

OL Summary:

I. "I have fought the good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7a): **A.** A proper Christian life involves fighting the good fight against Satan and his kingdom of darkness and for the interests of God's kingdom. **B.** Paul considered the ministry a warfare for Christ, just as the priestly service was considered a military service, a warfare. **C.** "No one serving as a soldier entangles himself with the affairs of this life"; this means that to fight the good fight for God's interests on earth, we need to clear away all earthly entanglements. **D.** Paul charged Timothy, his faithful co-worker, to fight against the differing teachings and to fight for God's economy. **E.** To war the good warfare is to war against the differing teachings and to carry out God's economy according to the apostle's ministry concerning the gospel of grace and eternal life for the glory of the blessed God. **F.** Whenever we minister Christ to others, we find ourselves in a battle; hence, we should be soldiers fighting for God's interests. **G.** To teach and preach God's New Testament economy concerning Christ and the church is to war the good warfare. **H.** To fight the good fight of the faith means to fight for God's New Testament economy; in particular, it is to fight for Christ as the embodiment of God and for the church as the Body of Christ. **I.** We fight the good fight of the faith not only objectively but also subjectively by laying hold on the eternal life. **J.**

II. "I have finished the course" (2 Tim. 4:7b): **A.** "I consider my life of no account as if precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:24): /It was not until the last moment of his running the race that the apostle Paul could triumphantly proclaim, "I have finished the course," and have the assurance that he would be rewarded by the Lord at His appearing. **B.** A proper Christian life involves running the course, the race, for the carrying out of God's economy according to His eternal purpose. **C.** We need to seek out the journey that the Lord has ordained and faithfully walk on it, paying any price to wholeheartedly continue on our journey until we reach the end. **D.** The journey that the Lord has ordained for us is the race that we all must run. /After we are saved, God puts us into a race, which is aimed directly at the kingdom. /We cannot choose the course that we want to run; rather, we must run the race that God sets before us. **E.** We need to "run with endurance the race which is set before us". /We need to run the race with endurance, suffering the opposition with endurance and never growing weary of fainting in our souls. **F.** We run the Christian race by "looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith". /Jesus is the Author of faith—the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith. /We need to look away unto Jesus with undivided attention by

turning away from every other object. /When we look away unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit transfuses us with Himself, with His believing element. /Jesus is the Perfecter of faith—the Finisher and Completer of faith. /As the Completer of faith, the Lord Jesus continually infuses Himself into us as the believing element and ability. /When we look away unto Him, He ministers heaven, life, and strength to us, transfusing and infusing us with all that He is so that we may be able to run the heavenly race and live the heavenly life on earth. **J.**

III. If the Lord's second coming is precious to us, we will love His appearing: **A.** Loving the Lord's appearing and loving the Lord Himself are inseparable. **B.** If we are waiting for the Lord to come, we should be those who love His appearing. **C.** The Lord's appearing, His coming back, is a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive to us. /We should have a living that loves the Lord's appearing; this causes us not to be discouraged but to remain faithful to the end. **D.** Loving the Lord's appearing is in contrast to loving the present age. /An age is a part, a section, or an aspect of the world system of Satan, which is used by him to usurp and occupy people and keep them away from God and His purpose. /In 2 Timothy 4:10 the present age refers to the world that surrounds, attracts, and tempts us; we cannot contact the world unless we contact the present age of the world. /Demas loved the present age; due to the attraction of the present age, he forsook the apostle Paul. /In Romans 12:2 Paul exhorts us to not be fashioned according to this age but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. /This age in verse 2 denotes the present, practical part of the world, which stands in opposition to the Body life and replaces the Body life. /To be fashioned according to this age means to adopt the modern fashions of the present age; to be transformed is to allow an organic element to be wrought into our being, thus producing an inward metabolic change. /Because the present age opposes the church, which is God's will, we must not be fashioned according to it. /If we are to live in the Body of Christ, we should not follow the present age or be fashioned according to this age or conformed to it. /If we love the present age, we will take sides with the world; if we love the Lord's appearing, we will take sides with Him and fight with Him for His interests. **E.** Those who love the Lord, wait for His coming, and love His appearing will overcome. **F.** Loving the Lord's appearing is a proof that we love the Lord and live for Him today; hence, it also becomes a condition for us to receive His reward. **G.** To love the Lord's appearing, does not mean that we should not live a normal life; rather, the more we love His appearing, the more we need to live a normal life today. **H.** As those who love the Lord Jesus, take Him as our life, live Him, and magnify Him, we should await His coming and love His appearing; this should be our heart's desire and our living as those who hope to enter into His joy, be saved into the Lord's heavenly kingdom, and receive the crown of righteousness.

