

THE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP

1 Timothy 1:18-20

LAW #3 To Be a Leader You've Got to Be Willing to Fight

Joe White is of Camp Kanakuk fame. He's written quite a number of books. In his book, *Over the Edge and Back* he writes of 40 teenage kids who have been right on the brink of losing it all. And the miracles and difference that Christ, made in their lives. He tells this little story that really sets the stage for today's study.

Early on a quiet Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, on a Navy base in a harbor on a small island in the Pacific, a young soldier looked carefully at the radar screen. He saw dots. Hundreds of dots. He rushed to his presiding officer. The officer brushed it off: "Don't worry; those are just planes coming in from California." Forty minutes later, Pearl Harbor went up in flames. We lost eight big battleships, hundreds of airplanes, and 2,400 sailors and soldiers—all because one lieutenant was lackadaisical in the face of a real threat of war.

Our junior high, high school, and college friends are fighting hard. It's a Pearl Harbor disaster that keeps repeating itself, and we sit at the radar screen (now a 25-inch, full-color TV set) and see dots. Everywhere.

- **Every 9 seconds in North America, a teenager engages in sex.**
- **Every 23 seconds, one becomes pregnant.**
- **Every 54 seconds, one has an abortion.**
- **Every 96 seconds, a teenager contracts a sexually transmitted disease.**
- **Every 14 months, the number of teenagers with AIDS doubles.**
- **Nine out of ten high school seniors have used alcohol.**
- **Four million kids are full-blown alcoholics.**
- **Each year, one of every eight teenagers tries to kill himself.**

You know, this message today is not going to be the message that you would think is popular. It's not popular because it runs contrary to the culture of the United States of America. Law #3 says that if you're going to lead you're going to fight.

We are in all out war! We have been in war for a long time but it's against an unseen foe.

The only problem is now we can see it and it's all about us.

1 Peter 5:8-9

“Be sober, be vigilant. Your adversary, the devil, is a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren that are in the world.”

Our principal today, If you're going to lead, you're in for a fight. And it's only going to intensify in these days in which we live.

Law #1 of Leadership is:

A Statement of Goal is Essential in Leadership.

Law #2 is:

Never Get Over the Privilege of Your Position.

It's Pride vs. Humility.

Am I a humble, broken instrument for God to use in a position of leadership?

Now Law #3 is this:

“To Be a Leader You’ve Got to Be Willing to Fight.”

Helen Keller said,

“Life is either a daring adventure or it’s a nothing.”

Now I know what you’re thinking. You’ve come to the study today with kind of a devious thought. You looked at the handout and you thought, *“Three verses. We’re going to get out early.”* Perish the thought !

Let’s look at verse 18:

v.18 *“This charge I am entrusting to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies that were made long ago concerning you, in order that with their aid you may fight the good fight (put up a splendid fight).”*

Now, out of the 3 verses, this is the key.

Paul has turned, after he sang that great doxology in verse 17, back to Timothy. He had just shared his personal testimony. He was honest. He was transparent. He was humble in sharing all that God had done in changing his life.

Now, he's getting ready to fade out of the picture and he knows he's getting older. And so, he's continuing the *charge* to young Timothy.

The *charge* basically is this, if you've forgotten from our first study, Paul is turning over the ministry of the strategic church at Ephesus. He's been there for 3 years, it's his greatest ministry, so it's no small charge for young Timothy.

Now I want to review a few of these words for just a minute from the Greek text, so you can kind of put some meat on this.

First of all he says, "*This charge.*" That word "*charge*" is a military word. It's a word which is an urgent command, handed down from the superior officer to the soldiers. So it's Commander Paul giving a *charge*, a command, to young Timothy that will affect his future.

The word can be translated “*order*.” It can be translated “*precept*” or “*advice*.” But here we take it as a military command.

Notice the next phrase:

“This charge I am entrusting”

That little word “*entrusting*” refers to giving something, that’s precious to you, to someone else. Now we do that with people we trust. We may share our intimate heart because we know, they’re going to guard it. They’re going to protect it. We may share special possessions with special people. We *entrust* that to them.

