Devotion #255

**Keep A Heavenly Perspective**

**1 Timothy 6:11-12 (NASB)** *“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.”*

Bullies show up in the strangest places - even in the church. There are people who will come to church who act like bullies, pushing their own agenda or even pressing down on others because they see themselves as top dogs. I’ve even watched pastors be bullies.

I remember many years ago, I think it was either first or second grade, a kid who always picked on me. I don’t know why, but I became his target for that year. He would often take my ice cream. I remember finally having to go to the principal’s office with this kid and then watching as the principle took a ruler and smacked the palm of his hand several times. I’m not sure it did any good, but I felt better. Since that year, I had no encounters with him again thankfully.

We have watched bullies take over the world in many places, and it is getting worse, even to the point where the authorities are giving in to them. Sadly, when that happens the bullies grow stronger and press down more and more because they know there is no one to counter them.

It was no different in Timothy’s day. Bullies were around, in the church. He was a young man, just beginning his ministry, when Paul left him in Ephesus to pastor the church there. As most young pastors can attest to, youthfulness in ministry can be very challenging when people are looking to have their way and make the church what they want it to be. So Timothy was, at times, intimidated by the people who were dominating the church. So Paul needed to help Timothy keep his proper perspective.

Giving him a lot of instruction, Paul summarized his thoughts to Timothy in the last chapter of this, his first, letter saying basically, “Don’t get lost in your life by focusing on the bullies. Don’t allow yourself to get so overwhelmed by them that you lose your focus.” In fact, just before our verse for today, Paul said this, **1 Timothy 6:11 (NASB)** “*Flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness*.” In essence Paul was saying, “Remember always that God chose you to follow Him, therefore, keep your perspective clearly on the things that matter to God and pursue them. Don’t let the things, people, actions and reactions of the world cause you to be overwhelmed so that you are no good to anyone. Just the opposite, stay in the fight, the good fight of faith and keep your eyes on eternity.”

The word “fight” is best translated “agonize”. Meaning if you are going to agonize over anything, agonize ovew fighting the evil works of Satan by living a godly life and trusting your Heavenly Father for all things. Don’t give up the agonizing, but make sure you are agonizing over the right things. Stay in the fight for righteousness and godliness, and make sure you are keeping your heart in line with what God would want for you as a faithful spiritual soldier. Earlier Paul told Timothy this, **1 Timothy 6:9-10 (NASB)** *“Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some, by longing for it, have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”* So Paul said to flee from those things and keep fighting, agonizing against the spiritual darkness that overwhelms people.

Beloved, you and I must continue to fight bullies. But we are to do so by agonizing over them in prayer and living righteous lives. God will take care of their hearts. You and I must make sure we stay the course, live by the Word, and always keep looking to heaven.