as it is a middle imperative – present tense – meaning that the motivation to struggle and contend in the faith against all obstacles is an internal sustained desire.
3. Paul told Timothy something similar in 1 Timothy 1:18 – where the emphasis was on making war on those who promote false teaching.
4. Here, a different word is used for *"fight"* – [ἀγωνίζομαι] – the term from which we get "agonize" – and it means to engage in a contest to the point of strain or "agony."
5. It conveys the discipline, conviction, and effort needed to win – the counter the aggression against the believer because of our faith.

B. Our Commitment to the Faith

1. *“The good fight of faith”* – repeats the same emphasis using the noun of the previous verb – [ἀγών] – struggle under a great strain in the face of significant opposition.
2. *“Good”* [καλός] – refers to what is noble or excellent – a worthy or useful struggle.
3. It is advantageous for the believer to struggle against opposition to our faith and to do so in a way that displays a commitment to our faith that nothing can defeat.
4. *“of faith”* refers to the body of truth we have embraced when we are saved – and includes the entirety of God’s Word we believe; it is under attack and is being undermined, discredited, misinterpreted, and even maligned by those who would supplant it with their ideas, opinions, and philosophies.
5. We must remain committed to *“the faith”* that has once for all been handed down to the saints – cp. *Jude 3*.

IV. A MAN OF GOD ACQUIRES ASSURANCE OF LIFE – 6:12B

A. The Custody of Eternal Life

1. When Paul tells Timothy to *“take hold of the eternal life to which you were called,”* – he emphasizes the need for each of us who have been *“called”* to gain a more firm grip on our faith.
2. It is not a question of whether *“eternal life”* can be gained; it is whether we will certify our custody of *“eternal life”* – cp. *2 Peter 1:10*.
3. The believer who pursues the spiritual qualities mentioned above certifies to himself that he is *“called”* by the spiritual fruit he exhibits.
4. One cannot be called – a reference to the effectual call, not the general call – and not have eternal life – *Romans 8:30*.

B. The Confession of Eternal Life

1. The testimony Timothy has provided – is referred to as *“the good confession”* – or the declaration of the Lordship of Jesus and Timothy’s trust in Him to save Him through grace – cp. *1 Timothy 3:16; 6:13*.
2. This was most likely made *“in the presence of many witnesses”* when Timothy was baptized and reiterated at his ordination to ministry – cp. *1 Timothy 4:14; Romans 10:9*.
3. When you confess Jesus as your Lord, it is incumbent upon you to do everything you can to verify the fact you have confessed – by gaining increasing submission to His Lordship.
4. It is this that Satan seeks to thwart by the schemes and strategies he

foists against us – against which we also contend – cp. *James 4:6-8;*
Ephesians 6:11.

So What?

1. Why does Paul tell Timothy to flee? How would things have gone differently if you had the last time you fell to temptation?
2. Are you pursuing the transformation God's grace provides? What evidence of this can your spouse (or friend) identify?
3. In what ways are you being called upon to "fight the good fight of faith?"
4. Is your grasp of faith more firm than it used to be? If not, what will you do to "take hold of eternal life?"

"Faithfulness to God requires intentionality."