

*Paul's exhortation in 1 Timothy 6:11-14 tells us that faith involves action. But what does this mean?*

*Written by Sigurd Bratlie*

*To fight the good fight of faith means that we abide in the Word by faith, regardless of what we feel or what we think we understand. Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed." John 8:31.*

*Do not let sin rule*

*It is written, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21. We have passions and desires that maintain the opposite. We have human reasoning that says, "This is impossible; then they will do what they want with me; they will walk all over me," etc. Here we have an exhortation by Paul: "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts." Romans 6:11-12.*

*Fighting the good fight of faith means that we stand firmly anchored in the Word in the power of the Spirit, reckoning ourselves dead to our feelings and our human reasoning, not letting sin rule in our mortal body by obeying its lusts. We have to do what Jesus says: Take up our cross daily and deny ourselves. (Luke 9:23) Paul also says the same thing: "But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Romans 8:13.*

*This does not happen without a fight and suffering. Peter says it like this: "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin ..." 1 Peter 4:1. Therefore we must suffer in the flesh if we are to cease from sin. There will be sufferings in the flesh if we by the Spirit are to put to death what rises from the flesh so that the lusts are not allowed to rule. Sin rules, and we suffer in our conscience if we do not suffer in the flesh.*

*A victorious life does not come automatically*

*Most people do not want to acknowledge this fight and this suffering. Most preachers use their abilities to present the Christian life as being as easy and as glorious as possible. They explain how Jesus has done everything and as a result, we don't have to do anything. They say, "Jesus has suffered for us; He died for us, and He has redeemed us completely. We must only believe in His finished work, and then we will automatically live an overcoming life. As long as we just look up to Jesus, the fruit of the Spirit which we read about in Galatians 5:22 will come."*

*They can proclaim "full liberty" in Christ despite seeing the people they serve continue to live in all kinds of sins, and even though they do not have the victory. They live in the love of money, envy, and fornication. They have come into false liberty and turn grace into licentiousness. (Jude 4) They cannot endure this sound doctrine because they have turned their ears away from the truth and have turned aside to fables. (2 Timothy 4:2-4)*

*Those who want to be faithful to the truth know that living an overcoming life in the virtues of Christ is not something that comes automatically. Therefore the Scriptures speak of a narrow way, about the cross and self-denial—suffering and death. The Scriptures are full of serious exhortations. They use such words as: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling ..." Philipians 2:12. "Strive to enter through the narrow gate ..." Luke 13:24. "Take heed to yourself and the doctrine. Continue in them ..." 1 Timothy 4:16. "Exercise yourself rather to godliness." 1 Timothy 4:7. "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue ..." 2 Peter 1:5. "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure ..." 2 Peter 1:10. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit precisely so that we should have the power to fight the good fight of faith.*

*However, when fighting the good fight to abide in His Word and pursuing sanctification is preached, people cry out: “Bondage! Striving in your strength! You want to sanctify yourself!” etc. They are enemies of the cross of Christ. You can see that by their conduct. (Philippians 3:18-19) This is why they do not have fellowship with one another as the Father and the Son have fellowship. Despite this, they do not want to acknowledge what is written in James 4:1-4. They have turned away from the truth to the lie. They are not sound in the faith. (Titus 1:13)*

#### *Sound exhortations*

*Let us rather choose to hear the sound doctrine, the sound faith, and Paul’s sound exhortations!*

*“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called, and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ appeared.” 1 Timothy 6:11-14.*