



## Topic: My Victory Is In My Faith

*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

*~1 Timothy 6:12 (KJV)~*

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### Introduction to the Lesson

From the moment we accept Christ as our personal Savior and begin to walk in our new life as a Christian, we are introduced to the importance of faith that accompanies our new life in Christ. Faith plays a significant role in our spiritual growth. In fact, it takes faith to even believe in Christ; it takes faith to believe that what God says is always right and true; and it takes faith to trust and walk in that each and every day. Although our victory is in Christ Jesus alone, the realization of our victory takes us believing by faith that we have the victory; that we have overcome and defeated the world.

### 1 John 5:4 (NKJV)

*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*

This verse lets us that know that if faith is established in us that this faith IS the victory. It is our victory, yes, but really, it is God's victory in us. The faith itself IS the victory. The very existence of faith in us is evidence of God's victory in us. What we must do to realize this victory is believe by faith that we have it; we must fight against all attempts to persuade us otherwise. Our **VICTORY** is in our **FAITH**.

### Our Study

Our lesson study text is taken from the Apostle Paul's first letter penned to his son in the Gospel and pastor Timothy. The Apostle writes two letters to encourage and to instruct the young Pastor Timothy. While some things in these two letters written to the young pastor are designed for pastors in particular rather than for all Christians, this particular verse (1 Timothy 6:12) is not. When Paul says, "Fight the good fight of faith," we can be sure he is not giving counsel that only pastors must follow. This applies to everybody in the body of Christ (*the Church*). We know it does because every Christian needs faith, not just pastors. To back up that it applies the every Christian, the next phrase in this particular verse goes on to say... "*lay hold of eternal life whereunto thou art called.*" Laying hold to eternal life is the goal for every born again believer in Christ Jesus not just for the young Pastor Timothy.

As we spend the next few weeks studying this text, what we desire to pull out of this portion of God's Holy Word and drive home in our hearts is that: "**All Christians Must Lay Hold on Eternal Life by Fighting the Good Fight of Faith.**" This is the victory you and I, my brother and my sister, are ultimately seeking to achieve. While this is our ultimate goal, we are also seeking to live out the balance of our time here on earth possessing the purpose for which our Lord and Savior extended His gift of salvation toward us. We are seeking to live victoriously in all our loving heavenly Father God has so graciously and

mercifully assigned our life to be. This blessing in this earthly realm as well as the blessing of our eternal life will only be realized as we engage ourselves in fighting the good fight of faith.

There are three questions that we trust, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, we will seek to address and answer in this series Bible Study.

### **Question One: *IN WHAT SENSE IS OUR FIGHT A FIGHT OF FAITH?***

As we look at the context of Paul's command to fight the good fight of faith, we see two ways to understand the phrase "fight of faith:

#### **Two Ways to Understand "Fight of Faith"**

One way to understand "**Fight of Faith**" would be this: since our faith is often threatened by doubt and unbelief we must *fight to maintain faith*. So, the phrase "fight of faith" would mean the struggle to keep on believing God, the fight to keep on trusting His promises. We see in the verse just before our study text verse (verse 11), Paul instructs Timothy to seek after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. Since the young Pastor Timothy is already a believer, one could assume this instruction to seek after these things is Paul's admonishment of Timothy to attain more faith or to hold on to the faith he has. The goal of Timothy's pursuit is faith itself.

From this we come to understand that there is a sense in which every one of us, as Christians, must keep on pursuing faith. We must not rest content as though the faith we have is all the faith we need, or as though the faith we have will remain in our hearts without a fight against the forces of unbelief. If we begin to coast in our Christian life or let down our guard thinking that some past act of faith will save us without any struggle to persevere, we may be rudely shocked on the judgment day. This is how Paul sums up our need to continue to pursue faith...

#### **2 Timothy 4:7 (NKJV)**

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

Fighting the good fight, finishing the race, and keeping faith all mean the same things. Fighting the fight of faith is the struggle to keep the faith. And it's a struggle that a true Christian never finally abandons until he attains the crown of righteousness from the Lord. So the first meaning of the term "Fight of faith," is the fight to maintain faith.

The second way to understand the phrase "**Fight of Faith**" would be this: we must fight the fight of faith in the sense that *faith is used as the weapon* to attain some other victory beyond faith itself. The Apostle Paul says it this way...

#### **Hebrews 11:1 (NLT)**

*Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.*

The idea is not merely that we are fighting to maintain our faith, but that we are maintaining faith in order to attain some victory by means of faith. As shared our victory is to "lay hold or take hold of eternal life" as the Apostle Paul tells the young Pastor Timothy in verse 12. The reason he adds this command right after the command to fight the good of fight of faith is that eternal life is the goal to be attained by a successful fight of faith.

