

Topic	How to Live Well
Reference	2 Timothy 4:6-8
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6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ... 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

LIFE IS ABOUT A FIGHT.

In verse 7 Paul says, I have fought the good fight.

What this fight is about?

Paul says, I have fought the good fight. The fight that we are involved into must be a good one and not a bad one. We can get involved in a bad fight, fighting one another like crazy. Fighting for properties, may be for possession or position. Some people go to the grave without having resolve their wounds and pains in life and I have come across people like this. What a tragedy, how we fight with each other within the family. We must be involved in a good fight and not a bad one. We must also be involved in a right fight and not a wrong one.

How can we be involved in a wrong fight?

Sometimes as Christian believers we fight one another. We quarrel, we go head to head with one another, we are locked in, biting one another like crazy in the church. Sometimes we find members of the church fighting with the pastor, sometimes the pastor is fighting with the members. What a tragedy, it is an absolute wrong fight altogether. In this fight Satan wins at the end. When we fight one another, we got no more energy to reach and touch the world for Jesus Christ. The devil loves to see us fighting one another, such that we have no more energy left to touch the world for Jesus Christ.

What kind of fight are we involved in doing?

We should be like apostle Paul that he could say, I have fought with enemy a good fight, not a bad one. There are three kinds of fights we are involved in, we are fighting our flesh, we are fighting the world and we are fighting Satan. That's the fight we should be involved in fighting. Firstly, we have to fight our flesh that wants us to compromise, that wants us to lower our standards, that wants us to cheat, lie and to do whatever there is needed to get our way around. That's a wrong kind of fight we should be involved in. We should fight our flesh to make sure that we keep our standards in line with scriptures for all of us.

We should be fighting the world, that also wants us to compromise. The world tells us that everybody does it, so what is wrong. We have to fight our flesh, fighting the world and ultimately fighting Satan that is trying to finish us all. Jesus says, the thief comes to steal, to kill, to destroy but I have come that you may have life and life eternal. The thief comes to steal our peace and joy of our hearts. He wants to kill us in our relationships in one another. So that we are not on talking terms even as believers in the body of Christ. Satan wants to prevent as many as possible to not have the opportunity to go to heaven. We have to clear on what are we fighting. Paul says, let's be involved in a good fight and not a bad one.

LIFE IS ABOUT FINISHING.

Paul says, I have fought a good fight, I finished the race. Life is a race and we are all involved in just one race. We have to make sure that in this race of life we finish well. When we start the race of life well, for example may be we have come from a wonderful Godly family and everything was going right in the family, but starting right friends is no guarantee that we will finish right and finish well. On the other hand, we may not start well in life, but it doesn't mean we will not finish well. We can all finish all.

So it is very important that in this race of life, we must be like apostle Paul, who finished the race. So what are the things that we must guard to make sure we finish race of life well. There are **6 Ps** that you and I must guard to ensure that we finish this race of life well.

1. Power

We see abuse of power in the market place and workplace, how people abuse power. We see this in the political arena. We also see this in the church sometimes. The Bible talks about King David and very frankly shares with us about the life of David in this one regard. When David committed adultery with Bethsheba, Bethsheba sent him a note, "I am pregnant". David realized he is in trouble. So he tried to cover up his act, he called the husband of Bethsheba back and when Uriah came back, David told him to go to his wife, but Uriah being a man of valor and a wonderful soldier refused to sleep with his wife. When this plan didn't work, David wrote a letter and send this letter to Uriah to be taken to the front line and

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." (2 Sam 11:14-15)

David thought in his mind that with this kind of scheme everything else will cover up. Sometimes even as Christians we think like that, that nobody will know about this, but sometimes we forget that God knows everything. We are really deceiving ourselves and

that is the worse kind of deception, self-deception that David was involved in doing. David abused his power. We should guard the power we are given.

2. *Position*

We must guard our position that God has given to us. King Rehoboam when he was appointed king succeeding the father king Solomon, the people of Israel came to Rehoboam and said to him, will you treat us better than your father. Solomon at the end of his reign was a terrible king.

Rehoboam answered, "Go away for three days and then come back to me." So the people went away. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked. They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favourable answer, they will always be your servants." (1 Kings 12:5-7)

This was the advice given by the advisors of the father King Solomon to Rehoboam. Instead of listening to the advices of the father, he turned around to listen to his own advices. The position that God has given to us is meant to serve people and lift up people and not to put people down and it is very-very important. Whatever position and power that God has given to us is meant to serve people but not to put down people. When we misuse it, it affects our credibility. It injures our character and at the end it is not worth at all. We don't finish well if we are not careful.