CP1: Fight the good fight, finish the course and keep the faith to be an overcomer

OL1: "I have fought the good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7a). A proper Christian life involves fighting the good fight against Satan and his kingdom of darkness and for the interests of God's kingdom. 2 Tim. 2:3 Suffer evil with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving as a soldier entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please the one who enlisted him.

To fight for the faith means to fight for God's New Testament economy. In particular, it is to fight for Christ as the embodiment of God and for the church as the Body of Christ.

The eternal life in 1 Timothy 6:12 is the divine life, the uncreated life of God, which is eternal. Eternal denotes the nature more than the time element of the divine life. To fight the good fight of the faith in the Christian life, especially in the Christian ministry, we need to lay hold on this divine life and not trust in our human life....To bring forth God's dispensation concerning the church in 1 Timothy, to confront the process of the church's decline in 2 Timothy, and to maintain good order in the church life in Titus, this life is a prerequisite.

A man of God should pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and meekness; he should fight for God's New Testament economy and lay hold on eternal life. All these matters are essential aspects of the New Testament. In contrast, the beasts in Revelation 13 and the lake of fire in Revelation 20 cannot compare with these essential aspects. We today must fight the good fight of the faith. This means that we must fight for Christ as the embodiment of God and for the church as the Body of Christ. Furthermore, we must not merely fight objectively, but fight subjectively by laying hold on eternal life. We should not do anything apart from this life. We should speak to our husband or wife and to our children not by the natural life, but by the eternal life.

OL2: Whenever we minister Christ to others, we find ourselves in a battle; hence, we should be soldiers fighting for God's interests. **OL3:** To teach and preach God's New Testament economy concerning Christ and the church is to war the good warfare. **OL4:** To fight the good fight of the faith means to fight for God's New Testament economy; in particular, it is to fight for Christ as the embodiment of God and for the church as the Body of Christ. 1 Tim. 1:3 ...I exhorted you...that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things. 4 ...rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

18 This charge I commit to you...according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you might war the good warfare.

OL5: We fight the good fight of the faith not only objectively but also subjectively by laying hold on the eternal life.

Application to new ones and Youth/College students

The Bible says that the Christian life is a battle. Believers

have the consciousness of the Body, and in coordinating with the members of the Body, they live and serve for the building up of the Body. However, whether each believer is an overcomer or a loser is a personal matter. Matt.24:40 At that time two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left. Even when working together, one can be an overcomer and the other one can be a loser. To be an overcomer, you need to fight the good fight in the environment you have been given.

2Tim.4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith. FN 「fought the good fight」: A proper Christian life has three aspects: **1** fighting the good fight against Satan and his kingdom of darkness for the interests of God's kingdom; **2** running the course for the carrying out of God's economy according to His eternal purpose; **3** keeping the faith for participation in the divine riches in God's economy. 1Cor.1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. FN 「Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God」: The crucified Christ preached by the apostles is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Wisdom is for planning, purposing; power is for carrying out, accomplishing, what is planned and purposed. In God's economy Christ is both.

For example, a student's main duty is to study. You need to study for the testimony of the Lord and the preaching of the gospel. However, even if you have a plan to study, you do not have the strength to carry it out. At this time, you can experience Christ as your strength and wisdom. You should pray, "Oh Lord, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God to me. For Lord's testimony and the gospel, let me now as a student experience Christ as my strength and wisdom in my studies. And when I can't understand something, I won't give up but call on the name of the Lord. Then let me gradually improve my grades. I will be diligent in my studies and fight the good fight in my school years." People in the world study only for their own future, but you should have a spirit to fear God and study diligently, not for yourself, but for the testimony of the Lord and the gospel. If you do this, your future will be blessed.

Isa.11:2 And the Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah. From your youth, turn to your spirit, call on the name of the Lord Jesus, set your mind on your spirit, and enjoy **1** the spirit of wisdom, **2** the spirit of understanding, **3** the spirit of counsel, **4** the spirit of might, **5** the spirit of knowledge of Jehovah, **6** the spirit of fear of Jehovah.

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, the normal Christian life includes fighting against Satan and his kingdom of darkness for the interests of the kingdom of God. To fight the good fight, I call upon the name of the Lord, confess my sins, set my mind on my spirit, and experience and enjoy The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah."