So the fight of faith is not just a fight to maintain faith (the first meaning); it is also a fight to use faith as a weapon for attaining a victory beyond faith itself, namely, eternal life (the second meaning).

## **Question Two: *WHY DOES THE APOSTLE PAUL CALL IT A GOOD FIGHT?***

Many believers have the misconception that walking by faith means they should be able to effortlessly glide all the way to God's destination for their lives with no hiccups or struggles along the way. But the Bible teaches quite the opposite. The Apostle tells us to fight the good fight of faith implying that the path of faith often requires a fight to see it through to completion. In this fight that we are encouraged to fight, we are told we are to fight it as a "good" fight. This perhaps goes against all of our past teaching about getting into fights. As children, we are told not to fight denoting in our childlike mind that to fight is a bad thing. Yet, when we cross over and begin to live in the newness of life wrought by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we are told and frankly encouraged to fight and that to fight is a good thing.

So, the question is how and why is it considered a "good fight"? Let's look at five reasons why the fight of faith is a "good fight" and not a bad fight:

### **1. Because The Enemy Is Evil**

First, it is a good fight because the enemy is evil. The enemy is unbelief and the satanic forces behind it and the sins which come from it. When we set ourselves to combat the forces that try to get us to trust in ourselves instead of God, we oppose a very evil enemy. In our fight, we are counteracting the negative and evil forces that oppose all that is God and all that God represents; therefore, our fight is a fight of good against evil.

### **2. Because We Are Not Left To Our Own Strength**

Second, it is a good fight because we are not left to our own strength to fight. The Lord has promised to be with us and to enable us to stand through and endure all that oppose us in our walk with Him. The Apostle Paul knew this very well which is why he could encourage the churches in his many letters to continue on in the faith. Paul knew that if we as Christians were to grow in our faith, it would be on the strength of a power greater than you and I.

#### **Ephesians 6:10 (NKJV)**

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

We can't fight the good fight on our own. We just aren't strong enough. We need the Lord's strength. We need His might. We need to depend on Jesus 24 hours a day, calling out to Him, asking Him to help us, asking Him for His strength. The Lord understands our frailty; He understands that we are no match for the enemy of our soul who is also the enemy of our Lord.

### **3. Because It's A Struggle To Let A Burden Be Carried for Us**

Third, it is a good fight because it is not a struggle to carry a burden, but a struggle to let a burden be carried for us. The life of faith is not a burdened life. It is an unburdened life. The fight of faith is the struggle to trust God with the burdens of our life. It's a fight for freedom from worry. It's a fight for hope, peace and joy which are all threatened by unbelief and doubt about God's promises. And since freedom, hope, peace and joy are good the fight to preserve them is a good fight. So, we are admonished and quite

frankly urged to give our burdens over to the Lord. This becomes even more necessary as we come to understand that the Lord is there to carry to our burdens.

**Psalm 55:22 (NLT)**

*Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.*

This is the promise we have as we trust the Lord to carry ALL of our burdens. Fight the good fight; it will only lead to peace and rest.

**4. Because It Involves Self-Humbling Not Self-Exaltation**

Fourth, the fight of faith is good because, unlike most fights, it does not involve self-exaltation but self-humbling. Most fighting is not good because it is a proud attempt to prove our own strength at someone else's expense. But the fight of faith is just the opposite. It's a way of saying that we are weak and desperately need the mercy of God. It's a fight of losing ourselves to find ourselves. It's a fight to allow our heavenly Father to make of our lives what He intends to and desires to.

**1 Peter 5:6-7 (NKJV)**

- 6. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,*
- 7. casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

While this may be a struggle for the proud, it's humbling to admit that we are weak, that we need help. But that's exactly what God tells us to do. He says don't try to fight this fight on your own; cast your cares and anxieties on the Lord. Humble yourself. Cry out to God; He is there to strengthen us and to see us through to the end of the fight. Hold on my brother and my sister; we will win in the end. We will come forth victorious on God's terms.

**5. Because By It God Is Greatly Glorified**

Fifth, the fight of faith is good because by it God is greatly glorified. When we devote ourselves to self-abasement with the purpose of casting all our hope on God, He is exalted in the world. Trusting in ourselves gets us glory. Trusting in the power of God gets Him glory. Nothing in all the world is as good as the glory of God. Therefore the fight of faith is a good fight.

In sum, then, the fight to maintain faith and lay hold on eternal life is a good fight because the enemy is evil; the strength to fight is given by God; the faith we pursue is not a burden but an unburdening; the fight involves self-humbling not self-exaltation; and God is glorified as we learn to trust Him with all our cares and hopes.

