

Fight The Good Fight Of Faith

1 Timothy 6:12 [New King James] *“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.”*

Do **not** overlook the word “good” indicating that there is also “bad” fighting!

If we meditate on the original creation of human beings we see **no** signs of hostility between Adam and Eve until Satan came on the scene and influenced their lives.

Satan, in the form of a serpent, [**Revelation 12:9**] deceived Eve into disobeying the Creator God and becoming, like him, the adversary of God and all human beings, [**1 Peter 5:8**].

The Creator God had to reject the sinful and rebellious Adam and Eve out of His holy presence and the tree of eternal life less they took of it and lived a rebellious, sinful life for ever.

Such a resulting situation was far from the plan that the Creator God had for human beings.

Genesis 1:26-27 [New King James] *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”*

This is the two-part plan that God has for all human beings. The first physical part was the creation of human beings in His “image,” Hebrew word “*tselem*” meaning shadow of the original, recognisable as the original but not the reality.

The second part was “likeness” Hebrew word “*demûwth*” meaning son or manner that is character. This is **only** created through an intimate relationship over a period of time.

A relationship that has to be desired and a character that has to be accepted as best.

Adam and Eve rejected this offer of relationship with the perfect Holy God by choosing to decide what is good or evil for themselves, having submitted themselves to the deception of Satan [**Genesis 3:1-6**].

From that time onward humans have been influenced by Satan, who continues to lie to us, [**John 8:44; Revelation 12:9**].

This influence of Satan resulted in the first murder, the reason being envy, [**Genesis 4:1-8**] and a wide spread of evil throughout the earth as Satan influenced the thoughts and hearts of human beings, [**Genesis 6:5**].

Here we see the origin of humans delight in fighting one another, based on the same character that is Satan’s that was his downfall.

Ezekiel 28:12, 14-15 [New King James] *“Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.”’” ... “You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.”*

The King of Tyre is dual, the original physical king but also, as this passage of scripture shows, a powerful and perfect created spirit being.

Isaiah 14:12-14 [New King James] *“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’”*

This is referring to the same powerful spirit being whose pride caused him to consider he could take over the throne of the God who had created him.

Revelation 12:7-9 [New King James] *“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”*

Dragon is another name for Satan, and his angels are now the third of all created angels, [verse 4], now called demons, who followed in his rebellion.

This is the cause of all “bad” fighting that we have seen among humans down through the ages.

This would mean eventually the total destruction of all humans living if God did not intervene, [Matthew 24:21-22].

Having now seen what the “bad” fight is about and why it happens, let us study the “good” fight of faith we all should be engaged in.

Hebrews 12:14 [New King James] *“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:”*

Our future eternal life depends on seeking to be at peace with all other human beings, [1 Thessalonians 5:13; Romans 14:19].

God intends us to fight but **not** with other human beings.

James 4:1-10 [New King James] *“Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, ‘The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously’? But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”*

If we remain a “friend” of this world that is totally under the influence of Satan [1 John 5:19], who blinds humans to the gospel message [2 Corinthians 4:3-4] and who is a liar and murderer, [John 8:44].

We automatically become an enemy of God, when we accept the teaching of this world, which is ruled by Satan.

Only if we submit ourselves to the Creator God, humbly accept the grace He offers, can we fight against this influence of Satan and his world.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

This submission to the Creator God must be total as an expression of our thanks for the grace He extends to us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The Greek word translated “bodies” is “soma” referring to our physical body, our mind and human spirit, [**Job 32:8**].

Luke 14:25-26 [New King James] *“Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.’”*

The Greek word translated “hate” is “miseō” meaning to disregard one thing over another, [**Matthew 6:24; John 12:25**].

True Christianity is not something you can practice one day a week, it is a total life commitment.

Romans 12:2 [New King James] *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

It is after this total commitment that God will re-educate our mind, that has been influenced by Satan.

Only then are we prepared to fight the “good” fight of faith.

Not a fight with human blood and flesh

Ephesians 6:10-12 [New King James] *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*

This scripture tells us two things. First, it defines who our enemy is, and also tells us we need God’s help in this fight.