For instance, Paul uses this word in 2 Timothy 1:12 when he says:

“This is the reason I suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep (same word) what I have committed to Him until that Day.” I’m entrusting it to Him.

2 Timothy 2:2

Paul says to Timothy:

“And the things which you’ve heard from me in the presence of many witnesses (what am I doing?) These things entrust to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

In other words, “The sacred trust of the Gospel is so special. Be sure you pass it on to others before you get through.”

v.18a “This charge I’m entrusting to you, Timothy, my son.”

Now it’s unusual that Paul would actually use Timothy’s name in this situation. But there’s a reason for that.

Timothy is made up from 2 Greek words, “Tima” which means honor and “Theos” which means God.

Isn’t that significant?

v.18a “This charge I’m entrusting to you, Timothy, my son.”

If I could put it in layman’s terminology,

“Timothy, live up your name.” Be an honor to God.

Be a tribute to Him. “My son.” And why? “In accordance with the prophecies that were made long ago concerning you.”

Have you ever, as you've grown up and gotten older, had special people in your life say to you, "*You know, you're really special. And because you are special, I expect some really great things are going to happen through you and that God is going to use you.*" Have you had someone share something like that?

I think when Timothy was ordained in Listra, there were some special prophecies that were made about his future and his ministry. And Paul says, "*call to remembrance all the things that people said who believed in you.*"

***"Now as you launch into the warfare of your greatest opportunity in taking this ministry in Ephesus, I am charging you and entrusting you Timothy, my son, in accordance with the things that were made long ago about you, it's these things to encourage you,"* and what's the purpose?**

(Last phrase, key phrase to the whole study)

"in order that with their aid you might fight the good fight (or put up a splendid fight.)"

John 16:33 is the last verse that is recorded of Christ's statement to the men before he went into the garden and prayed that high priestly prayer in John 17.

And this is what He says as He bids His men farewell.

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. But in the world you're going to have tribulation, be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

You can count on it; life is going to be a battle all the way to the barn. And you cannot assume a place of leadership in the Christian community without expecting that you are going to face warfare!

And it's going to be a fight on many fronts.

Accept it. It's there!

Swindoll said it well:

“It's the lonely whine of the top dog.”

There are 4 things that are true about a Christian in leadership, that runs you counter, to the culture.

#1: You are filled with compassion. That's genuine.

Produced by the Spirit of God, for lost and dying men and women.

#2: You have got personal convictions that have been forged by the Holy Spirit.

Daniel purposed in his heart that he wouldn't defile himself with the king's meat.

#3: You're character is changing and you're becoming Christ like and you're dancing to a different drummer.

and #4: You've got enough courage to stand up for what you believe and people think you're crazy.

What does the world think about you as a believer the minute those 4 things are true?

#1: They doubt your compassion, that you really do love them and you care.

#2: What about your convictions? Well, they're going to question those. *"Oh, man, what makes you so cool? Why do you believe that garbage? You know, it's just almost ridiculous."*

#3: And then your character, they are suspicious of every good thing you do, because they think, there's an ulterior motive or some selfish reason that you're doing this. Rather than your personal honesty and integrity and that you simply want to please the Lord.

#4: The next one is courage. They're saying, *"You're crazy to throw your life on the line for something like that and to be so courageous and to take such a stand."*

Now wonder we're at war.

Ephesians 6:10-17 prepares us for that.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand. Don't go out in the morning undressed or the fiery darts of the wicked one are going to nail you unless the shield of faith is there to quench it. It's indeed going to happen."

2 Timothy 2:3-4

“Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier.”

Since we’re talking about this business of fighting in the war, I think it’s time to go back and focus on the Scriptures for just a minute and see where the word *fight* occurs. It’s very interesting. Most of the time in the Old Testament every time you see a fight, it is the children of Israel dependant upon the Lord, to fight for them.

Exodus 14:14

“The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”
That’s when Pharoah is bringing his forces up from the South and the Red Sea is in front of them.
And God delivers!