**Question Three: HOW DO WE GO ABOUT ENGAGING IN THIS FIGHT SUCCESSFULLY?**

We now come to the third and perhaps the most important question in our fighting the good fight of faith. How do we successfully fight in this, the most important battle of our Christian walk? How do we finish strong? The Apostle Paul was a great example of how to live this Christian life of faith successfully.

**2 Timothy 4:7-8 (NKJV)**

- 7. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

8. ***Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.***

The Apostle Paul understood the blessing that awaits all who fight the good fight remaining faithful until the end. In the previous verse (verse 6), the Apostle Paul tells the young Pastor Timothy that as for himself, his life has already been given as a sacrifice unto God; his life has been poured out; meaning he has given his life to becoming all God has created him to become. This took the Apostle Paul engaging in the good fight of faith and remaining in the fight until the time of his death. And now the Apostle Paul tells Timothy that a prize awaits him—the crown of righteousness the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give him on that great day of His return. And the prize is not just for the Apostle Paul, but for all who eagerly look forward to His glorious return.

All that we have shared above is good and we conclude that it is the way to go. However, in reality we sometimes find ourselves standing on the outside struggling just to hold on and make it in the inside of this thing called faith. If we would be honest with ourselves, we find fighting the good fight of faith really tough on some days. While we are called to stand in faith, we live in a body that is subjected to the five senses, especially that which we see. But God calls us to look at our world through His eyes, the eyes of faith. But just how do we do this successfully with all that it presented before our eyes to see?

***Thanks be unto our God!*** We have been given three strong weapons of our warfare with which to fight the good fight of faith and be victorious. Our weapons are Word, Prayer and Praise and these are powerful enough through the power and spirit of God to overcome any opposition that comes against our faith.

## **2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (MSG)**

***The world is unprincipled. It's dog-eat-dog out there! The world doesn't fight fair. But we don't live or fight our battles that way—never have and never will. The tools of our trade aren't for marketing or manipulation, but they are for demolishing the entire massively corrupt culture. We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ. Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity.***

Wow! The Message Bible really speaks to the heart of the blessing we have received through the Spirit to fight against every strong hold that attempts to turn us away from the faith. Word, Prayer and Praise are our weapons of mass destruction. It's time we take inventory of ourselves to see if we have our weapons in good working condition.

### **1. How much time are you spending in God's Word every day?**

It is not only important to read the Word, but to look for opportunities every day to practice what you learn. In the Parable Jesus told about the man who built his house on the rock vs. the man who built his house on the sand (*cf., Matthew 7:24-29*), there was only one difference between the two men. The man who built his house on the rock not only heard the Word, but he did the Word. It is in God's Word where we find our Spiritual, mental and emotional stability; practicing the Word. Developing faith is a process, but it will never happen if you don't start where you are.

## **Romans 10:17 (NKJV)**

***So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***

In this verse, the Apostle Paul gives us knowledge on how faith comes, by taking in God's Word. Faith to believe God's Word is the very essence of receiving the promises that He says we can have. Studying and meditating on the Word of God along with confessing the Word of God is when your faith, with action, brings results. Begin now developing and strengthening your good faith fighting habits by setting aside time within your day; or at least within your week to spend time in God's Word. If you do this, you will automatically begin to put in practice what you receive from God's Word.

## **2. How much time are you spending in prayer; in relationship with the Father?**

How can we say we have relationship with someone we never spend time with? Our relationship, at best, will be shallow. The more time we spend with someone, the more we begin to learn who that someone is; we learn their traits and abilities; we learn their likes and dislikes; we even come to learn their trustworthiness...whether or not we can rely on them to perform toward us in the manner that they claim they can.

Spending time with God in prayer is so important to us embracing an unshakeable faith in God and in God's ability to be who God says He is. Prayer is our communion with God. In prayer, we not only speak to God, but we quiet ourselves enough to allow Him to speak to us and direct us. Yes, God still speaks in this modern age of technology. If God spoke to the saints of old, He certainly will speak to us if we believe He will. Remember, as we engage in the good fight of faith, prayer is one of the most powerful weapons that we, as believers, have in our spiritual arsenal. Our fight is not against flesh and blood; it is a spiritual fight and because of this it's going to take spiritual armor to fight with.

### **Ephesians 6:11-12 (NLT)**

- 11. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.***
- 12. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.***

In this text, the Apostle lets the church at Ephesus know that they will never defeat the enemy of their soul in their flesh. When we engage in spiritual warfare in our flesh, we play right into the hands of the enemy giving him what he seeks after...a weak Christian who is unable to overcome his powers. If we are to stand against the strategies of the devil, we must put on all God's holy armor.

