

1 Tim 6:11,12 PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS

PRELIMS. **Everyone** has a **goal** in life. Everyone pursues **something**. Even the man who has no ambition or desire for anything pursues the state of contentment which is the **status quo**! Something makes each of us 'tick'. Something keeps us getting up in the morning! We get up for some 'philosophical' reason. We are **all** pursuers of our own **contentment/happiness**, and whatever gives us **contentment/happiness**, that is what we pursue each day.

But Paul here is saying that we ought **not** to be **content** with the status quo! We **ought** to be pursuing! We ought to have a **honourable goal**. He has just been reminding his readers of the **danger** of the goal/pursuit which is the World's Biggest Myth – '**Money and materialism** makes you **Happy**'!

So Paul now **defines** the 'Pursuit of Righteousness' and what it **involves**! Paul makes **4 appeals**, which we must follow if we are to be good Xians! They are:- Flee; Pursue; Fight; Capture!

FLEE

First, look at how he addresses Tim! "*But you, man of God*"[11]. It is **Xns** who **need** this warning! Xns can have, and sadly too often do have, wrong ideals and values! Xns **need** these instructions!

"flee from all this"[11] "*this*" being the pursuit of riches and materialism! There are times when **nothing** else will do but **fleeing** running away from the **temptation**. This is **not** cowardice – it is **wisdom**! Remember **Joseph**! Nothing else would have saved him! (Story of man, tempted, ran to hotel room, locked door, threw key out of window!) What wisdom! What courage! What **strength**!

The surprising thing here is that it is **not** sexual temptations (he does that in [1Cor 6:18] "*flee sexual immorality*") Rather it is flee from the **hunger for material gain**! Flee from the 'love of money', being "*eager for money*"[10]. Paul told the Cors "*Flee from idolatry*" [1Cor10:14] and we know Paul believed "*covetousness* (greed/avarice) *which is idolatry*" [Col 3:5 NKJ]!

Don't try and 'reason your way out' of your wrong desires. Covetousness has a **unique ability** to **out-reason** you! It **will** find a 'legitimate' **reason** to **justify** your desire! **APP** Most temptations are settled with a 'drop tools and run' attitude! That is **not** being 'chicken' or weak. It is **not** 'escapism' (which refusing to face responsibilities). There is **no technique** to **learn** – just simply **run** from evil desires, **as you run from a fire in a building!**

PURSUE

Now Xianity is **not** a **negative** religion. Xianity is a '**for**' religion. Instead of pursuing the things which attracts the world, viz pleasure, promotion, fame, wealth, power – we are to **pursue** "*righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness*" [11]. Xns already have the **seed** of all these graces in our hearts – these grace **must** be **strengthened**! Thus so often in Scripture "*Build yourselves up...*"! The **only** way they can possibly be strengthened and built up, is through **exercise**!!

Do you want to **enjoy** life? Do you want to have 'good days'? Then listen to Peter: "*turn away from evil, do good...seek peace and pursue it*" That was written to those "*whoever desires to love life and see good days*"!![1Pet3:11] I remember going on a business course on 'How to Improve Your Turnover and Sales in Business' It **guaranteed** 'success'! If you did what it told you it guaranteed to increase your business profits!

What a disappointment! It was really a course in the **practical outworking** of our plans! It told you to do the **obvious**! We learned nothing new – just **do** what was so obvious. This passage reminds me of that course. To stop loving money and evil things, to live for God, you just do the very obvious things, "*pursue righteousness, godliness...*" etc. Make **these** your goals. (The course said '**Set** goals – **Aim** for them')

APP Do you Xn, **make** your **target** godliness? When you get up in the morning, what's your aim – to glorify God throughout the day? Well, make **that** your goal. If you are a Xian, then you have the

germ-seed of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance inside you. All you need is **fertiliser** and **exercise**! Feed it with the Word and “**train yourself to be godly**”[4:7b]!

If you are not pursuing godliness, you are pursuing **something else** which is **not** godly! You are **either** pursuing godliness or ungodliness! You are either serving Christ or the devil! Look: “*Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you **are** slaves to the one **whom you obey***”[Rm 6:16]! If you are doing what Satan wants you to do, you are Satan's slave; if you do what Christ wants you to do. You are Christ's slave! It is what you **do** that confirms who you serve! By their fruits you shall know them.

FIGHT

Paul now uses another word “**Fight the good fight of the faith**” [12a]! Being a Xn is a **fight** It is a **battle**! It is struggle - if you are **conscientious**! Now **why** are we told to put armour on? Because we are in a **fight** and are likely to get hurt!

If you are really keen to advance His Name, you find living the Xian life hard. Look at the greatest evangelist of all time- “*We are hard-pressed on **every** side, but not crushed, **perplexed** but not in despair, **persecuted** but not abandoned, **struck down** but not destroyed*”[2C4:8]+ “*I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, been exposed to death again and again...5 times 40 lashes minus 1...3 times beaten with rods, once I was stoned...*”[2Cor 11:23cf]. Some CV! Far cry from the comfy armchairs of some TV evangelists!

Notice **what** Tim was to fight **for** - “**the faith**” – the body of doctrine that is the truth! There is a 'set' of beliefs regarding God and Jesus Christ, that is called '**the**' faith, and has to be **defended**! Seven times in this letter alone Paul has referred to '**the** faith'! “*my own son in the the faith*”[1:2]+ “*the mystery of **the** faith*”[3:9] + “*great boldness in **the** faith*”[3:13]+ “*some shall depart from **the** faith*”[4:1]+ “*he has denied **the** faith*”[5:8]+ “*have wandered from*

the faith”[6:10] + “*some have professed and in so doing have wandered from **the** faith*”[6:21]! Collected body of Truth!

Paul said later on “*I have fought a good **fight**, I have finished the race I have kept **the faith***”[2Tim 4:7] The Xian work is not only to promote love – it is also to **destroy** the **work** of the **devil**! “*The weapons of our **warfare** are not carnal but mighty in God **for pulling down** strongholds, **casting down** arguments*”[2Cor 10:4]! It is **never** physical fighting – **Never** (except in self-defence).

CAPTURE

Paul encourages Tim to “**take hold of the eternal life**”[12b]. Did Tim not have eternal life in him? Yes! The word ‘take hold’ means ‘**capture**’ - **grasp, grab** and don't let go! Paul is wanting Tim to make **capital** of it! So many Xians are **timid** and are almost **afraid** to be bold for Jesus. All Xns have **abilities** or **power** they are not aware of! With the seed of God in us, with the Holy Spirit within us, we have power “*His **divine power** has given us **everything** we need for life and **godliness***”[1P1:3] There most definitely is a power in godliness! Thus: “*a form of **godliness** but **denying** its **power***”[2Tim3:5] Ie, **if** there is no power, it is not true godliness!

Xns have access to Someone “*who is **able** to do **exceedingly abundantly above** all that we **ask** or **think**...according to His **power** that is at work within us*”[Eph 3:20]! Now **why** did Paul write that about God? To **encourage** us! **We** have **access** to a **source** of power that's **way beyond** our **imagination**!

Paul **reminds** Tim of something which should **strengthen** him. His **ongoing confession** – “*in the **presence** of many **witnesses***” [12c] At the **Lord's Supper**! When we take the Lord's Supper, we are **continuing** our profession. If we stop taking the Lord's Supper, we stop professing him! We, as it were **re-capture** our faith when we take the bread and wine. It strengthens us for we are **doing** something that is **commanded** and we are **obedient to Jesus Christ** and it has a real connection with our Saviour! You are '**taking hold**' **afresh** of that eternal life which is in Christ!