

1 Timothy 6:12-16

Instructions to Timothy
Fight, Keep Fighting, Finish!

The Good Confession!



One of the most heartwarming, encouraging occasions for the Christ-follower is to see and hear someone give their heart to Jesus! The Christ-follower has had their own experience with Christ and it was surely the most important day of their life. It was the day that we switched allegiances from Satan to the Creator/God. It was the day that we saw Jesus for who He really is and wanted Him as our Savior and Absolute Leader! It was the moment that we changed citizenship from the Kingdom of this Earth/World ("*the Kingdom of Darkness*"), to the Kingdom of Heaven/God ("*the Kingdom of Light*")! In that instant, we crossed over from God's condemnation and judgment, to God's acceptance, approval, and love! As such, we experienced a seismic shift from eternal death to life eternal! Our life, from then on, became a life of learning, of purpose, and of significance as we come to know things we would have never known before, (wonderful things) and do things (significant things) that we would have NEVER done before. So it is a significant occasion for us when someone *else* does that also! *Back many years ago, the town I was in had a shoe repair shop. It was a dying trade even then – antique machines – the smell of new leather, oil, glue, and stinky old shoes! When I walked into the shop, I immediately saw a sign high up on the wall. It said, "*I save soles here*". I chuckled at that and filed it away in the back of my mind. It was an obvious play on words – on the Christian phrase "*saving souls*". Now, repairing shoes is a nice thing and makes people's lives better, at least momentarily. But saving souls, s-o-u-l-s, is the more significant ambition, is it not? Our secular jobs are usually not earth-shakingly important. What we do for 8-12 hours a day to make a living, is usually one tiny cog among billions in a vast economic machine! We are literally unimportant as individuals! We can get released from that job tomorrow and it will leave as big a hole as a hand withdrawn from a bucket of water! But if there is a *greater* purpose to our life - the purpose that Jesus gave to His followers to carry on in His absence - that purpose and its significance lasts for an eternity when we fulfill it! What could be more important than introducing someone to Jesus, praying with them to receive Jesus (make their "good confession"), and watching their eyes come alive as the light of life switches on in their soul – and knowing that they are saved to God! There is immense satisfaction in leading someone to Christ, for you have born fruit. It is for this task that we were saved – to bring glory to God, and to bring others to Jesus – and there is great joy when our efforts in this task come to fruition and someone comes to trust in Jesus and receives Him/acknowledging Him, embracing His leadership authority. I mean - that is the most euphoric you will ever feel – because you were a part of that!



Timothy made His confession of faith “*in the presence of many witnesses*”. This is important, folks!

[Matt. 10:32] - Here Jesus says that if we are willing and unashamed to confess Him, or confess our faith in Him unapologetically (to *people*), then He will not be ashamed to confess us/acknowledge us before His Father! This is not a hypothetical. It will happen one day when Jesus acknowledges us as one of His own,.. or not! “*That one is mine!*” or “*I never knew you*”. Now, we might loudly claim to belong to Jesus, but I will add here - if you know that you are not consistently living for Jesus, making a big deal out of being a Christian at work, in the family, in the neighborhood, isn't a good idea.

You will be doing more far more damage to the Name and reputation of Jesus than good! I cringe when someone loudly professes Jesus and then lives before people as if they do *not* know Him! *It is not a good thing for someone to have a Christian

bumper sticker on their car – a Christian fish, or “*Honk if you love Jesus*”, and then they are honking or displaying some kind of road-rage at the ineptitude of other drivers! You are advertising Christ with your mouth (or car), yet discrediting Him with your behavior! If I am telling someone about Jesus and find that they are hostile to Him, the most common reason for that hostility is that they have known a Christian or two that really turned them off – usually through hypocrisy! It is the **half-hearted Christian** with a bad attitude, a bad temper, or a sharp tongue, or dishonest dealings, that gives Jesus a bad reputation! It would be better if that person *never* claimed any connection to Jesus! This next thing is off topic but bears mentioning. The second most common reason for hostility toward God is **bad theology**. Some tragedy is blamed on a God who is thought to control all things good *and* evil! If He did not directly cause it, they reason, since He is all powerful and controls all things, He could have stopped it if He wanted – so either way, directly or indirectly God is at fault! It is what a large segment of the church has taught over the centuries - a theological misconception, useless to God but very useful to Satan – for in this error the one hostile to God has found His or her excuse!



Moving on to vs. 13, Paul refers to a time when Timothy had told a large group of people that he was a totally convinced, all-in and committed, Christ-following believer! Now Paul is holding him to it! Paul is charging Timothy in the sight of God and those witnesses when he made his “good confession” to stay the course – to keep on being faithful to Jesus by taking good care of his church by surrounding himself with good co-leaders who were also following Jesus faithfully/consistently, and by taking good care of his own walk with God. What Paul is doing to Timothy here, we have to do to each other sometimes. Sometimes faith can have its times of euphoric strength, and times of depressing weakness – of running hot, and then maybe a time of being lukewarm, and then it might run cold for awhile, and then something happens to awaken our faith and suddenly it is hot again! It is during those down times that it become imperative for us to encourage one other to stay the course!



[Heb. 10:24; Ph’p 2:4] We are in this thing together! It is part of our God-given role to lift up and carry our brother or sister when they are down, or in doubt, or when they’ve failed and are living in defeat! We come alongside and lovingly give them a kick in the pants! We charge them to make good on their “good confession”, to get back to the basics – reading/meditating, praying, fellowshiping, and sharing their faith! But it’s not all butt-kicking! When they are doing well, we should tell them what we see! It’s called **encouragement!** *“I love the way you follow Jesus! The way you follow Him makes me want to follow Him like YOU do! Keep up the good work! It’s beautiful”* Such meaningful and impactful conversation should be a regular part of your interactions here at Bethany! So let me ask you a personal question. Is it? If it isn’t, you need to do a little stretching and make it so! Grow into this responsibility by doing it for the first time. Let it be genuine! Let the love of Jesus flow from your mouth! Turn the tongue – from a missile launcher to a healing medicine!

Then Paul launches into the greatness of God in a benediction. I believe he is primarily addressing the greatness of God the Father, which he does not normally do. Most of his focus usually remains on Christ, but this time he is filled with the overall greatness of God! First he references the return of the risen and Living Jesus. The people of His time had expected this return of Christ long before this, but it had not happened. Paul emphasizes that He will return, but that God the Father is in charge of the timing of it! If you remember in the gospels, Jesus has said that no one knew the timing of His return, not even He! He said that knowledge was the exclusive property of God the Father Matthew **[Matt. 24:36]**! So Paul acknowledges that here, and then launches into an acknowledgement of the overall greatness of God – **the King of Kings and Lord of Lords** – which is **also** the title of **Jesus** (Isa. 9:6; John 1:1,2; Ph'p 2:9-11 ; Heb. 1:2,3; Col. 1:15-20; 1 Jn. 5:20; Rev. 11:25; Rev. 7:14) because God is One! God is also immortal and He lives in the unapproachable light of His own glory and for a mortal human being to see Him, it would be lethal! In our present state of being – in these fragile bodies of ours - it would be as withering as getting too close to the sun! When our bodies are changed and we take on immortality, that will change and we will be able to see Him as He is **[1 John 3:2]** It is for this God so great that we live contrary to our base human nature, that we wrestle with our flesh and with powers and principalities, and it is this great God that we serve. It is this unimaginably great God that has given us the difficult task of convincing a hostile world that He loves them and that they need Him desperately!

