

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Series:	Scripture Memory		Pastor/Teacher
Number:	60		Gary L.W. Johnson
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THE MAJESTIC BEING OF GOD

D. A. Carson, one of my professors at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, wrote a very helpful book entitled *Exegetical Fallacies*. In it he ascribed to his father this little gem: “A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text.”¹¹ I am reminded of the practice of the acclaimed Bible teacher of a past generation, G. Campbell Morgan (who was pastor of Westminster Chapel in London. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones was his assistant). He would never preach on a passage of Scripture until he had read the entire book 50 times!

Our text today must be understood not only in the immediate context of the sixth chapter, but within the whole of the epistle. Note how Paul’s admonition to Timothy in 6:11-12 precedes the charge that follows:

¹¹ But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.

¹² Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

“There are three imperative verbs here that mark what Paul and Timothy ought to do. First, *shun all this*; second, *aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness*; and third, *fight the good fight of the faith*. Those are three verb forms which translated literally are words that all start with the letter *f*. This will help us remember them. The first word is, *flee*; the Christian is to flee certain things. The second word is, *follow*; follow after, set yourself every day to pursue these qualities. Then the third word is, *fight*. I want to look briefly at these imperatives because they are helpful to us in this day.

“First, *flee these things*. Elsewhere in Scripture we are told to flee certain things. For instance, we are to *flee immorality* always. Peter says, *flee youthful lusts which war against the soul*. (1 Peter 2:11 KJV). There are times in our Christian life when the only defense we have is a clean pair of heels. Get up and go; flee these things. Paul is here referring to what he has just covered in the previous paragraph in his word about false teachers. Timothy is to flee the three characteristics of false teaching: The first characteristic is conceit – taking pride in knowledge and relying upon that as a basis for success. If we are going to be men and women of God we are to flee conceit in any form. The second characteristic is *combateness*, the love of controversy. Some people love to get an argument going among the people of a church. This is a mark of a false teacher: he always wants to form a faction around an idea he has that is different than everybody else’s. That is to be fled from. The third thing is avarice, greed, the love of money, the hunger for material gain, the desire to drive a Cadillac, a

Rolls Royce or a Porsche, and to eat high off the hog (as they used to say in Arkansas or Montana). Paul tells Timothy to flee these things; they will only create difficulty in life.

“Paul’s second imperative, *follow after*, is most important. He lists six things which divide into two groups – the first three relating to God, the second three relating to man. The first thing on the list, *righteousness*, is very important. Paul says, *Follow after righteousness, godliness, and faith*. So the man of God does three things in life: He flees certain things; he follows after the qualities listed; and he fights the good fight of faith by taking hold of the provision of Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Paul now turns to the other side: The God before whom we stand. In these verses the apostle flings back the boundaries of life and, for our encouragement, opens to our amazed eyes the vision of the mighty God before whom we stand. Listen to these words:

I. **THE CHARGE.** Paul’s admonition in v. 12, “Fight the noble fight of faith; take hold of that everlasting life to which you were called” is not followed by an Apostolic charge or command to keep the confession, *homologia* harkens back to Timothy’s baptismal profession:

“(1) Let him not fear for his life, for the charge is given and received under the very eyes of that God who is the Bestower and Preserver of life, the *life-generating* God. Cf. Luke 17:33; Acts 7:19.

“(2) Let him remember what *Christ Jesus* (see on 1 Tim. 1:1) did when *he* was testifying before an enemy of the truth. Before Pontius Pilate he stood firm, and, bearing witness before him by *word* and *deed* (Matt. 17:1, 2, 11-31; Mark 15:1-20; Luke 23:1-7, 13-25; John 18:28-19:16), thus made the beautiful confession, thereby proving himself to be *the faithful witness* (Rev. 1:5; 3:14). Hence, let Timothy *keep* – that is, stand guard over, protect, and preserve – his commission. That *commission, precept, or mandate*, comprises *all* that he has been ordered to do with respect to the ministry of the gospel and the government of the church. Cf. 1 Tim. 6:20; then Matt. 28:20. He must, moreover, take care that his attitude and conduct is such that this commission remains *without spot* (see James 1:27; 2 Peter 3:14; cf. Eph. 5:27) and *above reproach* (see on 1 Tim. 3:2; literally, *not to be laid hold of*, hence, *irreprehensible, unassailable*). With reference to this *appearing* Paul continues: **which in due season he will display, (even he)**

Old Testament Parallels

- a. the blessed and only Sovereign Deut. 6:4; Ps. 41:13; Is. 40:12-31; Dan. 4:35
- b. the King of Kings Ezek. 26:7; Dan. 2:37; Ezra 7:12
- and
- c. Lord of lords Deut. 10:17; Ps. 136:3
- d. the only One possessing immortality. Ps. 36:9; Is. 40:28; Dan. 4:34
- e. dwelling in light unapproachable Ex. 24:17; 34:35; Ps. 104:2
- f. whom no human being has (ever) seen or is
 able to see Ex. 33:20; Deut. 4:12; Is. 6:5
- g. to whom (be) honor and strength eternal. Amen. Neh. 8:6; Ps. 41:13; 72:19; 89:52.”³

CONCLUSION: “The great mystery is not that men measure up to a laundry list of godly characteristics to which they will never fully conform. Rather it is grounded first and foremost in conforming to the manifestation of the fully flesh human who proved to be the fully glorious God Jesus Christ. Our identity is founded in our union with Him, which we believe and proclaim. It is the catalyst for both our participatory role in personal holiness and our missional role of proclaiming the gospel. Fundamentally, 1 Timothy 3 connects Christ to holiness and mission. The letter of 1 Timothy concludes with this Christological doxology. The doxology is bound up in a final charge that Paul gives to Timothy to be faithful to his pastoral calling. What do we learn about Christ here? There will be a second advent. Christ came a first time, and as Paul conveyed in chapter 1, He came to save sinners. 1 Timothy 6 bookends this letter by telling of the glorious return of Christ. His appearing will be triumphal. Many scholars connect the language *appearing* to imperial cult language akin to that of Augustus, Nero, or others who followed like Hadrian. These rulers *appeared* throughout their land, visiting city after city, to confirm their rule and evaluate the state of their people – were they submitting to his rule?”⁴

ENDNOTES

¹D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Baker, 1984).

²I owe this analysis to the late Ray Stedman. You can go to <https://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/timothy/o-man-of-god> and listen to this great preacher.

³Wm. Hendriksen, *The Pastoral Epistles: New Testament Commentary* (Baker, 1957), p. 205.

⁴This is from J. Cochran, *The Christology of 1 Timothy*, and can be found at <https://www.placefortruth.org/blog/the-christology-of-1-timothy>.