1 Samuel 17:47

David in the valley of Elah got a string and 5 smooth stones and he says:
“The battle is the Lord’s.”

2 Chronicles 20:17

“You will not have to fight in this battle, Jehoshaphat, God is going to deliver you from all of your enemies.”

2 Chronicles 32:8

King Hezekiah says:

“With him is the arm of the flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.”

At the lowest time of Nehemiah’s life in Nehemiah 4:20, when the wall is half built and everybody’s griping and complaining over his leadership and all the hardship, what does he say?

“Our God will fight for us!”

And so, the Old Testament is filled with campaign after campaign. But so is the New Testament. And to be a leader you’re going to get in the war and you’re going to fight.

Listen to 1 Timothy 6:12

“Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of eternal life to which you were called.”

What do you want to hear, more than anything, else when you die? What do you want to be able to say, to the people, you're saying goodbye to? The very same thing Paul said,

2 Timothy 4:7 *"I fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;"*

Listen to what Dan Allender said in his book called, *Bold Love.*

"It is imperative to know that a great deal of the harm that will come our way in the war against the Evil One will be at the hands of fellow Christians—so-called 'friendly fire.'

In fact, I would suggest that it is unusual for those in ministry to be attacked by the 'unbeliever.' The typical agent of war will be those who share the name of Christ and who direct their missiles against those who are on the same side."

I don't know if I agree with him about that.

However you're going to get it, from both sides so you have to plan on friendly fire.

Bill McCartney, the founder of Promise Keepers and former head football coach of the Colorado Buffaloes, published a book called, *What Makes a Man?*

And this story is in it. This is the kind of thing I'm talking about, when it's men who are willing to give of themselves in leadership.

Second Lt. Bobo was already over the halfway point going home from ten months of combat duty in Vietnam. He was a platoon leader in I Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines. Often leading missions in the "bush," and frequently in the midst of a firefight, he had earned his men's respect. But on March 30, 1967, he would earn the nation's highest honor.

Just barely twenty-four, Bobo ducked his head and jumped out of the helicopter when it touched the ground. His objective was Hill 70, in Quang Tri Province, from which his platoon was to set up an ambush site.

For a short time, they struggled through the elephant grass toward their position without incident. But what they were experiencing was the calm before a deadly storm. A large force of front line NVA regulars had massed to pull off their own ambush. Lt. Bobo's men were to walk right into it.

Their lead elements saw several NVA soldiers and opened fire. But all that accomplished was to pinpoint their own position and signal the enemy to open fire.

In pre-sighted killing zones, the hidden NVA poured machine gun and mortar fire onto the men on Hill 70. Many of them died before ever firing a return shot in that first firestorm of bullets.

Lt. Bobo shouted order about the din of the battle, positioning his troops to return fire and calling the air support. Murderous fire was coming from several machine gun emplacements that were ripping his men to pieces. When a mortar round knocked out a Marine rocket team, Lt. Bobo ran forward and took over the position. He directed the firing of round after round at the enemy strongholds, with bullets shredding the ground all around him.

He was firing when a mortar shell landed nearby, showered him with shrapnel and blowing off the lower part of his right leg. First Sergeant Raymond Rogers told him to crawl back but Lt. Bobo refused.

“Just tie the leg off now and give me all the shotgun ammo you’ve got. Then help me to the ridge.” The sergeant did what he was commanded and pulled a web belt tightly around the commanding officer’s leg in a tourniquet.

Bobo had judged correctly what was to happen next. After the first devastating machine gun and mortar attack, the enemy were preparing for mass ground assault to overrun the rest of his troops.

“Pull back,” Bobo shouted. “Everybody back,” he ordered his men—all of them—back down the hill. And as Sergeant Rogers helped gather the men, a machine-gun toting NVA soldier suddenly stood over him, wounding Rogers and several others.

But “Boom!” blazed Bobo’s shotgun, spinning the enemy soldier around and knocking him to the ground.

“Get back,” he yelled. “Get back.”

