

## **FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT** **(1 Timothy 1:18-20)**

### **I. Paul gave Timothy a reminder (vs. 18).**

- A. We are told in Acts 16, that Timothy was well thought of by the brethren in cities of Lystra and Iconium.
  - 1. They spoke well of Timothy to Paul.
  - 2. Most commentators believe this to mean that they believed and told Paul that Timothy would be a great asset to his work and could do great things if taught well.
- B. Paul knew Timothy was young and impressionable.
  - 1. By reminding Timothy of what had been said about him, he would attempt to live up to those things.
  - 2. This was Paul's way encouraging Timothy to stay in the war and not give in or up while fighting.
- C. Paul was encouraging Timothy to not let those people down who had spoken so highly of him and believed so much in him.
- D. One of the worst phrases you can hear from someone you love or admire is "I'm disappointed in you."
  - 1. From a parent, that is worse than a spanking.
  - 2. From a person who has great faith in you, that is deeply hurtful.
- E. Paul was encouraging Timothy to not let down those people who loved him and cared for him.
- F. There are probably people in your life who have encouraged you in your life for Christ.
  - 1. When the going gets tough, one way to be encouraged is to remember those people and what they think of you.
  - 2. You are fighting for them as well as yourself.

### **II. Paul told Timothy what he needed to fight (vs. 19a).**

- A. Paul gave Timothy some encouragement but he knew that would not be enough to stay strong in the face of false teachers.
  - 1. Encouragement is wonderful but you need more than that.
  - 2. You need weapons to fight and that is what Paul told Timothy about in the first part of this verse.
- B. Paul has already mentioned both of these weapons in verse 5.
  - 1. Faith and good conscience.
  - 2. Both of these come from true and sound doctrine, which comes from God's word.
- C. There are two ways the word faith is used in the New Testament.
  - 1. At times it used for one's belief in Jesus and His word.
  - 2. At times it used as a part for the whole of the gospel.
  - 3. There is debate as to how Paul uses it here.
- D. If it means a personal faith, Paul tells Timothy to wear his faith, which is the meaning of holding.
- E. If it is the gospel with faith being a part representing the whole, it means to keep the gospel doctrines, to be true to the gospel and what it teaches.

1. With the emphasis on warfare and battling false teachers, this is probably what Paul meant.
  2. Timothy was to keep the doctrine pure and fight for it and not let it go.
- F. The idea of a good conscience has to do with obedience to the gospel.
1. A conscience is only good if it has been taught properly.
  2. Paul did things in good conscience but was the foremost sinner, at least in his mind.
  3. Timothy's conscience had been trained by the gospel and he was to keep it good.
  4. This carries the idea of not allowing it to be stained with sin and become hardened to the gospel
- G. With pure doctrine and a pure life, Timothy could battle false teachers and sin.
1. Could you imagine Timothy trying to battle sin with sin in his own life?
  2. Those false teachers and people living in sin would be looking for things to use against him and he had to be as pure as he could be in doctrine and life.
- H. The same holds true for us.
1. If we are going fight in this war on God's side, it will be with doctrine and purity.
  2. We must hold on to the gospel and we must live lives above reproach.
  3. These two attributes allow us to be great weapons in God's war against evil.
- I. We need to realize that this war is much bigger than our personal battles with Satan.
1. This is a war between good and evil, between God and Satan.
  2. We are soldiers in this war on God's side or Satan's side.
- J. God has given us what we need doctrinally and we need to get and keep a good conscience.

### III. **Paul gives Timothy a warning and illustration (vs. 19b-20).**

- A. Sadly, there were those, even in the infancy of the church, who did not keep a good conscience.
1. They put the faith away from themselves and allowed their consciences to become polluted with sin.
  2. They rejected that which they once believed or professed to believe.
- B. What this led to was a shipwreck spiritually speaking.
1. They crashed in the storm of life because they gave up their only defense.
  2. They turned from God and it cost them their spiritual lives.
- C. Too many Christians do this even today.
1. The conscience they once had has been allowed to harden and be deceived by sin.

2. They crash on the rocks of life and the end for them is worse than the beginning.
- D. Paul then gives Timothy an real life illustration of two Christians who put away good consciences: Hymenaeus and Alexander.
1. Hymenaeus is thought to be the same as the person of that name mentioned by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:17.
  2. It is not known for sure who Alexander is.
- E. Whoever they were, they were withdrawn from by Paul and the Lord's church in order to learn not to blaspheme against God.
1. These two men were Christians who did not keep the faith and allowed their consciences to be polluted.
  2. Because of that, Paul said they were delivered to Satan.
  3. This simply means they were withdrawn from by Paul because of their sinful lives and their failure to repent.
- F. This is the end of one who does not keep the faith.
- G. We either keep the faith and a good conscience as a result and be on God's side, or we lose both and end up fighting with and for Satan.