



First Baptist Church Selmer

"ORDER IN THE... CHURCH!" • MISSION MINDED • 1 TIMOTHY 6:11-21 • 5/26/2024

MAIN POINT

A healthy church remains mission-minded despite any distractions from either inside or outside of the local body of believers.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When do you think you first understood that there is a spiritual war going on around us and that it involves you?

Is that something that you're aware of in a cerebral sense or would you say you actively engage in that battle?

When you hear the exhortation, "*Fight the good fight,*" what comes to mind?

As we come to the final verses of Paul's first letter to Timothy, we think back to his instructions regarding the church, prayer, divisiveness and distraction, gender roles, church leaders, caring for widows, serving one another with honor, materialism, and contentment. When we do, it is easy to see we are in a battle.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:11-16.

11 "But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which

you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, 14 to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen."
(ESV)

What are the godly virtues Paul encouraged Timothy to pursue (v. 11)? What are some additional examples?

Why is it important that we not only flee from worldly attitudes and actions but also replace them with godly pursuits?

Which of these virtues do you find most difficult to practice?

This list of attributes or goals is an important reminder that godliness is much more than going to church or associating ourselves with church affairs. Godliness extends into every aspect of life, every response to the opportunities and challenges of the world, and every relationship. These are the priorities of Christians.

Why did Paul describe the Christian life as a fight (v. 12)? How might viewing the Christian life as "*the good fight of the faith*" change the way you approach spiritual growth?

By challenging Timothy to "*fight the good fight of the faith*," Paul made clear that spiritual growth is not easy. Growing in Christlikeness is hard work and it is often painful. It requires persistence, discipline (1 Timothy 4:7), and practice (1 Timothy 4:15). Despite the dramatic stories we often hear about people coming to faith in Christ and forever leaving behind years of sinful addictions, spiritual growth is a difficult process that requires patience and commitment.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:17-21.

17 "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 thus storing up treasure

for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

20 O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called "knowledge," 21 for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.

Grace be with you." (ESV)

Why do you think Paul revisits his previous instructions on material things here?

In what way is materialism a spiritual battle in your life?

What is the link between the generosity described in verses 18-19 and "godliness with contentment"?

What has been entrusted to believers today? How can we guard it? What does grace have to do with it (21)?

The church then and then church now fight spiritual battles constantly from the enemy. Timothy could not do it on his own then, and neither can we do it on our own now!

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Paul burst into praise in verses 15-16. How does regular worship help you fight the good fight?

What do you need to run from today? What do you need to pursue instead?

How can this group help you in that?

PRAYER

Thank God for His grace that enables you to fight the good fight for the faith and the victory we have in Christ. Pray for group members to rely on His presence in their lives and on each other, as our battle is intended to be fought together.

COMMENTARY

| 1 TIMOTHY 6:11-21

6:11. Instead of pursuing greed, Paul admonished Timothy (and us) to pursue godly virtues and spiritual goals. Paul contrasted the man of God with the false teachers (vv. 3-5) and the lovers of money (v. 10). The verbs flee and pursue are vivid. Flee from false teachings and the love of money as if something is chasing and endangering us. And evil is. The desires of the flesh and the pride of possessions constantly hound us to give in to the worldly system based on greed. Instead, we must pursue intentionally the specific virtues of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness. Righteousness is upright conduct before God and others. Godliness is conforming our lives to the character and person of God displayed by Jesus Christ. Faith here refers to faithfulness or dependability. It describes the person who, despite all the changes and circumstances of life down to the very end, is loyal to God. Love is that virtue that works for the good of others over self, striving to give rather than to receive. Steadfastness is the sticking power to stay in the race when the going is tough, knowing that one will be victorious in the end. Gentleness is power under control. Each of these virtues manages false prophets from without and greed from within.

6:12. Paul added two more verbs of importance in verse 12. The first is fight, an athletic or a military metaphor with an emphasis on a disciplined and determined struggle, requiring one's best to prevail and take the victory. The English word agonize comes from it. It's in the present tense, indicating an ongoing fight.

The other verb in this verse is take hold; its tense reflects a single, completed event. That indicates we can take hold of eternal life as a completed, final action with assurance. To confess is to speak out one's faith, to announce one's belief. A Christian confession announces one's dependence on Jesus Christ.

6:13-16. Paul turned from a series of admonitions to Timothy to give advice to those already rich. The preceding words on wealth in vv. 6-10 were spoken to those who aspired to wealth. As a final thought Paul spoke a word to those who already had it. The constructive advice here balances the more extreme prohibitions of the earlier passage. He did not condemn wealth, but he showed the added temptations the wealthy face. He was vitally concerned that Christians have the right attitude toward their wealth and make the proper use of it (see also Luke 12:13- 21; Ps 52:7).

Paul turned from a series of admonitions to Timothy to give advice to those already rich. The preceding words on wealth in vv. 6-10 were spoken to those who aspired to wealth. As a final thought Paul spoke a word to those who already had it. The constructive advice here balances the more extreme prohibitions of the earlier passage. He did not condemn

wealth, but he showed the added temptations the wealthy face. He was vitally concerned that Christians have the right attitude toward their wealth and make the proper use of it (see also Luke 12:13-21; Ps 52:7).

6:17. Paul's beginning reference to the present world suggests that the wealthy can have their wealth only in this age. It is good for this present world, but it does not convert automatically into blessedness in the world beyond. In this verse Paul contrasted right and wrong responses to the possession of wealth. A wrong response involves an arrogant attitude and the making of wealth as the hope of one's life. As a deterrent to trusting in riches, Paul mentioned the transitory, uncertain nature of wealth. The word uncertain contains a reminder that it is by no means clear that riches will continue with the one who has them. The right response is to hope in a God who lavishes on His people all their needs. The statement implies that God does not give wealth to promote pride but that we might use and enjoy it in His will (see also Jas 2:5; 4:13-14; 5:2-3). Paul's sound advice walks the straight line between a world-denying asceticism and a self-centered indulgence. The advice promotes gratitude toward God for the benefits He bestows.

6:18. Paul mentioned four ways to use wealth wisely. To do good involves using wealth in a positive way instead of letting it feed a life of personal luxury. To be rich in good deeds pointed the wealthy in the direction in which they were to be truly rich, in the doing of good deeds. These two verbs probably include more than benevolence. The need for benevolence is emphasized in the next pair of terms. To be generous demands a liberal sharing of wealth with others. One who is willing to share shows that the generous act of giving is to spring from internal generosity. Paul was suggesting that genuine wealth is found in what we give, not what we have.

6:19. Paul outlined the outcome of such generosity by stressing two truths. First, he stressed that giving generously to the needy stores for the giver a future treasure. Paul was not advocating that the giver could earn salvation or favors from God. Good works are solid evidence of salvation and assure us that we have eternal life. Paul may have based these thoughts on such words as contained in Matt 6:19-21. The godless, on the other hand, lay up treasures for themselves of a different kind (Jas 5:1-5). Second, Paul stressed that generous actions allow the giver to lay hold of eternal life in the here and now. Paul had urged Timothy to lay hold of this in v. 12. Here Paul expressed that taking hold of eternal life is a goal of the unselfish giving he had commanded. Christians who enter the life of love by unselfish behavior will enter gloriously into God's presence in the life to come.