

**Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 6:12** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Godly Virtues And Eternal Perspective

INTRO: Have you ever received a job application reply message (rejection letter) in which the recruiter for the prospective employer states that "even though you are highly qualified, you are not a good match for them"? In effect, the recruiter is evaluating that the characteristics of your nature and of your orientation do not align with and are not optimal for fitting into their company and accomplishing their goals.

Well, the same kind of mismatch in our nature and our orientation occurs for achieving God's program when we align ourselves to wanting to get rich. (v.9)

BACKGROUND:

- - According to God, we believers commit sin if we "want to get rich". (vv.5,9)
  - - And thereupon, we become entrapped by and through this choice of wanting to get rich, which thereafter progressively moves us into self-inflicting of adversity and progressively moves us farther away from the faith and from maturing spiritually. (vv.10,9)
  - - Every pastor, elder, and ministry leader, along with every believer, is to consistently stay away from wanting to get rich, and instead be completely devoted to thoroughly pursuing and implementing the virtues of the faith in their life.
  - - Let's see what else God says we need to do if we want to be a true "man [or woman] of God", aligning with and accomplishing His program. (v.11)
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READ: 1 Timothy 6:12, with vv.10-11 for context

v.12a - READ (again)

[Lesson Question: Analyze and then describe various aspects of actions that believers must implement in order to "fight the good fight of the faith".]

SECTION POINT: Being a true "man [or woman] of God" who successfully "fights the good fight of the faith" means being consistently victorious in maintaining genuine godly virtues in one's life in the midst of relentless surrounding pressure and opposition to the contrary.

**"Fight the good fight of the faith."**

- - Standing up for and maintaining the living of a life characterized by godly virtues such as those in verse 11 is an ongoing "fight", "struggle", or "contending" with active adversarial opposition. (Strong's #0075)
- - The inner nature of every human and the outer forces of naturally humanistic societies combine and team up to comprise a formidable adversary to those persons who are pursuing godly living with contentment. (vv.11,6)
- - Therefore, being consistent in applying and maintaining the principles "of the faith" takes motivated self-discipline, self-control, and self-denial.
- - Strenuous effort needs to be exerted in situations or conditions of vulnerability.

- - Staying on guard needs to be continuously alert.
  - - Firm self-restraint needs to be resolutely exercised.
  - - This struggle for believers who strive to be "men [or women] of God" is like being in a seemingly never-ending wrestling match with a much larger, stronger, and tireless opponent. (v.11)
  - - But despite the toughness of the struggle, we believers are commanded by God here to not only persevere in this struggle but also to be consistently victorious - to "fight the good fight".
  - - And because God cannot rightly command us to do something that is in no way possible for us to achieve, then each of us believers in some manner possesses what is necessary to not only be ultimately successful but to prevail consistently all the way through to the end. (v.14)
  - - From other passages in the New Testament such as Romans 8:3-9,26, it is clear that the power that enables every true believer to consistently victoriously "fight the good fight" comes from "the Spirit of God [who] lives in you". (Romans 8:9)
  - - So the key and the challenge to being successful at "fighting the good fight" is to effectively access, and collaborate with, and draw on, and apply in one's life the empowerment from God that is available to each true believer.
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#### v.12b - READ

[Lesson Question: As a group (or in sub-groups), contemplate, brainstorm, discuss, and then develop a credible biblical explanation of the meaning of the second sentence in verse 12. Hint: An important key is to be sure to carefully consider the context of this sentence, because the concepts in the verses before and in the verses after this sentence give focus and shed light on the meaning of this sentence.]

SECTION POINT: Being a true "man [or woman] of God" who successfully "fights the good fight of the faith" also means tenaciously holding on to and living by the eternal perspective that accompanied eternal life when it was received.

