

**1 Timothy**  
**A.) The Church and its message**  
**3. 1:18-20 The message at work**  
**1:18-20**  
**“A good conscience not a bad memory”**

**I. Introduction**

**II. Vs. 18 Two important truths**

**III. Vs. 19a Two weapons that win**

**IV. Vs. 19b-20 Two examples**

**I. Introduction**

The charge that Paul writes to Timothy about is the same one he mentioned in verse 3 that he not allow folks to major in minors. He has made his case clear that only the gospel has the ability to transform a heart and to continue to do so. Since we were created to have fellowship with the living God and that His goal is our growth more and more into the image of His Son anything that doesn't lead to that aim is a colossal waste of time! But what are the biggest enemies we face? In this section Paul mentions them and surprisingly they deal with faith and a good conscience. Some say that, “*The key to a good conscience is a bad memory.*” But a good conscience is best defined as “*the inner voice which warns us that somebody may be looking.*” The truth is bad doctrine usually starts with bad conduct.

**II. Vs. 18 Two important truths**

Vs.18 This verse offers **two important truths for every Christian:**

1. **Who has called us:** Like a general to his younger officers Paul commits this fight into the hands of his commanders who will entrust it to their men.

**Casting vision** is a key ingredient to waging war. Timothy's commission

came from multiple words from God and since He was confident of His choice then nothing should be able to dislodge this confidence. Every person I know will face situations and circumstances in this life that will cause us to lose confidence in God's direction for our life...confidence will not be regained by a mere pep talk from your fellow sojourners but it will be regained when you spend time with the commander and chief who called you to service!

2. **What we have been called too:** It is equally important not only that you know who called you but also to what you have been called to as Paul summarizes not only this letter but the Christian life when he writes: “*That by them you may wage the good warfare.*” **Saint's the fundamental truth about the Christian life is that it is essentially a battle!** There have been many a disillusioned Christian because once they gave their heart to Christ they were of the understanding that life was going to be easy from here on out...only to soon come to the realization that life on many fronts has become far more difficult.

- We are battling ourselves...in ways that we never knew of prior to faith in Christ
- We are battling satan and a world system under his control...that we once were allegiance with
- We may be battling those friends, family and co-workers who suddenly find us not practicing their life style
- We may be battling our former religious practice that we now find contrary to our new faith

There is **something missing in this admonishment:** *Missing is any statement or assurance of survival or option given Timothy by which he may escape the battle.* I

believe that Paul means to explain to Timothy, that **the battle that we are engaged in is**

**not one where the victory is based upon our “survival”. The victory is gained not by our survival but rather by God’s truth being on display...we are not the end goal, His life transforming truth is!** The greatest example of this is to be found in Jesus who did not hide away in some unreachable palace but dealt with life of the battle field of the open square, among people who hated Him dealing with all the dangers of everyday life that in the end cost Him His earthly life. And I remind you that it was in His death that victory was won not in the preservation of His earthly life! **We are called to “wage the good warfare”** and the proof that we have is **not** our survival but rather it is to be found **in our death to self!** We are to live as one author put it, **redemptively!** But we must realize that with warfare we have an enemy and in fact we **Christians have three.** Paul in his letter to the Ephesians made it plain in chapter 6 verse 12 that people are not one of the three as we are told that *“we do not wrestle against flesh and blood..”*. Instead we have three steady foes that will not stop in their attempt to cause us not to die to self:

- **The World:** The world is the philosophy that continues to insist that **“I”** am all that really matters. It insists that **“My”** pleasure is all that is important and that I must give in to the pursuit that is all about **“Me”** and my happiness. After all I **“deserve”** the best and I must take my happiness and pleasure now no matter how temporary it might be.
- **The fallen flesh of our old nature:** This is the part of our old nature and is dedicated to **“self”** living and loving, it loves anything illegal, immoral and fattening. There is a little poem that expresses the attitude of this fallen flesh: *I had a little party this afternoon, was very small, just three guests invited in all; Me, Myself and I! It was Me who ate all the sandwiches, and Myself who drank up all the tea, ah but it was I who ate the pie and passed the cake to Me who ate it to!*
- **The devil:** Paul warned of him in Ephesians 6:11 saying that we need to be on guard against the **“wiles of the devil”**. He will be using the above two enemies we face to cause us to be our former self, while the **“New You”** will want to live like Jesus, the devil will be pulling you back. That is **“waging the good warfare”** that he has admonished Timothy to be engaged in.

