



TODD LEVIN MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

A monthly teaching publication to our partners and friends

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Dear Friends and Partners,

You are in a race – it’s a spiritual one – but still a race. At the end of this race is laid up for you a crown of righteousness. (**II Timothy 4:8**) This isn’t a fifty-yard-dash, but a marathon. It’s not an “overnighter” but the race of a lifetime! You friend are in it for the long haul. As in any race, there will be “hurdles” and “obstacles” that we all must overcome. The Apostle Paul spoke of this race that Christians are in and encouraged the saints to “*run with patience*” this race that is set before us. (**Hebrews 12:1**) It is a **decision**, not a feeling, that each of us have to make because there will come challenges and other “contenders” in the race along side of you. Like in any race, if you take your eyes off the goal, then things may not turn out as you expected. In life there will appear many distractions. Jesus referred to some in Mark chapter four – “*lust of the eyes, the deceitfulness of wealth and the cares of this world.*” We **must** choose wisely at what we give our attention to. We **must** learn to follow our heart because our convictions define who we are. Some have given their attention to money which results in pursuing things instead of pursuing God. Yet others like David have a heart after God. And even though distractions came and satan tempted David, yet at the end of the day when all the dust settled, His heart still was and always had been after the Lord. If we are not careful and focused on the goal – **JESUS** - we could very easily end up sidetracked and distracted with everything that’s going on around us. When this happens, we will not turn up where we originally wanted to be.

One hurdle we all have to face is fatigue. When fatigue tries to grip you, you just may happen to glance down and realize that there are certain weights strapped to your shoes, which can and should be removed. By casting them aside, it’s as though a breath of fresh air comes your way. You have a “spring” in your step and you’re off and running again. For those of you runners, you know what I’m talking about. With each breath there comes a sense of freedom and vigor. You’re taking it all in; enjoying the peace and serenity that comes from being out in the open, like a pilot who has the sky as his “playground” or the jogger who runs along the beach or through a beautiful countryside. With the iPod at your side and something edifying to listen to, you almost wish it wouldn’t end. But after a while, reality kicks in and either your strength is exhausted or you must tend to other business. In any case, there’s always tomorrow...another opportunity and the beginning of a new day.

Let’s look at another analogy that we have given to us in God’s word. This is revealed in the book of Jude. In this letter we are reminded too that in serving the Lord there will be opportunities where your faith is challenged.

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

Jude 1:3 (KJV)

Here we see the Apostle Jude exhorting his readers to *“earnestly contend for the faith.”* Or as the Greek implies, *“to struggle for the faith.”* Simply put, this calls for a decision on our side. At that time, the believers were facing false teachers who were “ungodly” and who were *“turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (vs. 4) You may recall that the Apostle Paul in writing to Timothy stated that Hymenaeus and Alexander ended up spiritually shipwrecked because they did not *“hold on to faith.”* (I Timothy 1:18,19) In chapter four of I Timothy he added that in the last days many would *“depart from the faith.”* This should never be! Here’s what it boils down to – because you are in a “spiritual race” serving the Lord, following His plan for your life, then your faith will be challenged. At the end of the day, what keeps you in the race is your faith in God, your faith in His word of promise and your faith in that He truly does have a plan for your life with a destination in mind for. Since faith is such a crucial part of the “race of your life,” then yes, opposition will come. Upon every waking moment of the day, the enemy is hoping to knock you out of the race. And here’s where it becomes interesting. Read with me Ephesians 6:12...

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Ephesians 6:12 (KJV)

My battle is **not** with man that I can see, but rather with an enemy whom I cannot see. That being said, how can I fight or stand against an enemy that I cannot see? The answer is simple – only through faith.

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

I Timothy 6:12 (KJV)

The reason it’s referred to as a good fight is because **you** are a **winner** in Christ Jesus and **more than** a conqueror! (**Romans 8:37**) Let me remind you once again that the only way to stand against an enemy who you cannot see is through faith and since it’s **“through faith”** then mark it down because your faith will be tried.

