

PRELIMS. In this chapter Paul is reminding us that the Xn, the *man of God*, as he calls Timothy, is a **soldier** and that we are in a **war!** The Xn has to be **trained, disciplined, committed** in order to *fight the good fight of the faith*. You just **cannot** be a good Xn unless you are principled, disciplined, committed! Paul makes **4 appeals**, which Tim must preach about if he is to be faithful. You and I must also follow them. They are:- **Flee; Pursue; Fight; Commit!**

FLEE

as for you, O man of God, flee these things [11] ‘Flee’ is a familiar phrase with Paul. He uses it again in [2 Tim 2:22] regarding *youthful passions* and in [1 Cor 6:18] *flee from sexual immorality!* There are times/occasions when **nothing** else will do but **fleeing and running away** from a situation. This is **not** cowardice – it is **wisdom!**

Remember **Joseph!** Nothing else would have saved him! I heard at a Conference a story of man, tempted, ran to hotel room, locked door, threw key out of window! What wisdom! What courage/**strength!**

The surprising thing here is that it is **not** sexual temptations Paul speaks of. Rather it is flee from the **hunger for MATERIALISM!** Flee from the ‘love of money and craving for money’[10]. Paul told the Cors *flee from idolatry* [1Cor10:14] and we know Paul taught that *covetousness* (greed/avarice) *which is idolatry* [Col 3:5]!

*Don’t try and **argue** your way out of temptation/**wrong desires**.

Covetousness has a **unique ability** to **out-wit** you! Ultimately it **will** find a ‘legitimate’ **reason** for you to **justify** your desire! It will show you what benefits you will gain by giving in, how much you can save by getting it, the bargain it is, and how it will be useful some time in the future. etc! If you ‘**engage**’ covetousness, you **will** finally believe ‘giving-in’ is the best thing to do, so just get it & end the struggle!

APP Most temptations can **only** be settled with a ‘drop tools and run’ attitude! That is **not** being ‘chicken’ or weak. Fleeing is **NOT ESCAPISM!** Escapism is **refusing to face** your **responsibilities**, fleeing is facing them and **conquering** them! There is **no technique to learn** in fleeing from temptation – just simply **run** from evil

desires, as you run from a **fire** in a building! *The Lord Jesus would have us **AVOID** all **involvement** with temptation and advises us to *Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation* [Mar 14:38] **Every morning**, make a point of praying that you would **not have** to fight with temptation today, but **if** you **have** to, you would **conquer!**

PURSUE

Now Xnity is **not** a **negative** religion. Xnity is a ‘**for**’ religion. Instead of pursuing the things which attracts the world, viz **pleasure, promotion, fame, wealth, power** – we are to **pursue** ‘right living’! *righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness & gentleness*[11] If you are a Xn you **ALREADY HAVE** the **seeds** of **ALL** these graces in your heart! *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.* A seed has **all** the **ingredients** of a plant within it! When planted, all the ingredients are planted with it! So it is with the **seed of grace!** If you are a Xn, the seed of every **good thing** is within your heart! What we need is that these seedlings be **strengthened and developed!** The life that is there needs to be **nourished/fostered.** That is **why** it is **vital** you are daily **fed/watered** by God’s **Word** and **Spirit** for it is *the Spirit who gives life* [J6:63]

Do you want to **love** life? Do you want to have ‘good days’? Then *turn away from evil, and do good...seek peace and pursue it*[1P3] **Sanctification** is actually **SIMPLE!** I mean simple in **theory** - not practise. Its **LOGICAL!** I remember going on a **business course** on ‘How to Improve Your Turnover/Sales in Business’ It guaranteed ‘success’! Guaranteed to increase your profit! I **believed** it!! What a **disappointment!** It was really a course in **psychology**. It told you to do the **obvious!** We learned nothing new – just do what was so obvious to businessmen – things we already did do but did not do enough of! This passage reminds me of that course. The way to be holy is just to **pursue righteousness, godliness...** obvious!

Dwell on Christ - **watch** Him! Make it your goal to copy Him and serve Him! Respond and react the way He did. *When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly* [1P2:23]

APP When you get up in the morning, what's your aim – is it to become more like Christ throughout the day? Let us all make **that** our goal. **Pray** that the germ-seed of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness inside you, would grow and increase. Ask God for the **fertiliser** of His Word and rain of His Holy Spirit would feed you, so that you would **train yourself for godliness**[4:7] All Xns have a **responsibility** to **train ourselves** for godliness!!

If you are not pursuing godliness, you are pursuing **something else** which is **not** godly! You're **either** pursuing godliness or ungodliness! You are either serving Christ or the devil! Look: *Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey* [Rom 6:16]! If you are doing what Satan wants you to do you are Satan'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 **battle**! It is struggle - if you are **conscientious**! Why are we told to put armour on? Because we are in a fight! If you are really keen to advance His Name, you will find living the Xn life hard. Look at the greatest evangelist of all time *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed*[2C4:8] + *Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea...in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure* [2Cor 11:23cf].

That to me is a **real** fight! **Not many** of us **are asked** to fight such battles! Do not let that discourage you from living the Xn life! But if you are asked to engage in such conflicts as Paul, what a **privilege**! Consider it all **joy**! You **will** have your **reward**, you will not be the loser in any way, but the gainer! After saying *we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered*, Paul said *in all these things we are more than conquerors* [Rom 12] nothing can separate us from God's **love**!

Notice **what** Tim was to fight **for - the faith** – the body of doctrine that is the truth! Paul *I have fought the good fight...I have kept the faith* [2T4:7] The Xn work is not only to promote love – it is also to **destroy the work of the devil!** *The weapons of our warfare...destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God* [2C 10:4] APP Never physical fighting except in self-defence!

COMMIT

To **enable** Tim, Paul encourages him to *take hold of the eternal life* [12b] Ie, to **Christ!** *Christ who IS your life* [Col 3:4] Listen to John *we know that the Son of God has come...and we are in Him...in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and ETERNAL LIFE* [1J5:20] The word ‘take hold’ means ‘grasp’ - don’t let go of Christ! Make Him your’s for keeps. **Give** your **whole self** to Him. Be **committed** to Christ! You and He must **always be together** - you must **never be apart!** You never go anywhere without Him!

Did Tim not already have eternal life in Christ? Yes, but it is possible to have something and not make the most of it. We can **own** something and not make use of it! Yes Tim had eternal life in Christ but he, like us, was inclined to live as if he hadn’t! We have access to Someone who *is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us* [Eph 3:20]! Do **you really** believe that? Paul prayed for the *immeasurable greatness of His power in us* who believe [Eph 1:19] Why did Paul write that? To **encourage** us, for we have an immeasurable source of power!

Paul **reminds** Tim of something which should **strengthen** him. His **confession!** *the good confession in the presence of many witnesses* [12c] For you/I to make a profession today is **easy**. For us there is **little cost, little risk.** For Tim (and remember he was **timid!**) there were **enormous** risks and costs! It was said, If you joined the band of believers, you were more less volunteering to be a **martyr**! Yet, he did it – before many witnesses he was not ashamed. Paul is saying ‘**Don’t go back** on your profession’! APP **Don’t throw away** your confidence. Be encouraged. Take hold anew and afresh of that **Christ** who is your **life!**