Paul does not encourage Timothy the way in which I would have thought he would, as he does not say the following truths:

1. 1 John 4:4: *He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world*
2. 1 Peter 1:5: *We are kept by the power of God through faith*
3. Jude 24: *He is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before His presence in glory*

Instead Paul simple reminds Timothy of his love for him as he calls him his son, then reminds him of God's precious promises that called him into ministry. **Love is such a stronger motivator of truth than merely hearing truthful words!**

### **III. Vs. 19a Two weapons that win**

Vs.19a Paul anticipates that Timothy may have wanted more than motivation, he would want some weapons in which to defeat these three and Paul supplies two that many a Christian have according to Paul have cast aside causing them to be shipwrecked.

1. **Having faith**: Paul reminds Timothy of weapon of trusting in what God's word has promised! **That is all faith is...TRUST!** And the truth about trust is we all have it the question is: **What is our trust IN?** Paul tells Timothy to defeat the three great enemies that we need we will need to trust only in God's word! We are often defeat because we don't trust god's word instead we trust the lies and false promises of the world system, flesh and the devil. Those three are always going to get you to go after things quickly before you stop to assess the consequences. They also over emphasize the temporary pleasure while not mentioning the long term destruction and cost involved in the pursuit of pleasure. This was the attack that the devil successfully launched at Adam and Eve as he got them to distrust God's provision saying that God was withholding something that was essential and that if they trusted him they would see. So through every day we are faced with believing the lies our trusting in the truth of God's word.

2. **A good conscience:** Many people have a misunderstanding as to what a “*good conscience*” is, they associate it with feeling and emotions. They have slogans and adds that say, “*If it feel good do it!*” But a “*good conscience*” has nothing to do with feelings and everything to do with **ACTIONS!** We know right from wrong not of feelings but rather of actions. A “good conscience” is what happens when we act towards God’s word and reject the lies of the threefold enemy. A good conscience is also what convicts us when we have trust a lie instead of the truth which will result in our agreeing with God about our misplaced trust as we turn back to trusting and acting on His word instead of a lie. A “good conscience” is like a gyroscope for our heart which resists any tendency to deflect it and it will warn us that what we are contemplating to trust in and act on is contrary to truth and it will cause us to get off course.

These two weapons work in conjunction with each other and Paul wrote of the impact of these two weapons in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 when he said, “*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*” These are the two great weapons at our disposal to defeat our enemies:

- **To know what is right:** Trust in God’s word above anything and anyone else
- **By the power of God to act upon it:** Act upon the truth no matter what

#### **IV. Vs. 19b-20 Two examples**

Vs. 19b-20 Paul mentions two men who rejected trusting and obeying the truth and have become stranded and alone away from truth. Hymenaeus and Alexander were not men

who didn't know nor hadn't obeyed the truth for at one time they were. No, they were men who stopped doing so and had become lost! In Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy he wrote that Hymenaeus taught that the resurrection of the believers in Christ had already happened which cause some to walk away from Jesus. Hymenaeus didn't start by teaching falsely, he started much more subtly than this as he just choose not to practice the truth in some area of his life. Paul also warns of Alexander in his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy saying that he did much harm and that they needed to be aware of him. Their departure from truth was not a sudden compulsive act but rather a slow abandonment, a course of spiritual deterioration that has taken a great deal of time.

I may seem to some that Paul's words that he "*delivered to satan that they may learn not to blaspheme*" to be quite vindictive but that is not the case. Paul knew satan, he will lie and lure away a believe from truth then abuse him, seek to destroy him. Delivering a person over is a hopefully cause a person to realize what they have abandoned in Christ, the love and joy that came from obedience to the truth. They will tire of the slop of pigs that satan offers and return to the abundance of food at the banquet table of our Father the King of Kings! Oh dear saints in need not come to this....we can know what is right now and we have the power in Christ to act upon what is right...so will we choose to do so?