



First Timothy

Hold on to Faith

Fight the Good Fight

I Timothy 1:18, 19a

Lesson Five

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum



First Timothy

A Study of the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to His Son in the Faith

Hold on to Faith

Paul comes to his instruction to Timothy in the eighteenth verse of the first chapter. We stop our reading for today in the middle of a verse. We do this because the last sentence in verse nineteen gives us an explanation about why Paul is writing Timothy and is better connected to verse twenty. Today's reading encouraged Timothy as he faced those "who have shipwrecked their faith." (1:19b) Read I Timothy 1:18, 19a.

Paul, after an interruption in verses 9-17, picks up on the statement he began in verse 3 and continued to verse seven. He tells Timothy to live up to the "prophesies once made about you." What are those prophesies? It seems most likely that Paul was reminding Timothy about the recognition of his gifts and the trust placed in him when the elders of the church laid hands on him.* (See I Timothy 4:14)

The elders of the church were people in the church who were trusted by the church and who guided the church in its work. When they "laid hands" on someone, most likely placing both of their hands on the head of the person, they were symbolically passing on a blessing from God. Only God can bless, so laying hands on someone was just a human act which recognized what the elders understood to be God's choice of a person. So, when Paul reminded Timothy of what the elders did, Timothy would have been proud of what God had given him to do.

Paul then tells Timothy that using the skills and personality that were recognized by the elders, Timothy should "fight the good fight." Paul liked to use military pictures in his writing. Here he is literally urging Timothy to fight the good "campaign." A fight can be just one battle. Paul had something more than that in mind.

He told Timothy that he was in a long war. It would not be just one battle for the fight to be over. Instead, he tells Timothy to expect to be fighting a long-term (life-long) war. He tells Timothy later in this same letter to "Fight the good fight of the faith." (6:12) The campaign or battle of the faith is an ongoing battle. It was fought before Timothy was born and would be fought after Timothy died. This is a war of faith...referring to the work of the church.

In Second Timothy (2:3-6) Paul told Timothy that he should be like a soldier and please his commanding officer (we assume that to be Jesus), like an athlete competing for the "victor's crown" and like the "working farmer" who works for his fair share of the crops. What great pictures. Each of these professions have long-term assignments and their task is very difficult.

Paul called it a "good" fight. Timothy may have thought of some of the "good fights" in the Old Testament: Gideon and his 300 soldiers (Judges 7); Samson and his amazing fights

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(Judges 15, 16); David and his slingshot faced Goliath (I Samuel 17) and many others. Timothy knew he could trust God to be with him also.

Timothy is told that there are two weapons in his battle. The first is faith. Later Paul will commend Timothy for his faith which he observed in both his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. (II Timothy 1:5) Timothy didn't inherit his faith. He observed it in his mother and grandmother, but faith is something that we must do on our own. Faith is believing in something. In this case, it is faith in God to be with Timothy in all his ministry.

The second weapon Timothy should take into battle was his good conscience. What is a good conscience? It is believing that you are doing the right thing. That is, the right thing, even when no one is looking, in your family, your church, your work or school...actually everywhere. This is something that is most important when you are serving God and serving other people. If you have a guilty conscience, you will not be doing your best, and you cannot be a good example and tell others to live and serve God like you do. If Timothy was going to do a good job of leading the church and challenging those who were trying to disturb the church, he had to have a good...clear...conscience. In I Corinthians 4:16, Paul told the church at Corinth to *imitate him*. That is the kind of living Paul is urging on Timothy.

Also, when we do things we shouldn't do, and don't listen to our conscience, we make it difficult, if not impossible, for our faith to survive. When we do this, sin remains unconfessed and unidentified. Instead, when we confess sin, it is brought out into the open and identified as something of which God doesn't approve.

There are many examples of good people who sinned and covered it up. They kept on denying their sin, but when it was finally revealed, their good work was destroyed, and because of them others began to doubt God and His power to do good things in us and through us.

Paul goes on to give an example of two such persons. Their names were Hymenaeus (Hi-men-E'-us) and Alexander. We will look at them and what Paul says about their "shipwrecked faith" next lesson.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the *Student Worksheet*.

Lesson Goal: To encourage students to believe in God and live good lives.

Scripture Memory: "...fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience." | Timothy 1:18b, 19a



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Student Worksheet—Following Through

Hold On To Faith

What are the prophecies Paul is talking about in verse eighteen?

Who were the elders of the church?

When the elders laid hands on someone, what did that symbolically say?

Paul told Timothy to “fight the good fight.” How long did Paul tell Timothy the war would last?

What kind of “fight” did Paul tell Timothy to fight in I Timothy 6:12?

What “good fights” in the Old Testament might Timothy have thought of?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What two weapons was Timothy told to take into battle?

- 1.
- 2.

It was good for Timothy to “**...fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience.**” (I Timothy 1:18b, 19a) it is good for us to do the same.

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.