



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V22 N18

May 17, 2020

DEAR TIMOTHY

"A Good Fight"

1 Timothy 6:11-16

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Single-mindedness
I focus on God and his
priorities for my life.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 6:33



Q?

How are Christians to live until the appearing of Jesus?

The creed for the Central Practice, Single-mindedness, suggests an ordering of one's priorities in life. It doesn't read, "I focus *exclusively* on God and his priorities for my life." What's more, Matthew 6:33 suggests a similar ordering of one's priorities. It reads, "But seek *first* his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Priorities are a good thing. We all have them; otherwise we would be subject to the tyranny of the urgent—letting *urgent* things crowd out *important* things. The term "tyranny of the urgent" was coined by Charles Hummel in 1967 in a little book with the same title. In it he addresses the problem of having too little time to do everything needing to be done. He writes: "When we stop long enough to think about it, we realize that our dilemma goes deeper than a shortage of time; it is basically a problem of priorities. Hard work doesn't hurt us. We all know what it is to go full speed for long hours, totally involved in an important task. The resulting weariness is matched by a sense of achievement and joy. Not hard work, but doubt and misgiving produce anxiety *as we review a month or a year* and become oppressed by the pile of unfinished tasks. *We sense our failure to do what was really important.* The winds of other people's demands, and our own inner compulsions, have driven us onto a reef of frustration. We confess, quite apart from our sins, 'We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done.' An experienced factory manager once said to me, 'Your greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important'" (*Tyranny of the Urgent*, rev. ed. [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994], 4-5, italics added). Having priorities frees us from the risk of urgent things crowding out important things. Simply defined, a priority is a concern, an interest, or a desire that *comes before* others. No one can do everything; priorities enable us to do the most important things first. They enable us to take seriously the advice of Stephen Covey who counsels: "The main thing is to

keep the main thing the main thing" (*First Things First*, 75 ff.).

Here are some examples of priorities that people have—either by choice or by chance: career/money, home/family, faith/spirituality, sports/recreation, and health/fitness, to mention just a few. We all know how priorities work. People for whom career/money is the priority will readily work late rather than attend a child's music recital, or uproot and move the family across country for the sake of a promotion. People for whom home/family is the priority will provide for a child to get a better education rather than buy a new car, or turn down a promotion in order to avoid frequent business travel. People for whom health/fitness is the priority will discipline themselves to be physically active rather than be couch potatoes, or refuse tasty desserts to avoid gaining weight and everything that comes with it. The value of the examples aside, you get it.

When it comes to making faith/spirituality—or in the words of Jesus, "the kingdom" (Mt 6:33)—the priority, Paul often uses examples borrowed from the world of athletics. To the Corinthians he writes: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. *Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training.* They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (1Co 9:24-27). Paul's point is this: people, who make "the kingdom" (Mt 6:33) or being "conformed to the image of God's Son" (Ro 8:29) or "godliness" (1Ti 4:7-10) the priority, ensure that faith/spirituality comes first and doesn't let "the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth" (Mt 13:22) get in the way. That said, making faith/spirituality the priority in life isn't a once-and-done, one-size-fits-all affair. It's a daily affair; it's an individual affair. It's a matter that requires wisdom, discernment, and the direction of the Holy Spirit.



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you 14 to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which God will bring about in his own time – God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

READ in another translation

11 But you, as a person dedicated to God, keep away from all that. Instead pursue righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness. 12 Compete well for the faith and lay hold of that eternal life you were called for and made your good confession for in the presence of many witnesses. 13 I charge you before God who gives life to all things and Christ Jesus who made his good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 to obey this command without fault or failure until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ 15 – whose appearing the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, will reveal at the right time. 16 He alone possesses immortality and lives in unapproachable light, whom no human has ever seen or is able to see. To him be honor and eternal power! Amen. (NET)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Box “but you” indicating *contrast* in v. 11.
- Bracket “man of God” in v. 11.
- Underline “flee,” “pursue,” “fight,” and “take hold of” in vv. 11, 12.
- Circle “eternal life” in v. 12.
- Circle “called” in v. 12.
- Double underline “good confession” in v. 12 and “good confession” in v. 13.
- Underline “I charge you” in v. 13.
- Circle “this command” in v. 14.
- Bracket “without spot or blame” in v. 14.
- Highlight the doxology in v. 15b, 16.
- Circle “immortal” in v. 16.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about _____.”