#### **"Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called"**

- - In order to successfully "fight the good fight of the faith", a crucial dynamic for believers is to establish and then consistently maintain a perspective that has eternity in mind and in focus.
- - "Taking hold of" an "eternal" perspective about one's life properly orients the believer toward making decisions in life that correspond to this eternal perspective.
- - Consequently and subsequently, the believer with an eternal perspective regards the forfeiting and loss of not striving for nor acquiring wealth in this life as a temporary sacrifice or temporary price to pay in order to pursue the godly virtues that hold potential of facilitating the producing of good works results that will retain value eternally.
- - Those believers who are true "men [or women] of God" firmly grab hold of this philosophy of life, not releasing their grip nor wavering in living a godly virtue-filled life from an eternal perspective.
- - All true believers are "called" by God to live in this way but very few respond by successfully obeying this calling.

- - Many believers do not adequately comprehend that God has called them to a life that essentially sacrifices earthly pleasures in order to engage in producing good works for God's Kingdom.
- - Many other believers do not want to give up any part of their striving after wealth and the comfortable lifestyle it supports.
- - And some believers erroneously think they can satisfactorily have both aspects - living a comfortable lifestyle that striving after wealth produces, while occasionally producing a good works for God's Kingdom.

**"when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses."**

- - The "calling" by God to live in the manner that pursues godly virtues while shunning wanting to get rich occurs at the moment a person genuinely places his/her faith in Jesus Christ, that He died on the cross to pay the punishment for their sins and that He rose from the dead on the third day. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)
- - At that moment of placing one's faith in Jesus Christ, the person is made a recipient of eternal life and therein starts gaining some understanding about seeing life from an eternal perspective.
- - At some subsequent point soon after having placed their faith in Jesus Christ, the genuinely believing persons give a "confession" "in front of" or "in the presence of" other persons of the faith they now have in Jesus Christ. (Strong's #1799)
- - So, their "confession" of their faith in front of other witnessing people serves as an "acknowledgment" that they have been made aware of and have received not only eternal life but an eternal perspective of life, which God is therein calling them to henceforth live by. (Strong's #3671)
- - Having received such a priceless gift (eternal life), and having received such a high calling (to live by the associated eternal perspective), believers are to fully comprehend, gratefully appreciate, tenaciously "seize", and thoroughly implement this eternity they have been given by God. (Strong's #1949)

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**BIG IDEA: Consistently maintaining genuine godly virtues and tenaciously living by an eternal perspective are vital for being a true "man [or woman] of God" - one who successfully "fights the good fight of the faith".**

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**IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:**

- - Up until this point in your life, how have you been responding to this calling that God has given you?
- - Have you been "fighting the good fight of the faith"? Or have you lived in defeat? Or have you been riding a roller coaster of victory peaks alternately followed by defeat valleys?
- - Have you been successful in consistently pursuing and implementing in your life the godly virtues listed in verse 11? Or instead have you been pursuing wealth?

- - And by the way, what is your confession of faith? Have you ever made a confession of faith in front of anyone?
  - - Do you consider yourself to be a true "man [or woman] of God"? Or instead have you been in reality a mediocre "man [or woman] of God", making a half-hearted effort - when it is easy or convenient or in church on Sunday mornings?
  - - What does God think about how you are responding to the calling He has given you?
  - - You get only one opportunity to live each day, and the number of days you have left is steadily dwindling.
  - - And when you arrive in eternity, you will seriously regret having wasted all those days, months, years, decades in pursuing what you wanted instead of pursuing what God wanted. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)
  - - Why not make a wise choice right now to henceforth pursue what God wants - to firmly "take hold" **now** "of the eternal life to which you were called" and live your life based on that?
  - - Obviously, you cannot go back and re-live the days you already have wasted, but you can make the necessary corrections to henceforth, starting today, live in a manner that God desires for you and has called you to do.
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[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - Read Luke 17:11-19 and discuss any comparisons that relate to people you see who receive eternal life and then wander off to continue living their life in their own way, being essentially oblivious to the priceless benefit God has just given to them.
  - - If at the time of our salvation or receiving of eternal life God has automatically "called" all of us believers to take hold of and live by an eternal perspective, then what else has God "called" us believers to do or to be? And generally (all of us)? Corporately? Individually?
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#### Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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