Bobo raised to a half-sitting position, jamming his wounded leg into the ground to try to stop the flow of blood. As the NVA charged down the hill, Bobo met the brunt of the attack. His men heard the boom, boom, boom of his shotgun as the enemy swarmed over the hill until finally his gun fell silent.

Lt. Bobo had faced the brunt of their charge and brought the rest of his men the needed time to pull back to a more defensible position, but at the cost of his own life.

When reinforcements arrived, the Marines fought their way back up the hill. There they found their commander. Fallen, but not forgotten.

For his sacrificial courage and extreme heroism, his family received our nation's highest honor—the Congressional Medal of Honor. Lt. Bobo was a man who was willing to “stay put,” no matter what the cost.

We share this story because we need more men like it. Particularly today, when there is such a battle raging over the lives and hearts of families. The ultimate mark of a man is that he is willing to “stay put” when the odds aren't good, rather than turning and running from his wife and his children, when the times get tough, and the cost may be high.

Now, I'd like to ask you a question.

What does it take to stop you? Somebody's criticism?

Somebody being mad?

You want to kick a stump and quit.

You tell me what it takes to stop you and I'll tell you what kind of an impact you're going to make, in fighting the war, and following this 3rd law of leadership.

Timothy put up a splendid fight!

He didn't quit in Ephesus. That's our 3rd law of leadership!

Now verse 19.

v.19 "holding faith and good conscience, which some, having rejected (repudiated), have suffered shipwreck in their faith."

What does it mean, "*holding faith and a good conscience.*"

While you're fighting, there are two things, that are going to get you through the war.

#1: *Holding on to your faith*

and

#2: *Having a good conscience as to your attitude and relationship to God.*

You put those two things together and you're putting yourself, in a place of victory.

What does it mean by "*holding faith*?"

It means that you are trusting God, in these unexplainable circumstances and you're "*holding onto your faith*" in it. It's like holding the hill, holding the ground.

In war, the shield of faith is in place to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, that are coming at you from every direction.

And a "*good conscience*" which of course, is the second part of it.

Martin Luther, with sweaty palms and legs trembling said: "*Unless I'm convinced by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot, I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise.*"

He stands with faith and a good conscience.

Here's an editorial from The Dallas Morning News called "Apology Due?"

While I realize the diversity of thought, both secular and theological, which abounds among Baptists in general, and Southern Baptists in particular, I wonder if we Baptists owe society an apology for the leadership we have furnished by way of Baptists who have served and will serve as elected officials.

A roll call of a recent products of Baptist churches or Baptist institutions, and their contributions to our society, goes somewhat like this: President Jimmy Carter (a Southern Baptist) who emasculated our national defense and economy; former Gov. Mark White (a Southern Baptist) who gave Texas pari-mutual gambling; Gov. Ann Richards (a Baylor grad) who gave Texans a lottery; former Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox (a Baptist) who actively opposed the Texas sodomy law; and former President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore (Southern Baptists) who both support abortion and homosexual rights.

What I fear is that the world will judge the Baptists by the actions and principles, or lack thereof, of these few people.

Now the question is this: Each one of these politicians had a Baptist heritage that we know is founded in the Scripture! What is it about assuming a place of leadership that you surrender what you believe in? And what you have been taught? That's my question! It doesn't matter whether they're Baptist or not. The question is: What caused them to now be able to, with courage, stand for their convictions in a position of leadership?

That's all I'm asking. I'll tell you what it is.

It's pressure and people and politics. And they've swayed the leaders. And they've nullified that cutting edge that is the mark of every man of integrity.

Somerset Maugham has written a fascinating short story entitled "Rain." In it a ship is forced by continual driving rain to remain docked in a small native village for about two weeks. The passengers take lodging at a boarding house. And one of the men is Pastor Davidson, a missionary, Who takes it upon himself to convert the local prostitute who has a room at the house.

At the end of the story there is a shocking twist. When the boat is finally ready to leave, Pastor Davidson can't be found. Even his wife has no idea where he might be. Then they hear the report that a local native has found a body on the beach. It was Davidson. He had cut his own throat with a razor. It is clear what has happened. The prostitute converted the minister.