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Explain the opening *contrast* in verse 11.
 2. Paul addresses Timothy directly, calling him “man of God.” Put what “man of God” means in your own words.
 3. What would you say the “all this” refers to in verse 11?
 4. Pick two virtues mentioned in verse 11 that you think are more difficult to define and put what they mean in your own words.
 5. The NET translates verse 12a: “Compete well for the faith.” Explain why you prefer the NET or the NIV.
 6. Put what “Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called” means in your own words.
 7. Verse 12 refers to Timothy’s “good confession,” and verse 13 refers to Christ’s “good confession.” Did both make the same confession? Explain.
 8. Verse 14 mentions “this command.” What command?
 9. Explain why Paul’s charge to Timothy is also a charge to believers today. (Cf., “man of God,” v. 11)
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about how we should respond to a *doxology* like the one contained in verses 15b-16.
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Commentary On The Text

The NIV inserts the heading “Final Charge to Timothy” above 1 Timothy 6:11; the charge itself is found in verses 13-14 (cf., 5:21). In it Paul challenges his protégé, Timothy, with these words: “In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vv. 13, 14).

The passage opens with a stark *contrast*: “But you, man of God,” Paul writes. Timothy is unlike those false teachers whom Paul had just castigated in verses 3-10, men of *money* rather than men of *God*. One commentator pictures the contrast in no uncertain terms: “They are people who teach incorrect doctrine, promote unhealthy instruction, have a sickly craving for controversy, are corrupt in the mind, are greedy for gain, have abandoned the faith, and have inflicted their own wounds. But Timothy is a man of God akin to the prophets of old with the authority to fight the false teachers of Ephesus” (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 353). The apostle clearly uses the expression “man of God” in a general sense to refer to Timothy “as a person dedicated to God” (NET) rather than a person devoted to money (vv. 9, 10, 17).

The opening contrast is followed by *four imperatives*, which Paul appears to treat as one command in verse 14 (i.e., “keep this command”). First, he tells Timothy to “flee from all this,” referring to the pursuit of financial gain and all its evil consequences described in the previous verses. Instead of chasing after money, he tells him to “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness” (v. 11). As far as definitions are concerned, “‘Righteousness’ includes all attitudes and actions in harmony with what God calls right. ‘Godliness’ is godlike character and conduct. ‘Faith’ is trust in God. ‘Love’ is selfless devotion to the needs of others. ‘Perseverance’ is faithful continuance through adverse or discouraging circumstances. ‘Gentleness’ is tender kindness toward others” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Timothy,” 2020 ed., 124, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1timothy.pdf; see also Homer A. Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 199-200). If *pistis* is rendered “faithfulness” (NET), it connotes loyalty to God and spiritual integrity.

Then, he tells him to “fight the good fight of the faith” (v. 12). Using athletic metaphors that may refer to a boxing or wrestling match but more likely to a foot race, his figurative words *literally* mean “compete

in the good competition of the faith” (cf., the NET, “Compete well for the faith”), or as *The Message* puts it, “Run hard and fast in the faith.” Paul wasn’t ordering Timothy to pick a fight with his opponents; he was challenging him to discipline himself.

Finally, he tells him to “take hold of the eternal life” to which he was called. Timothy already possessed eternal life, so what did Paul mean? To “take hold of” or “to seize” something means to “take full advantage of it” as in “seize the moment.” Eternal life, viewed this way, isn’t something reserved for the future; it’s something to be grasped now and experienced fully.

