Contending For The Faith

1 Timothy 1:3-20

(All Scriptures NASB 1995 unless otherwise noted)

"…Fight the good fight…"

"This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight …"
(1 Timothy 1:18)

Why Fight The Good Fight?

1. Because some will **teach strange doctrines,** not even understanding what they're teaching.

*"As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach **strange doctrines**, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to **mere speculation** rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to **fruitless discussion**, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions."* **(1 Timothy 1:3-7)**

Why Fight The Good Fight?

2. Because some will **practice things contrary** to God's will.

*"But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is **contrary to sound teaching**, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted."*
(1 Timothy 1:8-11)

Why Fight The Good Fight?

3. Paul personally understood **what the truth of God's word can accomplish**.

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." **(1 Timothy 1:12-17)**

Why Fight The Good Fight?

4. Because **some have turned back** and "suffered shipwreck" in their faith.

*"This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which **some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith**. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme."*
(1 Timothy 1:18-20)

Jude teaches us that we must **contend earnestly for the faith**.

*"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you **contend earnestly for the faith** which was once for all handed down to the saints."* **(Jude 3)**

Jude wrote about "**Our Common Salvation** …"

Same lost condition.

*"… for **all have sinned and fall short** of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus …"* **(Romans 3:23-24)**

Same message preached.

*"For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just **as I teach everywhere in every church**."* **(1 Corinthians 4:17)**

Jude wrote about "**Our Common Salvation** …"

Same faith received and practiced.

*"Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have **received a faith** of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ …"* **(2 Peter 1:1)**

"What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself." **(James 2:14-17)**

"For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." **(James 2:26)**

Jude wrote about "**Our Common Salvation** …"

Same obedience rendered.

*"Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"* **(Acts 2:38)**

*"But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being **baptized**, men and women alike."* **(Acts 8:12)**

Jude wrote about "**Our Common Salvation** …"

All added to one body.

*"I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock **I will build My church**; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."* **(Matthew 16:18)**

*"So then, those who had received his word were **baptized**; and that day there were **added** about three thousand souls."* **(Acts 2:41)**

*"… And the Lord was **adding** to their number day by day those who were being saved."* **(Acts 2:47b)**

*"For by one Spirit we were all **baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."* **(1 Corinthians 12:13)**

Jude wrote about "**Our Common Salvation** …"

*"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about **our common salvation**, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you **contend earnestly for the faith** which was once for all handed down to the saints."* **(Jude 3)**

Our salvation depends on our obedience to this charge!

Contending Earnestly for the Faith

"Contend" defined:

- *W.E. Vine*: "ep**agoniz**omai – signifies "to contend about a thing, **as a combatant**…The word 'earnestly' is added to convey the **intensive force** of the preposition."
- *Wuest:* "… used of athletes contending in the athletic contests … a **vigorous, intense, determined struggle** to defeat the opposition."

"Contend" by whom?

- **Elders.**

"… holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain." **(Titus 1:9-11)**

"Contend" by whom?

- **Preachers.**

"… preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths." **(2 Timothy 4:2-4)**

"Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you." **(1 Timothy 4:15-16)**

"Contend" by whom?

- **Parents.**

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." **(Ephesians 6:4)**

"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." **(Deuteronomy 6:6-9)**

"Contend" by whom?

- **All Brethren.**

"The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." **(2 Timothy 2:24-26)**

"Contend" by whom?

- **All Brethren.**

*"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."* **(Ephesians 4:11-16)**

"Contend" against whom?

- **Satan.**

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." **(1 Peter 5:8)**

"But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds." **(2 Corinthians 11:12-15)**

"Contend" against whom?

- **Satan.**

"And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.'" **(Revelation 12:9-11)**

"Contend" against whom?

- **False Teachers.**

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep." **(2 Peter 2:1-3)**

"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." **(Acts 20:29-30)**

"Contend" against whom?

- **Brethren in sin.**

"It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst." **(1 Corinthians 5:1-2)**

"Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ." **(Galatians 6:1-2)**

"My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." **(James 5:19-20)**

"Contend" against whom?

- **Self-will.**

"Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" **(2 Corinthians 13:5)**

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.'" **(Matthew 16:24)**

"For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." **(Galatians 5:17)**

What is the purpose "Contending"?

- **Not just to win arguments, justify ourselves, or seek personal gain.**

"If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain." **(1 Timothy 6:3-5)**

"And He said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.'" **(Luke 16:15)**

What is the purpose "Contending"?

- **It is about the salvation of souls.**

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh." **(Jude 20-23)**

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." **(Luke 19:10)**

"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation." **(Romans 10:1)**

What is the purpose "Contending"?

- **It is about the salvation of souls.**

"And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'" **(Acts 26:15-18)**

What is the purpose "Contending"?

- **It is about defending the truth of God's word.**

"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.'"
(1 Timothy 2:3-4)

"… but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.'"
(1 Timothy 3:15)

"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart …" **(1 Peter 1:22)**

What Is The Manner Of Our Contending?

- **Earnestly – Jude 3; Titus 2:14**
- **Honestly – 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:17**
- **Humbly – Acts 20:18-20; Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:1-3**
- **Lovingly – Ephesians 4:14-15; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3**
- **Courageously and Boldly – Ephesians 6:18-20**
- **Patiently – 2 Timothy 4:2**

What Do We Use To Contend?

- **The scriptures.**

"… for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." **(Acts 18:28)**

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."
(2 Timothy 2:15)

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." **(2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV)**

What Do We Use To Contend?

- **The scriptures**

"Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God …"
(Ephesians 6:14-17)

- **With logic, reason, and persuasion**

"And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures…"
(Acts 17:2)

"And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks." **(Acts 18:4)**

What Do We Use To Contend?

- **With spiritual wisdom and not human wisdom**

"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." **(1 Corinthians 1:18ff)**

"And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God." **(1 Corinthians 2:1-5)**

What Do We Use To Contend?

- **With what God promised would work**

"'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ***So will My word be*** *which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without* ***accomplishing what I desire****, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.'"*
(Isaiah 55:8-11)

What Is "The Faith"?

- **We learn in scriptures what "the faith" is:**
  - **What God has revealed to us – Galatians 3:23; Deuteronomy 29:29**
  - See **Acts 13:1-13**

The **word of God** (verse 7); **the faith** (verse 8); **the teaching of the Lord** (verse 12) – all refer to the same body of revealed divine knowledge.

- See **Galatians 1:11-23**

Preaching **the gospel** (verse 11); preaching **Him (Christ)** (verse 16); preaching **the faith** (verse 23) – all refer to the same body of revealed divine knowledge.

"Once For All Delivered"

- The complete revelation has come – **1 Corinthians 13:8-10**
- *"The perfect law"* has come – **James 1:25**
- God has granted to us **"everything pertaining to life and godliness"** – **2 Peter 1:3**
- Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the Apostles into "**ALL truth**" – **John 16:13**
- God's scripture is able to make man "**complete, thoroughly equipped**" – **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

Personal Application

- I am personally responsible for knowing what God has revealed.
- I am personally responsible for believing and obeying the faith.
- I am personally responsible for contending for the faith in my life.

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

Hear the word of God
(James 1:21; Romans 10:17)

Believe the gospel message
(Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24)

Repent of sins
(Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31)

Confess Jesus Christ
(Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32-33)

Be Baptized for forgiveness
(Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)

Remain Obedient
(Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 3:12)