And I think that's what's happening to many of our prominent leaders. They're getting fed to the satanic system. And they yield to the pressure, it's so subtle, it's like a frog sitting in a kettle of water, you turn it up slowly, you can hardly tell what's happening but one of these days you wake up and you realize you're in a war and you've lost a whole lot at it! We're in a war and we've lost a lot!

We have got guys who should be *holding faith and a good conscience* because of their background and they're surrendering it. Yielding it to the pressure of people around them, who don't believe those things.

v.19a *"Holding faith and a good conscience, which some, having rejected or repudiated."*

Do you know what that word is?

That's kicking against the goads.

You know those guys, with that tremendous heritage of the teaching of the Scripture, have a conscience that's kicking their goads.

Now granted, you can say No, to your conscience so much, that, as 1 Timothy 4:2 says:

"It is seared like a hot iron."

And you no longer listen to it. You deny it exists. But when you kick against it and you repudiate and you resist it, then it eventually no longer functions.

Somebody said: *"Faith is the pure liquid that is put into the glass of a good conscience."*

Back to verse 19b.

"Some have suffered shipwreck in their faith."

How do you suffer shipwreck?

It can be doctrinal.

You get off on some side-track doctrinally.

It can be deception. You've been deceived by the devil.

It can be disqualification because of disobedience and sin.

It can be deeds that are displeasing to the Lord and yet with a violated conscience you don't deal with those things in your life.

It could be desires that have enslaved you and gotten out of hand that can cause you to be shipwrecked.

Or it can be just lack of discipline. That you've let your lack of discipline destroy the times you should have had with the Lord.

The roll call in the Bible is pretty long of some of these guys who have experienced, "*shipwreck in their faith.*"

There's Peter, John Mark, Demas, Diotrephes, David, Solomon, Samson, Gideon, Saul-and the list goes on-of men who at one time or another, ran into the rocks, and were shipwrecked.

Charles Haden Spurgeon said:

“Happy are we because we have God’s Word to guide us. What is the mariner without his compass? And what is the Christian without his Bible? This is the unerring chart, the map which every shoal is described and all the channels from the quick sands of destruction to the haven of salvation are mapped and marked to the One who knows all the way.”

Life is tough, friends. And without Jesus Christ it’s impossible.

And for people who do not have Christ it’s without hope.

Verse 20

v.20 “Among whom are Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, in order that they might be taught (or disciplined) not to be blaspheming (or speaking profanely).”

Now that’s a troublesome phrase, “*turned over to Satan.*”

But it's used one other place: 1 Corinthians 5.

Remember when that guy is living in open sin and Paul says,

“I turned him over to Satan.”

All that means is that they have been excommunicated from the fellowship of the church, until they deal in repentance, with the sin in their life.

See the recovery?

v.20b *“That they might be taught not to be blaspheming”* so when they're taught, they can be restored.

All discipline is an exercise in restoration.

It's to bring the person back.

And these two men have suffered a shipwreck and they're blaspheming God, in the midst of it and Paul says,

***“I just turn them over to the world.”* They're excommunicated from the fellowship of the believers, for a period of time. And they're disciplined until they deal with that matter. And then they can be brought back in the fellowship.**

Now it's unpopular isn't it? The world reeks havoc on us, when we take a stand like this.

In Colson's book, *The Body* he says:

In 1989, the bishop of San Diego refused the sacraments to a pro-choice political candidate who openly defied church teaching. The bishop was assaulted by the press and political leaders, and the candidate was elected. To this, the cleric responded calmly and correctly: "No popular vote or public opinion can change in any way the divine law that directs and guides human kind.

I'll conclude today's study with a story from George McDaniel Cole book called, *To the End of the Race* because I think it says real well, what I'm trying to say, in this 3rd law of leadership.

You've got to be willing to fight.

My father's best "Lead Dog" was named Scrap. Scrap could run with Morgan in any race. He had the same fine qualities of leadership that Morgan had. Scrap knew when to give voice. He knew the right kind of game and he knew that which was not. He never quit a race. He was faithful and loyal to his master. Scrap could follow just as well as he could lead.

