

The Fight of Faith

“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12 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.” (1Ti 6:11-12 NKJV)

This passage starts out with the contrasting conjunction, “but.” The contrast is between yesterday’s passage concerning the love of money, and today’s emphasis the love of eternal life. Those who know the Lord understand what the apostle is saying. The walk of faith is a fight.

It would be wonderful if salvation meant instant and complete sanctification. However, salvation is by faith, and faith requires believers to put to death the works of the flesh to be assured of an eternal hope. Paul puts it this way to Timothy, “Lay hold on eternal life.” In another epistle, he says it differently.

“. . . His divine power has given to us all things that [pertain] to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption [that is] in the world through lust. 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, [you will be] neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2Pe 1:3-11 NKJV)

So, one can see that the admonitions of Scripture to seek godliness are not suggestions just to make one’s stay on earth more pleasant and or productive. It’s true that seeking godliness will make life more joyful and more productive for the kingdom, but seeking godliness is critical for salvation, and the assurance of it. The passage immediately above says those who have all the previous virtues abounding in their lives will not be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (v.8). That is what you want. Believers need to be full of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. There must be intimacy!

Friends pursue holiness or you will not see the Lord (Heb 12:14). Remember He rewards those who diligently seek Him (Heb 11:6). Yes God is sovereign, and yes He is the one working in you, but that working is seen in your practical righteousness. Notice how Paul describes this cooperation between the Spirit and the believer.

“And if Christ [is] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin, but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who

dwells in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors——not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Ro 8:10-14 NKJV)

Remember to keep yourself pure today. The stakes are high and the war is long, but God will never leave you nor forsake you in this fight of faith.