
THE FOUR F'S OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

1 TIMOTHY 6:11-12



Publishers have told me that the most popular Christian books are on the Christian life. Yet, the number and variety of such books tells us there's a lot of confusion about what the Christian life really is. Otherwise, why would we need so many books? So, what is it to live as a Christian?

As Paul comes to the end of his first letter to Timothy, a letter that's been complicated and controversial, he re-focuses Timothy on the basics of the Christian life. This is a great help to us as well in the midst of life's complications and church controversies. Paul sums up the Christian life with four F's.

- FLEE THE FALSE
- FOLLOW THE TRUE
- FIGHT FOR THE FAITH
- FASTEN ON TO LIFE

LEARNING

FLEE THE FALSE

The first thing we need to learn is how to run away. **But as for you, O man of God, flee these things (11).** What are **these things**? It's the issues raised in the letter: the love of controversy, division, and money. Turn your back on these things and run as fast as you can in the opposite direction.

IF WE'VE RUN TO CHRIST,
WE WILL RUN AWAY FROM SIN.

So, am I just running away all the time? No, we also have to run to something.

FOLLOW FAITHFULNESS

We run away from the false, but we also have to run to faithfulness. **Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness (11)**. He defines faithfulness in three pairs of balanced spirituality. **Righteousness** is faithfulness in our relationships with people, whereas **godliness** is faithfulness in our relationship with God. **Faith and love** are paired a few times in 1 Timothy as each feeds the other. **Steadfastness** is tough patience, whereas **gentleness** is tender patience.

FOLLOW FAITHFULNESS
AND YOU'LL BE A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER.

What about the attacks on Christian ethics and doctrine? Do I just watch that getting attacked?

FIGHT FOR THE FAITH

Fight the good fight (12) is literally “agonize the good agony.” What have we to agonize for? **The faith**. That’s the doctrine that faith believes. Fighting for God’s truth is a tough and traumatic fight, but it’s a **good fight** too. When you’re fighting for God’s truth in the area of doctrine or ethics, do it with all you have and do it to win.

FIGHTING FOR THE FAITH
IS GOOD FOR OUR FAITH AND THE FAITH.

Is all this worth it? The fourth F makes it all worthwhile and supplies the energy for the other three F’s.

FASTEN ON TO HEAVEN

Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called (12). But how do we grip eternal life? How can we hold fast what we already have? It means hold the hope of heaven more tightly, more confidently, more certainly, more hopefully, and more happily.

GRAB HEAVEN WITH BOTH HANDS
OR HELL WILL GRAB YOU WITH BOTH HANDS.

LOVING

I love the simplicity and clarity God provides here through Paul’s Four F’s. Flee, follow, fight, fasten. That’s it. Whatever else you do, do this. Don’t you love the God who simplifies and clarifies things for us in a complex and confusing world. And let’s praise him for giving us not just a teacher of it in Paul, but a model of it in Christ. He lived the Four F’s perfectly and in doing so, covers all our imperfections.

LIVING

Keep the Christian life simple by fleeing faster, following closer, fighting harder, and fastening tighter.
