

Winning The Spiritual Battle (Part 3) **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

Third, we must follow the correct pattern. vs. 16

1. My father served in the Air Force in the Korean War. Many of you also have military backgrounds. When you were in boot camp, you learned quickly that

- your superiors wanted things done a certain way, and that is the way they told you to do them!
- There was a pattern that you were to follow when it came to making your bed, shining your boots, cleaning your gun, wearing your uniform, etc.
 - What if you decided that you had a better way? If you followed your own pattern in how to do these things, what would be the result? Let's keep violence and blood out of this sermon!
 - While I was never in the military, Bible College in the 1980s was as close as you could get. It was a spiritual boot camp. In a similar way, you were instructed in the pattern to follow, and you had better follow it!
2. Did you know that our Commander, Jesus Christ, has given us a pattern to follow after today? vs. 16
 3. Who is the pattern for the body of Christ today? This is a great question, and a crucial question if we are to understand our place in the plan of God.
 - Is Moses (and the law) our pattern?
 - Are the twelve apostles our pattern?
 - Is Peter our pattern?
 - Is Christ's earthly ministry our pattern to follow?
 4. God saved Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. Saul was the enemy of those who believed in Jesus Christ. Why was God merciful to Saul? Why did He show forth such abundant grace towards him and save him on that road?
 5. The Bible is clear. It was for the purpose of making Paul a pattern to all those who would be saved by grace after him. vs. 16
 6. It has often been taught that the twelve apostles represent the church, just as the twelve patriarchs represented Israel in the Old Testament. This conclusion is without Scriptural foundation.
 - Matthew 19:28 makes it very clear that the twelve apostles represent the nation of Israel.
 - In the regeneration (Christ's earthly kingdom), Christ will sit upon a literal throne and will rule this earth after His Second Coming. Matthew 25:31
 - The twelve apostles will sit upon twelve thrones ruling and reigning with Christ. Whom do they represent? They represent the twelve tribes of Israel. cf. Revelation 7:4
 - This will be the fulfillment of the prophetic promise to Israel in Isaiah 1:25-27.
 7. God raised up a separate apostle, distinct from the twelve, to represent us, the body of Christ. This, of course, was the apostle Paul. Colossians 1:24-25
 8. The great mystery revealed to Paul was that Jews or Gentiles (who were once at enmity) could now be reconciled into one body by the cross work of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:11-18, 3:6
 9. Paul is the pattern that aptly represents this one body of Jews and Gentiles. Think about the following facts:
 - Paul was born a Jew (Hebrew) of the tribe of Benjamin. Philippians 3:5
 - But Paul was born a Roman too (Acts 22:25-28). He was very much a Jew, but also very much a Roman. He was a Hebrew religiously, but a Roman politically.

- Paul was a Jew and a Roman in one body! What a marvelous representation of the church - Jews and Gentiles reconciled to God in one body by the cross.
10. Not only this, Paul was the former enemy of Christ who is now reconciled to God by sheer grace. This, too, aptly represents the body of Christ today. Colossians 1:20-21
- Paul was a sinner that deserved the wrath and judgment of God, but obtained abundant grace. What a picture of the body of Christ today. 1 Timothy 1:13-14
11. 1 Timothy 1:15 is a verse that has been grossly misunderstood because it is so often lifted out of its context.
- This verse is not teaching that Paul viewed himself at that time as the one who was sinning more than anybody else. Paul described himself as living godly in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 3:10-12
 - The word “*chief*” means “foremost in time, place, order, and importance.”
 - In context, Paul is saying that he stands as the leader and chief of a bunch of sinners who have trusted Christ, the Savior of sinners.
 - Paul stands first and foremost (chief) in a line of sinners who have experienced the transforming work of God's grace. The next verse clearly explains this context (verse 16). Notice the words “*first*” and “*pattern.*”
12. Paul declares that he is a “*pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*”
13. What do you do with a pattern? You follow it. 1 Corinthians 4:16-17, 11:1; Philippians 3:17, 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:2
14. Paul stands as a pattern of what God would do in this present dispensation of grace. God is taking heathen, hell-bound sinners, cleansing them, placing them in His Son, and giving them a new identity as saints in Christ Jesus.