The actual charge to Timothy is found in verses 13-14. Paul delivers it “in the sight of God” and in the same breath mentions “Christ Jesus” to lend it an air of solemnity. The charge itself is “keep this command,” a reference to what he told Timothy in the previous verses. “The commandment is more general, encompassing Timothy’s commitment to Christ and his ministry, a commitment to preach the gospel that included righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and meekness in contrast to the opponents’ teaching, and a commitment that demanded perseverance until the Lord returned. The commandment includes more than any one part of the immediate context and in fact encompasses it all” (Mounce, 359). The command is without flaw and Timothy is to keep it flawlessly until the Lord returns. Of course, the great incentive for Christian living is the second coming of Christ. “The term *epiphaneias* refers to the visible and glorious display when Christ returns and is vindicated among men. At that time, the validity of the good confession will be demonstrated to all, and any suffering which Christians are called upon to undergo will be turned into joy as the enemies of God are put down” (Kent, 203).

To inspire him to do so, the apostle concludes his remarks to his protégé with a doxology extolling God, the supreme, sovereign, and holy one, before whom he is to walk in obedience. Paul declares seven truths about the one true God, who will bring about the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ in his own time. As the revered One and only Ruler of the universe, he has authority to set the time for his Son’s return. As “King of kings and Lord of lords,” he exercises sovereign authority over all powers in the earthly and spiritual realms. As the sole immortal One, he alone is not subject to death; he alone can convey immortality to others. As the One who lives in blinding glory, he has never been nor can he ever be seen. “To him be honor and might forever. Amen.”

Word Studies/Notes

v. 11 **But you** “The section opens with a strong contrast, ‘But you,’ by which Timothy is commanded to distance himself from the people described in verses 3-10” (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 209).

v. 11 **man of God** “This verse stands in contrast to the preceding section. [*su*], ‘you,’ is emphatic, [*de*], ‘but,’ is adversative, and these with the lengthened title ‘O man of God’ all serve to set Timothy apart from those who want to be rich (v. 9) and those who teach other doctrines (v. 3)” (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 353). “The generic *anthropos* (‘human being’ not ‘man’ in the sense of male)” (Liefeld, 209).

v. 11 **flee** Cf., “pursue” (v. 11), “fight” and “take hold of” (v. 12). “This is the first of four imperatives in this section and the introduction of the emphasis in the passage: a call to perseverance (the linear aspect of all four imperatives *emphasizes the need for day-to-day action*)” (Mounce, 353 italics added).

v. 11 **all this** “The things which Timothy is to flee must be given a wider connotation than the dangers of wealth. There is probably an extended reference to all the vices mentioned from verse 4 onwards” (Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, 114).

v. 11 **righteousness** Not imputed righteousness, “which is the possession of the believer in its complete form on the merits of Christ’s death, but rather practical righteousness” (Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles*, 199). The Gk. term *dikaio sunē* “is used here in its ethical sense of the demands laid on a person who has been justified (2 Tim 2:22, 2:16)” (Mounce, 354).

v. 11 **godliness** I.e., “godlikeness.” “Godliness is godlike character and conduct” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Timothy,” 2020 ed., 124, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1timothy.pdf).

v. 11 **faith** Cf., “faithfulness” (NET); see 4:12. “Without the definite article the term likely refers to an attitude of faithfulness or trustworthiness rather than right belief” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., 1, 2 *Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 138).

v. 11 **love** I.e., “benevolence and good will toward others (see 2 Thess 1:3; Titus 2:2

(Lea and Griffin, 172). “It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), and the essence of Christ’s new commandment (John 13:34)” (Kent, 200).

v. 11 **endurance** Gk. *hupomonē*, which means “remaining steadfast under trials” (Kent, 200). Synonyms include “patience,” “steadfastness,” and “perseverance.”

