

The Testimony of a Fighter

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Text: II Timothy 4:6-8

Introduction:

Have you ever heard someone say, “there goes a fighter.”? Some people are known as fighters. I have heard doctors and nurses say this about certain patients. A fighter is characterized, no matter what the circumstance, as someone who will not give up.

Courage is not limited to the battlefield or the Indianapolis 500 or bravely catching a thief in your house. The real tests of courage are much deeper and much quieter. They are the inner tests, like remaining faithful when nobody's looking, like enduring pain when the room is empty, like standing alone when you're misunderstood.
--Charles R. Swindoll
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Paul was such a man; he was a fighter. Let's look at a few of his “statements” that show us his testimony.

- I. I have fought a good fight.
 - A. Paul had fought a good fight against sin. Since Christ had blinded him and then healed him, he had not stopped fighting against sin.
 - B. Paul had fought against satan and everything that he represents. He had fought off fear and depression as satan had tried to destroy him.
 - C. He had fought against his self-will. He had successfully brought his body and spirit under subjection to Christ. He had defeated his desires of the flesh to receive the desires of Christ. He said I have given up everything that I may win Christ.

II. I have finished the race.

- A. Paul had run the race for Christ by staying fit. He exercised his godliness everyday. He allowed the Holy Ghost to move in his life everyday.
- B. He had run a focused race. He kept his eyes upon Christ and would not remove them.
- C. He had also stayed true to the course. He did not run someone else's race, he ran his own. He obeys Christ unto the end.

III. I have kept the faith.

- A. Paul was saying, I have not lowered my standards. I still believe in holiness and that it is holiness or hell.
- B. He was making the statement of faith. There is no other God, religion, belief or teaching that a man can put his trust in. Paul said that there is no other foundation that can be laid outside of Jesus.
- C. Paul was simply saying that he has not trusted in another way. Christ is the only door. He is the only authority. I have kept my faith. Eagle and the rock, the eagle never changes his rock.

Conclusion:

Endurance is the key to success. Paul fought, finished, and kept the things God gave him. Paul makes one final statement in this text; he says, "Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness." Then he shifts focus and says that there will also be one waiting for you if you fight and stay faithful.

g It probably wouldn't work, but somebody ought to start a movement back to the basics. And again, it might be just novel enough to not only catch on, but to flourish.

How long has it been since you walked into a store without seeing "New" or "Improved" written on every bottle? And toothpaste? There's a new ingredient added every week. If you don't have FL-7, Amalgam-58, ammoniate, fluoride, chlorophyll, etc., your teeth are sure to fall out before you finish reading the label. Regardless of how faithful you have been in brushing your teeth in the past, that doesn't count if you have missed out on the latest ingredient.

It's a wonder people ever got their clothes clean in the past. Just think of it! They actually used non-miraculous soap, and often with "non-purified" water. What a world!

Do you recall what happened to Coca Cola when they wasted multi-millions of dollars bringing out the "New" Coke? Improvement went too far and irate customers wouldn't drink the new stuff. Coca Cola almost immediately decided the old drink wasn't so bad after all. This time they returned to the old formula, but gave it a new name (Classic). What a world!

Given the state of our times, it's hardly any wonder that there are countless preachers out trying to sell a "new" and "improved" Christianity. Let us pray that it will have the same success Coca Cola enjoyed.

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At the end of our road we too will need to be able to say some "Statements." Will they be like Paul's who said, "I have" fought a good fight, finished my course and kept the faith.

References

May, Steve (1999) 1001 Contemporary Illustrations. Raleigh, North Carolina: Heaven Word Inc.