

Introduction

1. What does it mean to be a man or woman of God?
2. The phrase “**man of God**” is used almost 80 times in the Bible to describe people like Moses and David, as well as many of the great prophets like Elijah and Elisha
3. It’s a phrase that describes the man who was wholly committed to serving God and did so faithfully until the end of his life
4. It’s only used twice in the New Testament, both times by Paul and both in regard primarily to Timothy
5. One of those times is in our passage this morning, and while Paul was specifically addressing Timothy, the principles we’ll see here apply to anyone who desires to be known as a man or woman of God—someone wholly committed to him and faithful to the end

A. The man or woman of God flees from worldly things and pursues spiritual things (6:11)

1. Paul begins by calling on Timothy to “**flee from these things**”:
 - a. “**these things**” primarily refers to what Paul just discussed earlier in chapter 6:
 - 1) In 3-5 he addressed false teaching for the third time and said that those who teach things that do not align with sound doctrine are (4) “**is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.**”
 - 2) In 6-10 he warned against the love of money and the pursuit of wealth, writing that (9-10) “**those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**”
 - 3) Both of these are worldly things: worldly teaching and worldly wealth
 - b. Notice that Paul doesn’t just tell Timothy to avoid these things; he tells him to “**flee**” which is a word generally used to describe quickly running away from danger:
 - 1) The Lord used it when He told Mary and Joseph to flee to Egypt when King Herod was seeking to kill the baby Jesus (Matthew 2:13)
 - 2) Jesus used it when He called the Pharisees vipers and told them to flee from the wrath of God (Matthew 3:7)
 - 3) Jesus used it again when describing the destruction of Jerusalem in the end times and said that those who are in Judea should flee to the mountains for safety (Matthew 24:16)
 - 4) These are all examples of fleeing physical danger, but the Bible also uses it when referring to temptation and sin:
 - a) 1 Corinthians 6:18: “**Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.**”
 - b) 1 Corinthians 10:14: “**Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.**”

- c) 2 Timothy 2:22: **“Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”**
- 5) This brings to mind the story of Joseph when Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce him; he ran away so fast that when she grabbed his garment he left it in her hands!
- c. The pursuit of worldly things never ends well:
 - 1) Paul has already described how some of the false teachers had shipwrecked their faith by pursuing strange doctrines, myths, legalism, and other forms of false teaching
 - 2) Earlier in this chapter (v. 9) he warned that, **“those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction”**
 - 3) Jesus Himself warned us that we cannot serve two masters—God and money—because we will hate the one and love the other, hold to one and despise the other (Matthew 6:24)
- 2. It’s not enough to simply flee worldly things; we need to pursue spiritual things: **“and pursue righteousness, goodness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness”** (11b)
 - a. One of the principles in the Bible is that we aren’t just called to put aside sin; we are called to put on Godly virtues and this is exactly what the Bible calls on us to do here
 - b. Paul repeats this call to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:22: **“Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”**
 - c. Each of these virtues is evidence of an individual who is filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit (READ Galatians 5:22-25)
 - d. It’s important that we recognize that Paul charged Timothy with **“pursuing”** these things which in a literal sense means to run or chase after them

I always swam my best races as the relay anchor chasing down someone ahead of me

- 3. Takeaway: in one sense righteousness is something God bestows upon us as a result of being in Christ, but if we are to be men and women of God we must also pursue it!
 - a. We must flee worldly things and pursue spiritual things
 - b. In part, this is what Paul was describing when he wrote to the Philippians (2:12): **“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”**
 - c. It’s what the Bible describes as putting off the old self and putting on the new (READ Ephesians 4:22-24)

B. The man or woman of God lives in light of eternity(6:12)

****Paul uses two word pictures here and they are both related to sports**

- 1. Paul calls challenged Timothy to **“fight the good fight”** which is a metaphor Paul uses elsewhere to refer to working hard to remain faithful to Jesus throughout one’s life and ministry