v. 11 **gentleness** Or “meekness” (KJV). “The word for ‘gentleness’ is unique in the New Testament; it may seem a strange word here, given that the next imperative is ‘fight’” (Liefeld, 209). Timothy should not exhibit that proud, self-assertive, swaggering demeanor, which unsaved men admire as manly. He should rather display the demeanor of his Lord (Matt. 11:29; see Matt. 5:5)” (Kent, 200).

v. 12 **fight, good fight** Cf., “compete well” (NET); “run your best in the race of faith” (GNT). The terms refer to an athletic contest, perhaps the Olympic Games (Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, 115). “The metaphor can imply either running or boxing or wrestling. To fight for ‘the faith’ includes at least a struggle for the truth of the gospel, but it may also refer ‘in a broader way to the whole of his Christian life as a great contest requiring discipline and purpose’ The use of the present tense for ‘fight’ suggests a continuous struggle” (Lea and Griffin, 172).

v. 12 **take hold . . .** “The imperative *epilabou* is aorist, indicating an act of grasping, not a course of action . . . He is to live in the light of his great possession. He is to make it practical in daily life. For the one who has really laid hold on eternal life, earthly treasures do not seem so important” (Kent, 201).

v. 12 **called** Cf., Rom 8:28-30. “Being called by God is a common Pauline theme (1 Cor 1:9; 7:17-24; Gal 1:6, 15; 5:8, 13; Eph 4:1, 4; Col 3:15; 1 Thess 2:12; 4:7; 5:24; 2 Thess 2:14) . . . It expresses the belief in God’s prior election based solely on his desire and grace, totally apart from human works, a call that drives believers toward a holy life” (Mounce, 356, 481).

v. 12 **confession** Most commentators take this to refer to Timothy’s confession of faith in Christ that accompanied his baptism rather than ordination (Guthrie, 115; Kent, 201; Liefeld, 211; Lea and Griffin, 172; Mounce, 357).

v. 14 **this command** It’s variously explained (see Mounce, 359; Liefeld, 211) but it most likely refers to the exhortations in verses 11, 12 collectively understood.



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Flee godlessness and pursue godliness, contending for the faith and seizing eternal life now, knowing that the one and only sovereign God, who called you, is your strength.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

My dream is simple. While pondering hard parenting decisions such as the most appropriate methods of discipline, which system of schooling suits our family best, or, you know, what to make for dinner, I often wish God would come to me with great and clear revelation, a booming voice through beams of light accompanied by tiny angels delicately playing harps and singing in perfect harmony in the background. You know what I mean? Unfortunately, nothing close to this has ever happened. In His infinite grace and mercy, God does condescend to us; however, this relationship isn't a passive sit-back-and-wait-for-God-to-tell-me-what-to-do kind of connection. What does our relationship with God look like? In our passage this week, Paul encourages his young friend Timothy to pursue, fight and take hold. These aren't idle words. God expects us to be an active participant in this relationship. We ought to have a hunger so strong we're driven to wake at the crack of dawn to seek Him. We should crave more of Him, seeking to be amazed at His infinite blessings and goodness. Our greatest desire should be to see Him magnified and glorified while we shrink into the background. We should be driven by a passion for the disciplines of prayer, study and worship. The more we seek Him, fight for our faith and take hold of our eternal life, the more we develop our relationship with our Holy God who loves us deeply. Parents, how are you actively pursuing God? We are praying for you this week! .

What Does The Bible Say?

What does the Bible say? Read 1 Timothy 6:11-16

1. What does Paul urge Timothy to flee (look at 6:3-10)?
2. What does Paul encourage Timothy to pursue?
3. How is God described in these verses?

What Do You Think?

What does "Fight the good fight of the faith" (1Ti 6:12) mean to you?

What Do You Do?

To pursue God means you're actively seeking Him. Create a sidewalk obstacle course that includes the memory verse. Take a picture and send it to kidpix@wearecentral.org for an extra token!

CORE COMPETENCY: Single-mindedness

I pay attention to what God thinks is important for my life.

MEMORY VERSE: Colossians 3:2

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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