Scrap did a good job in every race. He gave his all. On one occasion when the race was in full swing, Scrap was trailing Morgan. Some of the hunters began to joke my father about it, so he rode up close to the pack and he called out to his, "Go on, Scrap, go on!" While Scrap was doing a good job, he was not doing his best and his master knew it. When Scrap heard his master's voice, he began to gain on Morgan, and in a little while, he led the pack.

This particular race was a wolf race. Now wolves run in pairs. Incidentally, when a wolf mates, he mates for life. This is the only animal which has this characteristic. Wolves are smart. One wolf will take the pack on a long run, away from the den. When he begins to tire, he circles back toward home. The mate has been anxiously waiting, and when the husband comes home, the "wife-mate" crosses the trail and leads the pack away from the den, and so both wolves escape.

On this occasion, old Scrap was all alone with a fresh wolf. As tired as Scrap was, had he caught the wolf, the wolf would have killed him. But, in the midst of it all, there was complete abandonment of self. Scrap was thinking only of the race and his master.

When the other dogs had come in from the field, and the race was over, Scrap was still gone. Daddy went searching for his dog and could not find him. Scrap did not answer when Daddy blew his horn.

A good dog can find his way home. Scrap finally came home. Early in the morning my father went out and found his dog almost dead. Scrap had run until he was so stiff he couldn't stand. He'd worn all the pads off the bottom of his feet. His feet were all bloody and strutted and swollen. His eyes were matted closed. He had cut himself on the briars in the forest. He could barely swish his tail in the sand.

At that time, my mother was living and my daddy called her to his side. As he stood beside his dog he said to his wife, "Sweetheart, I want to dedicate my life to the Lord anew today. The other day when Scrap was trailing old Morgan, he was doing a good job—but not his best. And when he heard his master's voice telling him to 'go on' he went until he could go no more."

Then my father said, “I have never gone for my master until I was bruised and torn, or until I was so tired I could not stand. I want Him to use me from this moment on for the rest of my life.”

When Francis Assisi laid dying, he turned to his men and he said, “Let us begin, my brothers, for up to now we have done but little.”

Now there are 10 lessons that come out of this study.

Lesson #1: Paul is entrusting Timothy with the ministry in Ephesus.

#2: Timothy is Paul’s spiritual son by conversion.

#3: To be a leader you’ve got to be willing to fight.

#4: In the battle, Paul is focusing on faith and a good conscience.

#5: Have you experienced a shipwreck in your faith?

#6: Satan is a master of steering us off course and onto the rocks.

#7: A good conscience is necessary for sound doctrine.

#8: Are you in the process of being disciplined by your heavenly Father?

#9: Do you know your mission, and are you fighting a good fight?

#10: To make good progress in the Christian life one must be a good soldier as well as a good sailor.

STUDIES IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

PART I — 1 TIMOTHY 1-3

"The Laws of Leadership"

LAW NUMBER THREE - To Be a Leader You've Got to Be Willing to Fight

1 Timothy 1:18-20

Key verse 1:18

Notes

v. 18 This charge I am entrusting to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies that were made long ago concerning you, in order that with their aid you may fight the good fight (put up a splendid fight),

v. 19 holding faith and a good conscience, which some, having rejected (repudiated), have suffered shipwreck in their faith.

v. 20 Among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, in order that they might be taught (disciplined) not to be blaspheming (speak profanely).

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read 1 Timothy 1:18-20 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. What is Paul entrusting to Timothy in verse 18?**
- 3. What is Timothy charged to do in verse 18?**
- 4. What two things is Timothy to be holding to in verse 19?**
- 5. What has happened to those who have rejected "faith and a good conscience," according to verse 19?**
- 6. Who are two men who have made "shipwreck" of their faith, according to verse 20?**
- 7. What action has Paul taken against these two men, according to verse 20?**
- 8. Why did he turn them over to Satan, according to verse 20?**