

## **Winning The Spiritual Battle (Part 2)** **1 Timothy 1:15-26**

### **Introduction:**

1. Many preachers today make a living off of telling people what they **want** to hear. They tell people that it is God's will that they be prosperous, healthy, wealthy, and basically have a problem-free life.
2. This sounds very appealing, and people are drawn to this type of teaching. The problem with it is very simple. It is not scripturally accurate! It is false doctrine. It also gives people false hopes, and when problems **do** come (and they will), it devastates them.
3. Here is the reality: the Christian life is likened to a battle, not a Bahamas cruise. Here in our text, Paul reinforces this truth to young Timothy. 1:18
4. There are twelve "charges" in this book, and this is one of them. A "charge" is a mandate or a command. Notice that Paul charges Timothy to war a good warfare. It sounds to me like Timothy is in a battle. It reminds me of an old gospel song.
5. The Christian life is not a summer vacation. It is a battle. A war. cf. 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3-4
6. So many believers fail to recognize this truth for this dispensation. They read verses that deal with Israel's kingdom on earth and come away with the "God wants to bless me" mentality.
  - Our blessings today are spiritual blessing in heavenly places. Life on earth is called "*the sufferings of this present time.*" We are guaranteed suffering, persecution, and affliction while on this sin-cursed earth.
  - Satan is called "*the prince of this world,*" and we are on his turf right now. We are living in the middle of his evil world system.
7. If believers fail to understand this, when the afflictions and heartaches of life come, they are unprepared to handle them. Believers then question God, they question the Bible, and they question the preacher who preached the health and wealth message. They become deflated and discouraged – casualties of war.
8. The word "*warfare*" comes from a Greek word from which we get our English word "strategy." We are soldiers for Christ, and we have an adversary – Satan (Ephesians 6:10-11). Therefore, we had better have an effective strategy.
9. Every believer must war a good warfare. How can we do this? The apostle Paul lays out a strategy for us.

### **First, we must exercise complete allegiance to our leader. vs. 17-18**

### **Second, we must obey instructions from our Commander. vs. 15**

1. Of course, we have already established that the King, Jesus Christ, is our Commander in Chief. Jesus Christ is the One that we will one day stand accountable to. 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10
2. Therefore, our heart should be to please Him. Obeying His instructions means understanding His heart, His passion, and His mission.

3. Verse 15 clearly defines His overall purpose. Our Commander's heart is to save sinners – to rescue them from the bondage and oppression of Satan. Luke 19:10
  - **Illustration:** Moses was sent as God's ambassador to deliver Israel from the cruel slavery and oppression of the Egyptians.
  - **Illustration:** Our brave soldiers went into Iraq and delivered the Iraqis from the cruel bondage of Saddam Hussein. They were ambassadors of freedom!
4. Remember, we are soldiers for Christ. So His mission is our mission. His desire must be my desire. We are ambassadors for Christ. We are representing Him on this earth in His physical absence. Paul understood His Commander's purpose. 2 Corinthians 5:20
  - An ambassador represents his leader on foreign soil. Imagine being an ambassador who has been left in a country which has declared war on its government. Can he expect cordial treatment, or will he see suffering, imprisonment, or even death?
  - And so it is with us, as ambassadors for Christ. We are on enemy soil, enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.
  - Why are we here? Paul said that he was beseeching sinners in Christ's stead (in His absence), to be reconciled to God.
5. Think of this! Paul is begging men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. He is pleading with men to be saved, and for this he suffered trouble as an evildoer, and was imprisoned. He called himself an "*ambassador in bonds.*" Ephesians 6:20
6. This is what Christ is doing every day through His faithful ambassadors. Are you an ambassador for Jesus Christ? Are you passionate about your Commander's purpose?
  - Paul's attitude was, "Christ represented me at Calvary. I now represent Him in a Christ-rejecting world."
  - Paul understood the great display of love that happened on the cross, and he was determined to no longer live for himself, but to live for the heart and passion of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
7. The world rejected Christ. They wanted no part of Him on this earth. They screamed, "Crucify Him." The world set themselves against the Lord and against His anointed. They declared war on God.
8. Our Commander resurrected from the dead, but then returned to His heavenly country. Prophecy anticipated that this heavenly King would make war on His enemies and destroy them. Revelation 19:11
9. Instead, Christ sent to this world ambassadors of reconciliation. Christ has sent us to this world with a message of grace, love, and forgiveness. Christ is extending to this world a grace period and an offer of peace. Romans 5:20-21
10. But it may not be long before God recalls His ambassadors of reconciliation and declares war on His enemies. We call this "*the day of the Lord.*"
11. Right now, God's throne of righteousness has been turned into a throne of grace. For the present, grace reigns. On what legitimate basis does grace now reign?
  - "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" **2 Corinthians 5:21**

12. What a blessing! Because of the work of Christ on the cross, grace can now be offered to this world, to every sinner.

**In Conclusion:**

1. Day after day, God is waiting to judge sinners, and He is giving them a chance to turn to Christ and be saved and forgiven. What a merciful and gracious God!
2. But this dispensation of grace will one day end and will give way to the day of His wrath. Until that day, we must war a good warfare for our Commander.
3. How do we do that? We must understand His mission, His purpose, and His heart. His heart is to save and rescue sinners who are enslaved by Satan.
4. As ambassadors for Christ, we have the message that can set them free, but we must proclaim it in truth and in love. Romans 1:16