

Fight or Flight

I remember working in the produce warehouses back in Cleveland, Ohio. I was quite startled when I saw my first river rat that apparently had a steady diet of produce. He was the size of a raccoon or large possum. One would think a rat that size would be afraid of nothing or no one. Yet upon my approach, he ran away as fast as his fat legs could carry him. Having experienced with cornered animals before, I decided not to give chase.

Have you ever wondered why some animals will turn and fight and others will instantly run away? Somehow they have been programmed to respond to stress in the way they do. How much of it is instinct given by God and how much is learned by experience I do not know. However, I do know that human's response to stress is often affected by their experience. This puts one's response in the realm of training and choices.

When do we choose to flee from danger? When do we choose to take a stand and fight? In order to answer these questions, we must take some time for introspection. After we identify our choices of the past, consider changing the questions just a little bit. When should one choose to flee and when should one choose to stand and fight? Paul gives guidance to all Christians through his words to Timothy.

“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith.” I Timothy 6: 11, 12

Lets look back a few verses to see what Timothy (and therefore we) should flee. In essence, we need flee from both false doctrine and those who would teach it. Many have been taught sound Biblical truth, and for reasons of hurt feelings or personal feelings have chosen to turn their backs on what is true. It is that, of which Paul warns Timothy to flee. The one who would teach or abide false teaching ***“is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.”*** I Timothy. 6: 3-5 These kinds of people and this kind of teaching Christians ought to flee.

There is something for which is worth fighting! Paul told Timothy, that he is to fight the good fight of faith. How can he do this? He is told to ***pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.*** I Timothy 6: 11 People pursue many things in life such as: a career, an education, a spouse, financial security, a family and more. We expend much time, effort and finances toward these pursuits. We plan. We purpose. We spend our resources to see that we get what we are pursuing. Do we pursue righteousness with the same fervor? How about godliness? As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? Did any one of us say, “I want to be more like Jesus?”

We never seem to have enough stuff. Our life revolves upon making ourselves comfortable in this world. It never ceases to amaze me how much discomfort we are willing to put up with in order to be more comfortable. We work 40 to 80 hours a week in order to buy items of comfort that we are never around to enjoy. Many will beg, borrow and steal in order to get drugs, alcohol and other things that they think will make them comfortable. We sacrifice so much and in return gain so little. Consider Paul's words in verse 7, "***For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.***" Why not be content with what we need and pursue that which we can take with us?

We have learned a bad lesson in adapting to this world. We have allowed ourselves to become conditioned to stick around with sin enters the rooms of our life. We do not recognize it for what it is, therefore we do not understand the need to flee. Having a 3 and 4 year old in the house constantly, one learns that what is on the television is not always appropriate for young minds. Consider: if it is not appropriate for their minds, why would it be appropriate for ours? It is time that we all make a concerted effort to fight for the faith and take flight from sin.