Ephesians 6:13-18 [New King James] *“Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints,”*

These are the weapons we are to use in this spiritual warfare.

[For an extensive study of these weapons, please download and study our article entitled ‘Armour Of God’ listed under the sub-heading ‘Satan’.]

Note that most of these weapons are defensive in nature and the operative goal is to “stand.”

God is the power behind this fight we have with Satan and his demons and we access to that power through study of His Word, the Christian Bible [**verse 17**] and prayer [**verse 18**].

1 John 4:1-4 [New King James] *“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every*

spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”

The Holy Spirit that is in us is greater than the spirit in this world, [Satan – **2 Corinthians 4:4**] so we do not have to fear him, [**2 Timothy 1:7**].

A second battlefront

Romans 12:2 [New King James] *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

Notice that true Christians are not to conform to this world.

This is not an easy battle to win.

The whole of society around us, its attitudes, its way of doing things, trends, styles, government policies, ideologies, religious and educational philosophies, these are all one gigantic pressure on us which the Christian Bible refers to as the “*world*.”

Revelation 18:4 [New King James] *“And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.’”*

Babylon [**verses 1-3**] is symbolic of the whole world’s society and all true Christians are commanded by Jesus Christ to come out of its clutches.

There is only one way for a Christian to avoid being crushed by and conforming to this world!

We have to be separate to it and resist all of wrong ways.

Do **not** allow the media of television, internet, radio, advertisements, books and magazines, even our association with other worldly people, to dictate how we think and act.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 [New King James] *“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says the LORD Almighty.”*

Note that our coming out of this world and its influence on our lives is a condition of our being created children of God.

This world influenced by Satan and his demons is reaching out to grab our children as well as our own lives.

There is a war going on, a war in which we all can be made slaves, if we do **not** fight to overcome its attacks on us.

A third battlefield

Romans 7:21-23 [New King James] *“I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”*

The apostle Paul describes this third battlefield that we face, he is talking about our inherited human nature that is constantly pulling us in the wrong direction, [Psalms 51:5].

Galatians 5:17 [New King James] *“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”*

When we are called by God to repent and seek His merciful forgiveness, upon baptism, an outward sign of our converted life, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit actively working in us will help us to resist the pull of the flesh which is still with us as long as we are human, [Galatians 5:16].

We must fight against the pulls of our fleshly human nature, this is a battle we will not win without strength from outside ourselves, the indwelling Holy Spirit.

For the Holy Spirit to remain active within us there are certain conditions, we must continue to obey the Creator God [Acts 5:32], we must not grieve the Holy Spirit [Ephesians 4:30-32], nor quench the work the Holy Spirit desires to do in and through us, [1 Thessalonians 5:19; John 7:38-39].

The principles of warfare

On the day we were baptised and placed within the Christian fellowship we were drafted into a war, a spiritual war against all the evil in this present world.

On that day God made available to us the equipment with which to fight on the three fronts we have studied.

But it is not always easy to remember truly and constantly that we are in a war every moment of our lives.

As a result we fail to conduct ourselves like the Christian soldiers we should be.

2 Timothy 2:3 [New King James] *“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”*

Here is one of the first principles that a soldier on active duty must learn.

Life will **not** be full of “*home comforts*,” it will involve many physical hardships.

We have to ask ourselves “*am I willing to be a Christian only as long as everything goes alright in my life?*”

As a soldier of Jesus Christ we must be willing to endure hard times, go through trials in our lives and still keep fighting the enemy.

We must recognise that there will be obstacles and problems to overcome.

Notice another principle of warfare.

2 Timothy 2:4 [New King James] *“No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”*

In World War 2 both the Germans and the Japanese realised the importance of this principle of warfare.

The Germans used Axis Sally and the Japanese used Tokyo Rose to cause American soldiers to violate this cardinal principle of warfare.

These broadcasts were on frequencies readily available to American troops playing American music that the troops liked. Then sometimes with factual information or made up names and places Axis Sally or Tokyo Rose would try to get the minds of the fighting onto their problems back home.