CP2: Realize the journey that the Lord has set for each one and consecrate to run through it faithfully to the end

OL1: I have finished the course....(2Tim. 4:7b) **OL2:** But I consider my life of no account as if precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus.... (Acts20:24)

The most important thing in the Christian life is to seek out the journey which the Lord has ordained and faithfully walk on it. A poor phenomenon among believers today is that many have not found the journey that the Lord has ordained for them. Some, even though they have found it, do not walk on it. This is the reason that their living is filled with so much spiritual death, gloom, and restriction, and this is the reason that there are so many conflicts and arguments in God's work. The most important task for each of us is to put ourselves into God's hand in a quiet, patient, prayerful, consecrated, and obedient way and wholeheartedly seek after His leading. We should be willing to obey Him and act only in accordance with His will. We should pray that He reveal to us the journey He has designated for us. After this, we should pay any price to wholeheartedly walk on it.

OL3: We run the Christian race by "Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith" (Heb.12:2). Jesus is the Author of faith, the Originator, the Inaugurator, the source, and the cause of faith. Psa. 27:4 One thing I have asked from Jehovah; that do I seek: to dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of Jehovah, and to inquire in His temple.

God has put the kingdom before us, and He has given us a race to run. At the end of the race, we will see if we have failed or won. The winner will reign with the Lord, while the loser, though saved, will have nothing to do with the glory of the kingdom. The race is already set, and those who want to run have to "put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us" (Heb. 12:1). There are two crucial things in running a race. First, we have to lay aside every weight, and second, we have to put away our sin. Those who run the race should not only lay aside the sin which so easily entangles them and every weight but should also run the race that is set before them with endurance. Why with endurance? Because the prize is not given at the beginning of the race, nor is it given in the middle of the race. Rather, it is given at the end, the very last step, of the race. We may run well at the start, and we may even run well at the midpoint, but we will not necessarily run well at the end. A victory involves winning at the beginning, at the midpoint, and at the end. Before reaching the end, we cannot guarantee that we will win the prize.

If we look unto Him as such a wonderful and all-inclusive One, He ministering heaven, life, and strength to us, will transfuse and infuse us with all that He is to enable us to run the heavenly race and to live the heavenly life on earth.

Application to business person/graduate students

Please pray by asking and seeking the course that the Lord has set for you, "Oh Lord Jesus, I have been called by You, and here I am. Show me the course that You have set for me so that I can walk in it faithfully. Because I am Your slave, I will faithfully do the will of my Master". First, please realize your course. Then say "Amen!" to the Lord and stay in that course set for you and consecrate yourself to walk on it.

When you realize the course if you don't consecrate yourself to do it, you will be filled with spiritual death and depression because your inner being and outer practice are not in alignment.

Base of Consecration—1Cor. 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.

Motivation of Consecration—2Cor. 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; 15 And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

Significance of Consecration—Rom. 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. Testimony of a brother: I was saved in the spring of my first year of college. As a sophomore, I began to actively share the gospel. I prayed every day during the week of the monthly gospel meeting held by the church, and invited my friends to the gospel meeting. However, after that week was over, I went back to my lazy life. Because I was living such a contradictory life, there were always conflicts and worries inside except for the gospel week. In the winter of my third year, I went to Taiwan for the church visit. I heard the message on consecration in Sanchong city, Taiwan. I still remember the speaking, "If you consecrate yourself to the life of the Body, even if you forget it, the Lord will remember". That night at a meeting hall in Taichung City, I consecrated according to what I heard and prayed, "I am willing to give myself and my whole life. I thank You that even if I forget this consecration, You will remember it. When I forget, please remind me. I want to please You by building the church". At this time, I felt the strong presence of the Lord. After this consecration, the contradictions between the inside and outside disappeared, and the inside became bright and clear. After the consecration, I was able to gradually start moving forward. Even after that, there were times when I forgot my consecration and became weak, but each time I was able to receive mercy because the Lord reminded me of this consecration and I was able to look unto Him and renew my consecration. Obviously, my consecration in Taichung during my third year of college was a turning point. When I was saved, the negative spiral (chain reaction) in my life ended. When I consecrated myself to the building of the Body, the positive spiral has begun. "Lord, I look unto You and let me finish my course to the end!"

