**Faith that Pursues**

*1 Timothy 6:11*

**Introduction**

1. Paul not only encouraged Timothy to flee, but to pursue – **1 Timothy 6:11**
2. We must think of faith as an active matter in our lives. It will certainly lead us to avoid and flee matters of unrighteousness, but if we have the faith we’re called to, we will be in constant pursuit.
3. Two Actions of Faith
4. Faith Flees
   1. Faith trusts what God’s word says about the spiritual dangers we face – **Ephesians 6:12**
      1. Not against tangible foes.
      2. **2 Corinthians 5:7** – faith, not sight.
   2. Rather than seeking to rationalize decisions of our liking, faith accepts what God warns about their end, and flees – **Proverbs 14:12; Galatians 6:8**
   3. Example of desire for riches – **1 Timothy 6:9-10**
   4. Example of youthful lusts – **2 Timothy 2:22** (Joseph – **Genesis 39:12**)
5. Faith Pursues
   1. Paul does not leave Timothy with instruction to flee, but to pursue – **1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22**
   2. The saving, living, God glorifying, Biblical faith is ever in pursuit of the flawless standard of Christ’s stature – **Ephesians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Galatians 2:20**
   3. **Not only do we need a fleeing faith, but we need a pursuing faith!**
6. The Importance of Pursuit
7. Flight Empties, Pursuit Fills
   1. Truly, they are but two sides to the same coin. To flee one thing is to pursue another, and vice versa. To cease pursuing is to cease fleeing.
      1. **Matthew 12:30** – being WITH Christ and GATHERING with Christ are productive actions – i.e. we are actively doing something.
      2. To be AGAINST Christ and to SCATTER abroad you do not need to be in pursuit of filthy, base things of the world, YOU NEED ONLY NEGLECT BEING WITH HIM AND GATHERING WITH HIM.
   2. Jesus speaks a parable to this point – **Matthew 12:43-45**
      1. It is good that a man be released from the grip of a demon.
      2. It is not good that he remains empty – it provides room for even more.
      3. **(v. 45b)** – the ministry of John, and Jesus and His disciples provided much good for the nation, but unless they wholeheartedly pursued His kingdom/will they would be worse off.
      4. It is better to be rid of some sin than to have it in our lives, but it is not good merely to be rid of it, but to fill the void with the will of God. (The purpose of flight is to be free to pursue.)
8. Faith that Pursues Reflects a More Intimate Knowledge of God
   1. God IS light – **1 John 1:5**
      1. It may be taken for granted in our concept of fellowship with God that it involves more than inactivity, but activity.
      2. God is described in the negative – ***“in Him is no darkness at all”***
         1. However, this is based in what He IS!
      3. **(vv. 6-7)** – Fellowship with God is not merely enjoyed by not walking in darkness, but by ACTIVELY WALKING IN THE LIGHT.
      4. Everything God is NOT is because of who He IS.
   2. God IS love – **1 John 4:8**
      1. This describes pursuing faith, and its importance.
      2. God may NOT be some things, but it is because HE IS LOVE.
      3. To not be guilty of sin XYZ only to neglect being active in love is to fail to know God.
      4. **Luke 10:36-37** – the one who acted in love had the better understanding of who God is.
         1. **(vv. 31-32)** – the other two were a priest and a Levite.
9. Faith that Pursues Trusts in God’s Grace
   1. Some say, “I just don’t know why God would punish a good person.”
      1. What they mean is, “I’m not XYZ, or as bad as this person over there, so I don’t think God would punish me.”
      2. Ironically, such people usually subscribe to the error of salvation by grace alone through faith alone to avoid coming across as if they were seeking to earn salvation.
         1. Suggesting that God would save them because they were a “good person,” or simply because they’re not “that bad” is every bit as much relying on self for salvation as what they claim to avoid by their doctrine.
   2. Pursuing faith realizes that there is something outside of ourselves (the knowledge of Jesus) which we need to receive in order to be right with God – **2 Peter 1:5-11; 3:18**
      1. We must grow in God’s grace to be in fellowship with Him.
      2. In doing so we also avoid the sin we should flee **(v. 10)** – flight through pursuit.
   3. **1 Corinthians 15:10** – Paul fully embraced God’s grace, not simply by ceasing to persecute the church, but by actively seeking to build it up!
10. Faith that Pursues is a Working Faith
    1. **Galatians 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3** – faith that works in love is what being a Christian is all about.
    2. Simply NOT being an immoral person does not accomplish God’s will. To be certain, we must not be conformed to the world, but WE ALSO MUST BE TRANSFORMED – i.e. become something new (**cf. Romans 12:2**).
    3. It is pursuing faith which DOES God’s will:
       1. Help a brother in need; restore a brother; evangelize; worship God; edify the church; etc.
       2. These, and more, are all actions we pursue, and they are not accomplished by merely NOT DOING other things. (**cf. 1 John 3:16-17**)
    4. Sometimes it’s what we DON’T do that condemns us – **James 4:17**
11. Pursue:
12. Righteousness and Godliness
    1. **Righteousness** – **Matthew 6:33** – not merely being right with God, but furthering His will (***“His kingdom”*** – i.e. submission to the King’s rule, and active in the King’s work) (**cf. Matthew 5:6**)
    2. **Godliness** – **1 Timothy 4:7** – godward piety – we pursue the frame of mind which always has God at the first, in a position of greatest veneration.
       1. This is pursued and found, not in human wisdom, but in the revelation which comes from God.
       2. The same goes for righteousness.
13. Faith and Love
    1. **Faith** – **Romans 10:17; James 2:14-17; Ephesians 6:16** – constantly searching and learning what God’s word says, doing what it says, and trusting in that over all fiery darts of doubt hurled our way.
    2. **Love** – **1 John 5:1-3** – shows us how faith and love are so connected (**cf. Galatians 5:6**).
       1. To believe in God is to also love Him.
       2. To believe in God and love Him is also to love the brethren – this is accomplished through keeping His commands.
14. Patience and Gentleness
    1. **Patience** – i.e. cheerful endurance, bearing up under trial – **James 1:2-4** – pursued through welcoming trial through trusting in God’s grace to cause it to work for our good.
    2. **Gentleness** – ***“meekness” (YLT)*** – i.e. the opposite of prideful self-will – being combined with patience, it leads us to think of not only the virtue patience through trial may produce, but also the virtue that would lead one to embrace the trial in submitting to God – **James 1:19-21** – regardless of how difficult the time and task might be, pursue the disposition that surrenders control to God.

**Conclusion**

1. God calls us to more than simply being without sin. He calls us to be active in faith.
2. If our concept of faith before God is not faith which pursues carrying out His will in all things then our faith is lacking.