

Fighting the Good Fight

by Zac Poonen

To take hold of eternal life, we must focus on spiritual warfare and avoid unnecessary conflicts with human beings.

Scripture: Luke 12:11, John 18:36, Ephesians 6:12, 1 Timothy 6:12

Topics: "Focus on God", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of fighting the good fight of faith as outlined in 1 Timothy 6:12, urging believers to focus their struggles against spiritual forces rather than engaging in conflicts with others. He highlights that much of our spiritual energy is wasted when we argue with flesh and blood, and that true believers should strive to keep their thoughts and actions aligned with God's kingdom, which is not of this world. Poonen encourages a firm decision to avoid controversies and to remain heavenly-minded, following the example of Jesus, who refrained from fighting for earthly matters and instead focused on spiritual truths. He warns that distractions from our true enemy, Satan, can lead to unrest and weaken our spiritual warfare. Ultimately, believers are called to maintain their focus on God and resist the temptation to engage in disputes with others.

Transcript

"Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of eternal life" (1 Tim 6:12) We can take hold of eternal life (the divine nature) only as we fight the good fight of faith. And if we want to fight that good fight, then we must do all we can to avoid fighting other fights that are not good fights. We are reminded in Ephesians 6:12 that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

If we want to fight against satan and his hosts of wickedness, then we must decide never to fight with flesh and blood. A lot of our spiritual energy is drained away when we fight with human beings. Our calling is to fight satan - not flesh and blood. Satan has his agents within our flesh - our lusts. And these lusts are always seeking to divert our attention towards people and away from the real enemy satan. So much of unrest in the hearts of believers is caused by struggling with flesh and blood. You may not struggle with people with words. The person you have a problem with may even be a thousand miles away. But you can have an inward struggle with him in your thoughts and thus come to unrest and be weakened in your fight against satan. If you wake up in the middle of the night, then keep a watch on your thoughts. Perhaps the best thing to do at such times is to pray or to praise God. Otherwise you can give room to satan by

thinking of others with whom you don't have a good relationship and very soon your thoughts can become bad ones. Then you will begin to battle flesh and blood in your thoughts and be incapacitated for real spiritual warfare.

Make a firm decision in your life therefore that you will never ever enter into a controversy or an argument with any human being, not even in your own thoughts - no matter how great the provocation. We must always bear in mind that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood" There may be times when we have to disagree with our fellow believers. That may be necessary at times in order to stand for God's truth. But if it leads to controversy and strife, then satan will certainly get an advantage over us.

In 1 Timothy 6:13, after exhorting Timothy to fight the good fight, Paul goes on to charge him in the presence of "Christ Jesus who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate". What was the good confession that Jesus testified before Pilate? It was just this: "My kingdom is not of this world; If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting" (John 18:36). All those who fight for earthly things thereby demonstrate that their kingdom is of this world. When Peter drew out his sword and chopped off a soldier's ear in Gethsemane, Jesus was quick not only to tell Peter to put his sword back but also to heal the soldier's ear. Thus Jesus demonstrated that He would not fight even for His earthly life. He was truly heavenly-minded. Our calling is to follow His example.

Once when Jesus was talking about how the Holy spirit would give his disciples words to witness for Him, when they were persecuted for his name's sake, a man from the audience interrupted Him to ask a question. One would have thought that he had a spiritual question to ask. But no. All he wanted was some help to get his share of the family property from his brother. He wanted Jesus to speak to his brother about it (Luke 12:11-13). Such is the covetousness that dwells in the human heart that even when listening to the most spiritual of topics in a meeting, people can be thinking about how to make more money. But Jesus refused to help that man, for He had not come to help people in their struggle with flesh and blood. Neither had he come to help people to make more money. And Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. If we pray to Him today asking Him to use His influence on our behalf, so that we can get our share of our family property, He will give us the same reply that He gave that covetous man.(Read Luke 12:14-21 carefully and see the answer that Jesus gave that man)

Jesus never fought with flesh and blood. But He warned His disciples constantly against the Pharisees, whom He called vipers. He had nothing in His heart against anyone. He loved everyone perfectly, including the Pharisees. Yet He could protect his flock with strong warnings against the influence of the Pharisees.

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