- a. He used it in regard to his own life in 2 Timothy 4:7: **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”**
 - b. He also began this letter to Timothy with the same charge back in 1:18-20 which we covered in week four
 - c. I thought it might be a good reminder of what it takes to fight the good fight by reviewing what we learned back then:
 - 1) To fight the good fight, we need to keep the faith and a good conscience (READ 1:18b-19a)
 - 2) To fight the good fight, we need to discipline ourselves for godliness through the preaching and teaching of Biblical truth (READ 4:11-16)
 - 3) To fight the good fight, we need to flee worldly wealth and pursue eternal things (READ 6:11-12)
 - 4) Finally, to fight the good fight we need to guard the Biblical truth that’s been entrusted to us (READ 6:20-21)
2. Paul extends this metaphor of fighting the good fight by adding another sports metaphor and it’s one of taking hold of the prize: **“Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and [to which] you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses”** (12b):
- a. In other to understand what Paul means here by taking hold of eternal life it will help to turn to Philippians 3:1-21 (READ):
 - 1) What Paul describes here is essentially this:
 - a) The worldly things Paul once considered of value (including his works of the flesh), he now considered rubbish compared to what he gained in Christ
 - b) One of the things he gained in Christ was eternal life (resurrection from the dead)
 - c) However, even though the promise of eternal life was his, he hadn’t fully attained it yet; it was still future
 - d) With that in mind, he wrote, **“Brothers, I do not consider myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”** (Philippians 4:13-14)
 - 2) In other words, Paul lived his life in a way that would ensure that he would take home the prize and take hold of the eternal life which Jesus had already promised him
 - b. Timothy had been **“called”** to eternal life as a result of His faith and commitment to Jesus Christ, but like Paul he had not fully attained it or realize it yet because he was still living when Paul wrote to him
 - c. So, Paul’s charge to him was that he would focus on that prize of that eternal life—take hold of it—and live his life in a way that would ensure taking possession of that prize

Dad pursuing his diploma instead of GED

3. Takeaway:
- a. We have been called to eternal life; that is Jesus’ gift to us and it is our destiny
 - b. We may not have fully realized it yet because we’re still down here living life, but we ought to be living our lives in light of this gift of eternal life
 - c. Knowing what awaits us in eternity should shape how we live now and the decisions we make in this life

- d. As Paul wrote, he considered all of this earthly stuff rubbish compared to what he gained in Christ, so he took his eyes off that and pressed on toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus

C. The man or woman of God faithfully endures until Christ's appearing (6:13-16)
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1. I appreciate the way the NET translates vs. 14 which is the primary command: that you **"obey this command without fault or failure until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."**
 - a. The command to which Paul refers is what we've just read in vs. 11-12:
 - 1) That Timothy flee worldly things and pursue eternal things
 - 2) That he fight the good fight and live in light of eternal life
 - b. Paul charged Timothy with living these out **"without stain or reproach"** before God and Jesus Christ and that he would do so until Jesus returns:
 - 1) They were the ones to whom Timothy was ultimately responsible and accountable; they were the ones who he should seek to please
 - 2) Paul reminded Timothy of this fact with similar language back in 5:21 when he wrote, **"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality."**
 - 3) I've shared before that the real proof of our faith and salvation is not where we begin but where we end:
 - a) In Hebrew 3:6 the Bible says we are of part of God's house, His family, **"if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end"**
 - b) It goes in 3:14 to state that **"For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end."**
 - c) In Matthew 10:22 Jesus warned us, **"You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved"**
 - d) In Revelation 2:10, He said to the Christians at Smyrna, **"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."**
 - e) In Revelation 2:26, He said to the believers in Pergamum, **"He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations"** which is a reference to reigning with Him in glory
 - 4) This theme of enduring faithfully to the end is repeated throughout the Bible and it will come either in our own physical death or when Jesus appears in the sky to take us home, which Paul writes, **"He will bring about at the proper time-- He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen."** (6:15-16)
 2. You may have noticed that Paul reminded Timothy of Jesus' own example of enduring to the end: **"who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate"**—Jesus Himself faithfully endured not just through 30+ years of early life, but all the way up to His death
 3. Takeaway: being a man or woman of God requires that we faithfully endure and look forward to and eagerly anticipate the day when we will meet Jesus face to face
 - a. Knowing that day will come should motivate us to live in a manner worthy of the one we call our Savior

- b. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that it is required of servants of Jesus to be found faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2)
- c. Our goal should be just that, and may we be able to repeat the words that Paul penned at the end of his life (READ 2 Timothy 4:7-8)