3. *Pride*

But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. (2 Chron. 26:16)

King Uzziah was a good king, was unfortunately overtaken by pride. He thought that he can do anything he likes and that's how some people think. It is so important to assure that we are not overcome by pride in our life and that's very-very important because the Bible says, pride goes before a fall and the Bible interestingly says to us cloth yourselves with humility. Humility is what people see in you. Humility is nurtured through servanthood. The more you and I serve, the more God grows in us humility. The lower down we are willing to serve, the greater God grows in us humility. The further down you are willing to serve; the more God grows you in humility. If you are willing to serve the poor, the needy, the hungry, the oppressed, God grows amazing things in you.

Serving without wanting any recognition or attention whatsoever is how God grows in us humility.

4. *Purse*

It is so critical and important for us to make sure that we stood it right, we stood it well, we stood it transparently, so that there is nothing to hide, we are open and transparent. So that when there is nothing to hide, there is nothing to lose, nothing to prove and nothing to fear. There is a whole area of accountability that is needed in finances and in the management of money. The stewardship of money is so important for us. We must not exchange our character for cash.

CASH – CHARACTER = CATASTROPHE.

They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty. (2 Kings 12:15)

It is so important to guide our hearts with regards to money that can trip us over. Even in the context of the church, that's why we find the admonition from apostle Peter is so instructive. It is not just meant for the leaders of the church; it is meant for all of us as well.

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be, not greedy for money, but eager to serve. (1 Peter 5:2)

The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. It is this that all we need to guard. When we are caught up and being greedy about money, it can just trip us over and sometimes just make us useless for the Lord and for His kingdom.

5. *Passion*

These are the feelings that God has put in all of us. These have to be directed properly, because these can go haywire if we don't direct it rightly and properly. One of the best examples is Samson himself, the strongest man ever in the world. Samson has got problem with woman. The Bible tells us,

Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife." (Judges 14:1-2)

One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her... Sometime later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. (Judges 16:1, 4)

Tragically, every other woman he meets he has got a problem and so likewise if you don't guard your heart or passion, it can trip us over and it can get us into serious difficulty. We should draw boundaries around us, because if we don't draw it will trip us over and we will not finish well. We can easily get entangled into extramarital affairs and it can make us do things that doesn't make sense. It can happen in the church too. No one is spared, we have to draw boundaries.

6. Practices

Many times for us as Christians, sometimes near the latter part of our life, if we are not careful, we can begin to cut corners or take shortcuts. We may say there is no more need to do Bible study or pray and little by little we create such a big hole in the backyard that is almost irreparable. King Solomon was a perfect example. He started so well, amazingly God appeared twice to him in dreams. Near the end of his life,

He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. (1 Kings 11:3, 4)

A man who was so smart, written three books in the Bible ended up so miserably. Practices especially if you are not careful, if you are not watchful, if you are not disciplined it can just trip us over.

LIFE IS ABOUT FAITH AND KEEPING FAITH

"... I have finished the race; I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7)

It is keeping faith and keeping it strong and passionate. There is so much that a matured person in Christ can give to the congregation, but when they keep it back, it is not walking by faith. We have all the gifts, all the experience, all the wisdom to be able to pour into lives of younger people as we serve together, rather not doing anything. When we back off completely, we have to serve with the younger generation and run with them. Otherwise the church miss your wisdom, your experience, your insights and maturity. There is so much that you and I can share and still impart.

How to keep faith strong and passionate throughout life?

It is very important, how to keep our faith strong and passionate all the way to the end. If we end up doing very little, just by coming weekend on Sunday that's about all that we do. How we are going to finish our Christian life is most important.

1. Worship to centre us: King David asked one thing from God,

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. (Ps. 27:4)

The one thing that David asked, when we are involved in worship we keep God at the centre of it all and when God and Jesus is centre of it all you and I see everything correctly. When God is not at the centre we see everything wrongly.

2. Word to free and guide us:

... but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her. (Lk. 10:42)

Mary was listening to Jesus and taking in the word of God. This book is the one that we should come to again and again, the most important book in the whole world. The word of God gives faith. All the answers about life and living are in the word of God.

3. Witness to fire and inspire us:

He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (Jn. 9:25)

Knowing Jesus and sharing Jesus is the best experience in this world. People may look good on the outside, they might even look sophisticated but on the inside many are hurting, many are wounded, many are gripped by pain, sorrow and some people by anger and bitterness. Pain is always to do with something that has happened in the past and if we harbor this what happens is, our past has imprisoned our present and has prevented us from moving into the future. So some people always live in the past and that's why sometimes in our lives no joy, because the past has imprisoned them.

You and I have to reach out too many who are hurting, we have the greatest news in the whole world, the goodness of Lord Jesus Christ, you and I must share, is a crime not to share because it is our only way to get people up to heaven.

Evangelism is not prerogative of the experts; it is the responsibility of every believer in Jesus Christ.