The Apostle Paul goes on in this six chapter of the book of Ephesians (*cf., Ephesians 6:13-17*) to single out every weapon we have in our spiritual arsenal instructing us of the criticality and necessity of us putting every piece on. Finally, the Apostle Paul identifies the last and most important weapon in our spiritual arsenal...**Prayer.**

### **Ephesians 6:18 (MSG)**

***In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.***

Not only are we encouraged to use our weapon of prayer to defeat the enemy in the spirit realm for ourselves, but we are to join together in praying for one another so that none of us in this battle of our faith fall short and give out. Prayer will also help us guard against our faith's biggest enemy...**doubt and unbelief.**

### 3. Are you giving God what is due to Him; Are you giving God your praise?

We have come to the third strong weapon of warfare we are encouraged to use in our good fight of faith. Just as the enemy attacks our prayer life and our study time, he attacks our praise. If he can put enough weight on us, he will stop us; he will contain our praise unto the Lord. Do not let Satan stop your blessing or contain you!

Praise is much more than just music; it is a powerful spiritual warfare tool. God never meant for us to fight our battles alone—Praise will shift the battle from us to God. Praise gives us strength and stops Satan in his tracks. Praising God creates the atmosphere of heaven in our environment and situation. Where praise is, God is—and the enemy cannot reside. There is an awesome power released when we declare God's majesty in praise. No matter what is going on around us or what the enemy brings, if we remain in God's Holy atmosphere it will not touch us. If our mind is set on God and our mouth and heart are singing praises to Him, the enemy cannot get in and cannot take what is not his; namely our faith. Praising God is like the sound of nails on a chalkboard in the enemy's ears. He cannot stand it when God's children praise Him. There is much dense darkness around us at times when we are going through our test and trials in our faith to believe God. This can take over us and cause us to feel overwhelmed. However, if we keep our focus on God and keep the praise unto God flowing, we will be able to successfully contend for the faith.

#### **Psalm 150:1-6 (TLB)**

1. *Hallelujah! Yes, praise the Lord! Praise him in his Temple and in the heavens he made with mighty power.*
2. *Praise him for his mighty works. Praise his unequalled greatness.*
3. *Praise him with the trumpet and with the lute and harp.*
4. *Praise him with the drums and dancing. Praise him with stringed instruments and horns.*
5. *Praise him with the cymbals, yes, loud clanging cymbals.*
6. *Let everything alive give praise to the Lord! You praise him! Hallelujah!*

There is never a time nor a situation occurring wherein we are to silence our praise unto the Lord. Our praise is NOT contingent upon what we are going through or experiencing. Or praise is NOT set only for times when all is going well in our life. On the contrary, since praise is a powerful weapon, it would behoove us to lift our voices in praise unto the Lord during our most trying and difficult times. When our faith is being fought against with every weapon possible, it is the optimum time for us to set our heart, mind and spirit toward lifting up the name of Jesus. Our praise will change us from the inside out; it will give us a believing hope resounding way down within our spirit and resonating through our being. Let us be ever ready to bring unto God what is due Him and what only we, the children of the Most High God, can give Him.

#### **Psalm 33:1 (TLB)**

*Let all the joys of the godly well up in praise to the Lord, for it is right to praise him.*

Not only is praise unto our God a weapon to defeat the enemy in our good fight of faith, praise unto our God is our obligation.

### **Conclusion**

As we come to the close of our study, let us walk away with knowing that to fight the good fight of faith means that we abide in the Word of God by faith, regardless of what we feel or what we think we

understand. Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, you are my disciples indeed” (cf., John 8:31). We must stand firmly anchored in the Word in the power of the Spirit, reckoning ourselves dead to our feelings and our human reasoning, not letting the sin of unbelief and doubt rule in our mortal body by obeying its enticement.

To fight the good fight of faith means we must commune with our Father in prayer asking for His strength to endure during our times of weakness and holding on the promise that He will give it unto us. Remember, God’s strength is made perfect in our weakness (cf., 2 Corinthians 12:9). When we feel as though we can’t go on; when the battle is more that we can muster the strength to stand...we must call on the name of the Lord in prayer and wait quietly for Him to answer.

To fight the good fight of faith means we must remember that all of our help is coming from the Lord and give unto Him the praises due His name. Any victory we achieve is of the Lord’s doing and if it is marvelous in our sight then we ought to praise Him for his goodness and marvelous work wrought in us.

My brother and my sister, my prayer is that this study has blessed and encouraged you to stand strong in your faith; never wavering but believing you will win the good fight of faith and in the end receive the crown of life that awaits you. Make the testimony of our brother and Apostle Paul come alive and be a reality in your life...***Fight a good fight; finish your course; keep the faith.***

***God’s peace and blessing be upon you....***

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