CP3: The Lord's second coming is a warning, encouragement and incentive to the believers. Train ourselves in God-man living, shepherd according to God, wait for His coming and become an overcomer

OL1: If the Lord's second coming is precious to us, we will love His appearing. 2 Tim. 4:1 I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus...and by His appearing and His kingdom...8 ...There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

There is a great deal of talk among Christians today concerning the Lord's second coming. But not many believers realize that when the Lord Jesus comes back, He will not come as the merciful God or as the gracious Savior, but as the righteous Judge. Christians should be warned and encouraged to prepare themselves to stand before this Judge. I hope that many among us will take up the burden in this dark age to bring such a solemn charge to the Lord's people. We all need to receive this charge before God and before the Lord Jesus, the One who will judge the living and the dead. We must declare the fact that when the Lord comes back, He will be the Judge of all, both believers and unbelievers. According to Matthew 25, all of the Lord's servants will have to give an account to Him. The Lord will either say, "Well done, good and faithful slave" (v. 21), or, "Evil and slothful slave" (v. 26). In His righteousness the Lord will decide whether or not we receive a reward.

OL2: The Lord's appearing, His coming back, is a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive to us. We should have a living that loves the Lord's appearing; this causes us not to be discouraged but to remain faithful to the end. 2 Tim. 4:18 The Lord...will save me into His heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory forever and ever... **OL3:**

Loving the Lord's appearing is in contrast to loving the present age. An age is a part, a section, or an aspect of the world system of Satan, which is used by him to usurp and occupy people and keep them away from God and His purpose. **OL4:** Loving the Lord's appearing is a proof that we love the Lord and live for Him today; hence, it also becomes a condition for us to receive His reward. **OL5:** To love the Lord's appearing does not mean that we should not live a normal life; rather, the more we love His appearing, the more we need to live a normal life today. 1 Thes. 1:10 And await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath which is coming.

We may express our desire for the Lord's return in the way of a prayer to Him, calling, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20). We should always call for His coming.

Application to the serving ones

The Lord did not let us know when He would come back. Therefore, believers need to be awake every day. For the believers the Lord's second coming is a warning, an

encouragement, and an incentive. **Warning:** Matt.25:11 And later the rest of the virgins came also, saying, Lord, lord, open to us! 12 But he answered and said, Truly I say to you, I do not know you. 13 Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour...30 And cast out the useless slave into the outer darkness. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

I say warning because if you don't become an overcomer, you will be denied by the Lord, cast out into the darkness, and you will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The darkness here is the darkness outside the glorious realm of the presence of the Lord in the millennial. The phrase, "weeping and gnashing of teeth," is first used for the wicked who will perish in the lake of fire. Believers will not go to the lake of fire nor perish, but going into darkness for a thousand years must involve considerable suffering.

Encouragement and incentive: 21 His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master. FN "a few things": A few things signify the Lord's work in this age. FN "many things": Many things signify the responsibilities in the coming kingdom. FN "over": Over signifies the ruling authority in the coming kingdom. FN "the joy of your master": The joy of your master signifies the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming kingdom. This refers to inward satisfaction, not to outward position. To participate in the Lord's joy is the greatest reward, better than the glory and position in the kingdom. The second coming of the Lord is an encouragement and a reward for the believers. You may be materially rich or have a high position in the world, but these things have nothing to do with whether you will be an overcomer or not. Whether you will become an overcomer depends entirely on ① whether or not you are training in the God-man life and growing in life, and ② whether or not you are faithful in service and profitable in spiritual business. A sister's testimony: The Lord's second coming is an encouragement to me in my service. There are times when I am disappointed and weakened in the service, but I am encouraged and strengthened when I think of the Lord will soon return. I especially like the hymn 960.

- 1 My King will soon come back again, The sky be filled with Him;
The universe to be redeemed Will see His light therein.
The Lord will soon fulfill His plan, His footsteps now I hear;
His glorious frame I faintly see Beginning to appear.
- 3 My heart is always with Himself, My eyes are heavenward,
My lips would utter nothing else Than meeting with my Lord.
The coming of the Lord draws nigh, His coming is for me;
His promise ever standeth firm And soon fulfilled I'll see.
- 6 A thousand hands won't hinder me, Nor will ten thousand eyes;
The thorns upon the road but help Me onward to the prize.
Arise, my spirit and my heart, And let the world go by;
The Lord of life will take me soon To be with Him on high.

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, the Lord will come again, but we do not know when it will be. It's a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive for me to be an overcomer. If I cannot become an overcomer, I will be denied by the Lord and cast out into the darkness. I should be awake every day and have a normal God-man life, faithfully shepherd the new ones given by the Lord, and wait for the Lord's coming. Come, Lord Jesus!"