

**Message #6****I Timothy 1:18-20**

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to see to it that this church became the pillar and support of the truth of God. It was his job to get the church on track. Paul had full confidence that he could accomplish the objective and God's church could become all that God wanted it to become. Paul believed Timothy was God's man to wage war against false teachers, false doctrines, and satanic forces that were in the church.

**LEADERS HAVE BEEN COMMANDED BY GOD TO BATTLE AND FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT TO SEE TO IT THAT THE CHURCH BECOMES THE PILLAR AND SUPPORT OF THE TRUTH OF GOD**

No one in his right mind likes to fight. But the truth is God calls leaders to be good soldiers who do fight, do wage war, who do, by faith, see to it that the church becomes what God wants it to become.

The context of the fight and the context of the war are in the local church. Timothy's battle was in the church of Ephesus, and our battle is in the church of Kalamazoo.

**POINT #1 – Paul commands leaders to fight a good fight. 1:18**

This verse is filled with military language and imagery. Paul viewed getting God's church straightened out as a military conflict and battle. The word "command" is one that refers to a military order or command (Smith, p. 338). The word "entrust" is one that refers to setting a charge or command before someone (*Ibid.*, p. 343). Paul is setting forth to Timothy a military-type command, namely, "fight the good fight."

Now the word for "fight" is critical to Pauline thought here for he repeats the word two times for emphasis. The word pictures an encamped army that is dug in and waging war in a battle (*Ibid.*, p. 419).

**Observation #1** - The verb "fight" is present tense, meaning the church is not only to fight one skirmish, it is to continually fight for the objective of making the church the pillar and support of the truth of God.

**Observation #2** - The fight we are to fight is to be a "good" fight.

Now the word "good" is one that refers to fighting in a way that God views as good, excellent and honorable (*Ibid.*, p. 229). The fight must be one that is in accordance with God's Word and will.

**POINT #2 – Paul motivates leaders to fight a good fight. 1:18**

**Motivation #1** - The motivation of Pauline son-ship. 1:18a

Paul is stressing the point here because he wants Timothy to fight a good fight and one of the reasons why he should is because he is Paul's son in the faith and Paul himself fought a good fight. In fact, at the end of his life he was able to say, "I have fought a good fight" (II Tim. 4:7).

Paul is saying you are my son; now fight like my son should fight.

**Motivation #2** - The motivation of prophetic ministry. **1:18b**

Timothy should fight a good fight because he had been given a special gift and ministry ability that made him capable of fighting a good fight. Paul wanted Timothy to realize that he was a divinely equipped soldier, fully capable of waging war. His capability and divine strength had been recognized by others (I Tim. 6:12).

The Apostle Paul kicked off his ministry the same way. The leaders of the church of Antioch were prophetically moved by God to lay their hands on him, thus identifying him as one singled out by God for ministry and they sent him away (Acts 13:1-3).

Apparently a similar thing had happened to Timothy, for he, too, was singled out and identified as one God wanted in ministry by the elders (I Tim. 4:14), and by Paul himself (II Tim. 1:6). Their laying of hands on Timothy was prophetic in that it literally revealed to Timothy his gift and ministry.

Now the gift of prophecy—people getting direct messages from God—ceased when the apostolic age ceased, something clearly predicted in Scripture (I Cor. 13:8). So today God does not give special messages to people about other people and their gifts and their future ministry. However, I do think a principle is true and that is if one is a gifted minister or teacher, God's Spirit will reveal that to His people and they will sense this one truly has been called by God into ministry.

People, who quit, give up or run, always have a common denominator—they are always focused on themselves! They are not focused on God, His Word or His will—they are focused on self!

**POINT #3** – Paul gave prerequisites to leaders to fight a good fight. **1:19a**

**Prerequisite #1** - A good fight means keeping faith. **1:19a**

The word "keeping" is present tense, meaning in order for one to fight a good fight he must continually keep faith. The word literally means to hold fast to something (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 192). Now the noun "faith" is anarthrous, without an article, meaning it is the character and quality of faith which is being described. In other words, Paul is not talking about saving faith; he is talking about the character of a faithful life to the Word of God.

If one is to fight a good fight, he must continually, by faith, follow the Word of God.

**Prerequisite #2** - A good fight means keeping a good conscience. **1:19b**

According to the Word of God, in order for anyone to fight a good fight, which God classifies as a good fight, the conscience must be good. In other words, the conscience must square with the Word of God.

As we near the end of this age, people will become so callused and hardened in their conscience that they will live a life of a hypocritical liar (I Tim. 4:2). A man who fights a good fight will have a conscience that is sensitive and real. It will guide and govern him. His conscience will be yielded to the Holy Spirit and when the Spirit prompts the conscience to do or not do something, he will obey it.

**POINT #4** – Paul gives illustrations of those not fighting a good fight. **1:19c-20**

The relative pronoun “which,” has, as its antecedent, “good conscience.” Here, then, grammatically is the way one spirals downward from a good conscience—they reject the Word of God that is speaking to their conscience, which eventually leads to a shipwrecked faith.

**Part #1** - Not fighting a good fight begins by rejection. **1:19b**

The moment you reject the Word of God, your good fight stops! The word “reject” is one that means to thrust oneself away or to refuse the truth (Smith, p. 56). This is a willful rejection.

**Part #2** - Not fighting a good fight leads to a shipwrecked faith. **1:19c**

Walk away from the truth, reject it, don't apply it, and don't listen to your conscience and years from now your faith will be, by God's assessment, totally shipwrecked. This is not talking about a setback; this is talking about a faith that has been destroyed.

**Part #3** - Not fighting a good fight ends in excommunication. **1:20**

Hymenaeus and Alexander were two that Paul delivered to Satan, which means he excommunicated them out of the church, which means he cut off all fellowship from them and publicly prayed delivering them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (I Cor. 5:1-5).

Hymenaeus was a person who loved to talk about and teach things that were meaningless (II Tim. 2:16-17). Alexander had been a big name in Ephesus. He was a spokesman for the Jews (Acts 19:33). He was a coppersmith who did Paul much evil (II Tim. 4:14) and he was delivered over to Satan. When people become so hardened to God's Word that their evil is affecting others, they must be put out.

Are you fighting a good fight? Are you obeying the Word of God? Are you listening to your conscience? Are you guarding your faith? If you can answer yes, then you will become all God wants you to become. If the answer is no, it is time right now to get right with God.