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”

James 1:2,3 (KJV)

The only thing that stands between the enemy dominating you or you dominating him is your faith. You’re not on trial, your faith is. It was your faith in the cross that saved you and delivered you out of darkness and into the light and it’s your faith that keeps you in the light. Realize the transformation that took place on the inside of you. One minute, you were in the hands of the enemy having served him all these years under his control, dominating you and

expressing himself by and through your actions and lifestyle. The next minute he is served an eviction notice when you made a decision to follow the Lord and invite Jesus into your life; giving Him express permission to have His way in you. You are a vessel. As a vessel, you are either filled with the Holy Spirit to do His will allowing Him to express His nature and character through you; or you are a vessel filled with darkness, dominated by the prince of darkness and available to do his will. Through you the enemy also expresses his character and nature on this earth. Just look around, things are quite in a mess!

Do you remember what happened to Jesus out in the wilderness when He was praying and fasting for 40 days? Along came the tempter and offered Jesus a deal. ***“If you bow down and worship me, I will give you all the kingdoms on the world.”*** (Matthew 4:8) What was satan after? A body; a vessel that he could fill and occupy and express himself through.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

Romans 6:16 (KJV)

This is what is happening today especially with our young people who are the future of tomorrow. The enemy has launched a spiritual attack in an effort to lure them into his control. I'm not referring to unbelievers – they're already in the arms of the wicked one. I'm referring to the Joshua's of tomorrow. Those who are living and serving God to the best that they know how. It is regrettable that so many have turned away from the Lord whom they once followed. I noticed this pattern even living in Eastern Europe for more than eight years of my life. So many teenagers and young adults too who at one time were on fire for the Lord and couldn't get “enough of God,” eventually turned their backs on Him and walked away – never to enter a church again. These were some of the same young people who stood hours on end at the outskirts of town, hitchhiking in hope of getting a lift to the next city 20-30 kilometers away where a service or crusade was being held. These are the same ones who walked hours into the dark of night in effort of making their way back home and rejoicing that they were able to enjoy His presence once again. Where are they today? What happened to their hunger and passion for the Lord? How did they get so far off base and become so cold toward God?

Let me tell you exactly what happened to them and is happening all around us. Their faith was being challenged day after day, just like yours is friend. And because of not guarding their heart where faith resides and not monitoring the company of “friends” who they spend time with, their hunger and interest in the things of God began to grow cold. God's holy written word no longer held true to their hearts. It became just another ordinary book filled with lots of stories and truths that they could not understand or comprehend. And you know what we do with something that we cannot comprehend? We lose interest in it real fast!

Now let me ask you a question today. Since faith in God and faith in His word is so vitally important and will be challenged and will be contended for, then is it strange to think that the enemy of your faith will try and undermine the very foundation on which you stand? Paul said, ***“The just shall live by faith.”*** (Romans 1:17) Satan is wanting to **strip** you of faith and he will use any and every means possible to do so: religion, circumstances, thoughts, people and fleshly

desires. He is determined to cast a shadow on the very nature and character of God. He will stop at nothing as long as he thinks he is winning.

I want to encourage you today friend, don't allow the enemy a foothold in your life, in your mind, or in your home. He's looking for avenues where he can gain entrance. Don't give him the pleasure. (**Ephesians 4:27**) Run a tight ship. Guard your heart. Stand your ground. Contend for the faith. Pray in the spirit. Read your bible. Surround yourself with those of like faith. Choose your friends wisely. Watch your confession. Remember God's goodness and thank Him every day for what He has done in your life. Empty yourself and allow Him to fill you up. His strength is made perfect when our strength is gone. Be that vessel of honor fit for the Master's use. "*When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" (Luke 18:8) When Jesus returns, will He find faith in your heart? I trust that He will friend. Stay hungry for God!

Your Friends and Partners,

Todd + Eva

In the USA: P.O. Box 826 · Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania 15012 ·
Tel/Fax 724-872-0347 · www.toddlevintoday.com
In England: Rev. Todd Levin c/o Pastors John & Joanne Taylor ·
35 Footscray Road · London SE9 2ST

