

The Daily Challenge: Godly Living in an Ungodly Culture

Live Song Church – August 18th, 2024

1 Timothy 6:11-12 - *But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

Introduction: The Challenge to Live Godly Amidst Cultural Decay

- To say that we're living in "ungodly" times is an understatement.
 - 2 Timothy 3:1-5 - *But know this, that in the last days ^[a]perilous times will come: ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, ^[b]unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power.*
- The enemy is no longer hiding but acting in plain sight.
 - Crime, decadent behavior, rejection of truth
 - Push of transgender ideology
 - Olympics opening ceremony
 - Illegal immigration resulting in rampant, unprosecuted crime
 - Christians being targeted
 - "FACE" act prosecutions; pro-life protestors doing time for praying
 - "Hate speech" prosecutions; England coming after those who quote the Bible
 - Church vandalism on the rise in this country and the globe
- How are we supposed to respond?
 - Should we expect the unsaved to act saved?
 - Are we too concerned about what "they" are doing and not focused enough on our own walk?
 - Deuteronomy 11:16 - *Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them.*
 - 1 Corinthians 10:13 - *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man.*
 - Maybe we need to spend less time chasing demons and more time pursuing personal holiness?
 - We push back the darkness by shining the light, but we can't do that if the light we reflect is dim. Luke 11:34-35 - *The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore, take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness.*
 - The question is, are we preoccupied with Jesus, or preoccupied with the fight? It's a daily challenge to keep our focus where it needs to be.

Flee These Things – Godly Living Starts With Running Away

- “Flee” (Strong’s 5343): *pheuge* = escape or shun (Webster’s – to avoid deliberately and especially habitually)
- What are we to flee from? 1 Timothy 6:6-10 - *Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*
- Being content is a great place, but our desires can kick in quickly and lead to lust.
 - No better example of this than the fall of man, found in Genesis 3:6 - *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.* Talk about being pierced through with many sorrows!
 - 1 John 2:16 - *For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.*
 - 2 Timothy 2:22a – *Flee also youthful lusts.*
 - “Lust” (Strong’s 1939): *epithymias* (same word as desire) = eagerness for; a longing (Webster’s – a craving). It’s wanting (craving) more than what God has given us.
 - Psalm 37:4 - *Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.* The more you delight yourself in Lord, the more your desires (cravings) will conform to His will.
 - Galatians 5:16 - *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* The more you move towards something, the more time you spend investing in it, the stronger the pull for it will be and the less you’re drawn to something else. It’s like a change in appetite.
 - Consider the contrast between Joseph (Genesis 39) and King David (2 Samuel 11).
 - Joseph fled temptation and God blessed him and his family.
 - King David didn’t flee, and it led to a curse.

Hot Pursuit – Godly Living Requires that we Chase Perfection, the Character of Jesus Christ

- Matthew 5:48 - *Therefore, you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*
- “Pursue” (Strong’s 1377): *diōke* = to persecute (Webster’s – to annoy with persistent or urgent approaches). We are to go after “perfection” in the same way that the widow kept approaching the judge in Jesus’s parable from Luke 18:1-5.
- Colossians 3:2 - *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*
- Philippians 2:5 (NLT) - *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*
 - Righteousness (Strong’s 2150): *dikaioynēn* = justification (Webster’s - acting in accord with divine or moral law). It’s all about having “right thinking.”

- Proverbs 15:9 - *The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But He loves him who follows righteousness.*
 - Matthew 6:33 - *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*
 - Righteousness, or being right before God, however, is not something we can attain on our own. 2 Corinthians 5:21 - *For [God] made [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
- Godliness (Strong's 2150): *eusebeian* = piety; synonymous with holiness (to be sanctified or set apart).
 - 1 Peter 2:9 - *But [Christians] are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*
 - 1 Timothy 4:7-8 - *But reject profane and old wives' fables and exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*
 - We are to reject the lies and enticements around us and make choices that honor God and reflect His glory.
 - 2 Peter 1:3 - *His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.*
- Faith (Strong's 4102): *pistin* = belief, trust, confidence
 - Hebrews 11:1,6 – *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*
 - Jeremiah 29:13 - *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*
 - Ephesians 2:8-9 - *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Faith itself is a gift!*
 - You will act on your faith. What you truly believe will show itself in your everyday life.
- Love (Strong's 26): *agapé* = benevolent affection (i.e., the love that God has for us)
 - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
 - John 13:34-35 - *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*
 - John 15:13 - *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. Jesus laid down His life to save all would accept Him.*

- 1 John 3:18 - *My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*
- Patience (Strong's 5281): *hupomoné* = endurance, steadfastness, constancy
 - Galatians 5:22 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.*
 - Romans 12:12 (NIV) - Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
 - Look at 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 again to see how closely love and patience are connected: *Love suffers long; bears all things; endures all things.*
 - Patience is the driving force behind holding our tongues when we really want to lash out. James 1:19 - *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*
- Gentleness (Strong's 4240): *prautés* = mildness; synonymous with humility
 - Matthew 11:29 - *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*
 - Philippians 2:3-4 - *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*
 - James 4:10 - *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*
 - 1 Peter 5:6 - *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.*
 - Pursuing Christ-like humility will not only bring yourself and others into a deeper walk with God, but it will prepare you for greater works in His kingdom.

Fight the Good Fight – Godly Living Requires Putting Our Faith to Work

- Fight (Strong's 75): *agónizomai* = to struggle; we get the word "agonize." We are to agonize for the lost around us.
- Remember what the church, the body of Christ, is here for. Matthew 28:19 - *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*
- James 2:26 - *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*
 - We must put action to our faith!
 - Get involved with your church and your community.
 - Be the hands and feet of Jesus through serving and giving of your time, talents, and treasures.
 - Matthew 5:16 - *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*
- Keep pressing on! Philippians 3:13b-14 - *One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*
- Don't try fighting in your own strength, but in God's! Ephesians 6:10-11,16 - *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you*

may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

- There will be arrows. Don't go in without protection!

Conclusion: Finish the Race!

- At the end of his life, the Apostle Paul wrote these words in 2 Timothy 4:7-8 - *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*
 - Is there a crown of righteousness laid up on Heaven for you? There is if you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior.
 - Romans 3:10 - *As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one."*
 - Romans 10:9 - *If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*
 - Acts 16:31 - *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.*
- The world and the culture may be looking darker, but Christians need not fear. We can live godly in these last days by holding onto Jesus, that author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:12), and by not giving up.
 - Galatians 6:9 - *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*
- Fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith! One day soon you will hear, *"Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord."* (Matthew 25:23)