Seeking to bring doubts into the minds of the soldiers as to the fidelity of their wives and sweethearts back home.

Many of the soldiers just laughed at the statements but a good number were actually affected.

This caused their attention on the battlefield to be distracted and consequently many were killed or wounded.

Since Satan knows this principle of warfare, it is his purpose to see to it that we become concerned with the affairs of this life to distract us from our prayer and study and relax in this fight for eternal life.

We must not allow the affairs of this physical life to take our minds off the spiritual warfare we are all involved in or we will surely be killed spiritually.

Rewards go only to the winners

Revelation 2:7 [New King James] *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”*

Eternal life is for those who overcome.

The Greek word translated “*overcome*” is “*nikaō*” meaning to conquer, prevail, be victorious.

Revelation 2:11 [New King James] *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”*

Not be hurt by second death from which there is no resurrection [**Revelation 20:14; Revelation 21:8**].

Revelation 2:17 [New King James] *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”*

Manna refers to spiritual life as given by God from heaven, a white stone was given to those acquitted at a trial or to a victor to have entrance to public festivals. New name alludes to the new status as Abram and Jacob, signifies the overcomer’s right to enter the Kingdom of God in a character all of his own, moulded by the Holy Spirit in them.

Revelation 2:26 [New King James] *“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations,”*

Refers to a position of rulership over nations.

Revelation 3:5 [New King James] *“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”*

White garments are what is worn by those who become the Bride of Jesus Christ, [**Revelation 19:7-9**].

Revelation 3:12 [New King James] *“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.”*

Refers to supporting the very work of God in the headquarters of the Kingdom of God.

Revelation 3:21 [New King James] *“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”*

A place with Jesus Christ as He rules all nations from the New Jerusalem.

To whom then do all these rewards go?

Only those who are conquerors in this spiritual warfare.

The rest are losers who have **no** rewards.

Revelation 21:7 [New King James] *“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”*

To all who overcome is the opportunity to inherit all things with Jesus Christ, [**Romans 8:16-17**].

Jesus Christ was the greatest warrior that ever lived.

Jesus Christ met the devil in a spiritual battle unparalleled in history and conquered, [**Matthew 4:1-11**].

Jesus Christ went up against His own human nature as the Son of Man, a physical human being and came out the victor.

Jesus Christ resisted this world fighting against its pressures all His life and was victorious.

John 5:30 [New King James] *“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”*

As a physical human being, Jesus Christ was unable to do anything of Himself, He had to have the same instruments of warfare and God’s help to be victorious.

This same help is available to all Christians, but we must recognise that we are in a fight for eternal life and a place in the Kingdom of God, the created family of God.

Matthew 11:12 [Amplified Bible] *“From the days of John the Baptist until this present time the Kingdom of Heaven has endured violent assault, and violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize], a share in the Heavenly Kingdom is sought for with most ardent zeal and intense exertion.”*

This reward goes to those who are conquerors, losers get nothing.

The Creator God made man with inbuilt desire of goal-seeking.

When we have no personal goal, life itself seems purposeless.

Humans were built to conquer the environment, solve problems and achieve goals and we find **no** real happiness or satisfaction in life without this.

Those who say that life is **not** worthwhile are really saying that they have **no** personal goals that are worthwhile.

Humans have this conquering nature built in and if they are not directing this towards the right goal, eternal life in the Kingdom of God, they will direct it towards fighting other humans to conquer them for personal dominion over them.

2 Timothy 4:6-8 [New King James] *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*

This was a statement made by Paul just before his murder.

Paul didn't say *“I have lived a good life”* but that he had *“fought a good fight.”*

Paul had conquered, he was convinced that there was a reward awaiting in heaven, to be given to him at the Second Coming of his Master and Saviour Jesus Christ, to this earth.

Paul also knew that all others who had *“fought a good fight”* in life would also receive a similar reward from Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 6:12 [New King James] *“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.”*

Get rid of any of the lethargy that is characteristic of our times and keep our eye on the goal of eternal life with our Saviour Jesus Christ, [John 17:3].