

Lesson 137 - Put Up a Good Fight

1. What are the first six words of **1 Timothy 6:12**?

EGW: "We are labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9). Christ engaged in the great work for which He lived and died. We are to be instant in season and out of season. And why? "For ye are bought with a price," and have enlisted under the banner of Prince Emmanuel. We are enlisted for labor, "not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (John 6:27). We are to work out our own salvation with fear and with trembling. We are not our own. We are bought with a price, to glorify God with our bodies and spirits, which are His. A work is to be done. There is a faithful work to do in His vineyard. And to every man is given his work. If we are privileged with the bread of life, we must work in the Lord's vineyard. A charge comes to us to deny ourselves and take up the cross and follow Christ. We are to run the race set before us with persevering earnestness. This oft requires energetic movements. We cannot be idlers. We are urged, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." . . . {UL 217.3}

2. What synonym phrase is found in the last four words of **1 Timothy 1:18**?

EGW: False prophets are described by Paul in his second letter to Timothy: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Paul warns his son in the gospel, saying, "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." {RH, April 30, 1901 par. 3}

Men oppose the truth with falsehood, and those who do not desire a knowledge of the truth listen eagerly to the fables presented to them. Their hearts are imbued with the same spirit of opposition to the truth that fills the hearts of the false teachers. They act toward God's commandment-keeping people in this time as the Jews acted when they refused to accept the truths that Christ unfolded before them. Christ presented to them the prophecies of the Old Testament, showing them that by their rejection of Him they were fulfilling these prophecies. But they continued in their evil course, and followed, to the end, the works that stand registered against them in the books of heaven, which have brought eternal infamy upon them as a nation. {RH, April 30, 1901 par. 4}

3. On what realm is this fight not taking place? **2 Corinthians 10:4**

EGW: It is the special work of Satan in these last days to take possession of the minds of youth, to corrupt the thoughts, and inflame the passions; for he knows that by so doing he can lead to impure actions, and thus all the noble faculties of the mind will become debased, and he can control them to suit his own purposes. All are free moral agents, and as such they must train their thoughts to run in the right channel. The first work of those who would reform is to purify the imagination. Our meditations should be such as will elevate the mind. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." [Philippians 4:8.] Here is a wide field in which the mind can safely range. If Satan seeks to turn it to low and sensual things, bring it back. When corrupt imaginings seek to gain possession of your mind, flee to the throne of grace, and pray for strength from heaven. By the grace of Christ it is possible for us to reject impure thoughts. Jesus will attract the mind, purify the thoughts, and cleanse the heart from every secret sin. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God; . . . casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." [2 Corinthians 10:4, 5.] {CTBH 136.1}

4. With the warfare not being carnal, who do we not fight against? **Beginning of Ephesians 6:12**

EGW: Terrible is the struggle that takes place between the forces of good and of evil in important centers where the messengers of truth are called upon to labor. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood," declares Paul, "but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." Ephesians 6:12. Till the close of time there will be a conflict between the church of God and those who are under the control of evil angels. {AA 219.1}

5. What four areas do we fight against? **Rest of Ephesians 6:12**

EGW: While Satan is constantly seeking to blind their minds to the fact, let Christians never forget that they "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places." Ephesians 6:12, margin. The inspired warning is sounding down the centuries to our time: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:11. {GC 510.1}

From the days of Adam to our own time, our great enemy has been exercising his power to oppress

and destroy. He is now preparing for his last campaign against the church. All who seek to follow Jesus will be brought into conflict with this relentless foe. The more nearly the Christian imitates the divine Pattern, the more surely will he make himself a mark for the attacks of Satan. All who are actively engaged in the cause of God, seeking to unveil the deceptions of the evil one and to present Christ before the people, will be able to join in the testimony of Paul, in which he speaks of serving the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations. {GC 510.2}

Satan assailed Christ with his fiercest and most subtle temptations, but he was repulsed in every conflict. Those battles were fought in our behalf; those victories make it possible for us to conquer. Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan. {GC 510.3}

6. What are we to lay hold on or fight for? **1 Timothy 6:12**

EGW: As God's steward, look to Him. It is He to whom you are to give account of your stewardship, not to your wife. It is God's means that you are handling. He has only lent it you a little while to prove you, to try you, to see if you will be "rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate," laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may lay hold on eternal life. God will require His own with usury. May He help you to prepare for the judgment. Let self be crucified. Let the precious graces of the Spirit live in your hearts. Turn out the world with its corrupting lust. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." If your profession is as high as heaven, and yet you are selfish and world-loving, you can have no part in the kingdom with the sanctified, the pure and holy. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If your treasure is in heaven, your heart will be there. You will talk of heaven, eternal life, the immortal crown. If you lay up your treasure on earth, you will be talking of earthly things, worrying about losses and gains. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" {2T 59.2}

7. When Paul fought the good fight, what did he declare that he kept? **2 Timothy 4:7**

EGW: Well-nigh a score of centuries have passed since Paul the aged poured out his blood as a witness for the word of God and for the testimony of Christ. No faithful hand recorded for the generations to come, the last scenes in the life of this holy man; but inspiration has preserved for us his dying testimony. Like a trumpet peal has his voice rung out through all the ages, nerving with his

own courage thousands of witnesses for Christ, and wakening in thousands of sorrow-stricken hearts the echo of his own triumphant joy: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." {3SP 442.1}

8. What is laid up for Paul as a result of the good fight? **2 Timothy 4:8**

EGW: The apostle Paul compares himself to a man running in the ancient race-course, and straining every nerve and muscle to win the prize. He did not consider his work ended while he could labor in the cause of God. He never felt that he had graduated in the school of Christ, but he ever realized the necessity of strictly guarding his appetites and passions, lest they should so strengthen themselves as to overcome spiritual zeal. He strove with all his powers against natural inclinations which called for unlawful indulgence. His own testimony was, "I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It was only when he was on trial for his life, which depended on a word or a nod from the tyrant Nero, and he was aware that his end was nigh, that he broke forth in the lofty, elevated strains of triumphant assurance: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept my faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." This crown is not a perishable chaplet of flowers, but the glorious crown of everlasting life, which awaits all who, having completed the Christian race, love the appearing of our Lord. {RH, October 18, 1881 par. 10}

9. In addition to it being laid up for Paul, who else will it be laid up for? **End of 2 Timothy 4:8**

EGW: (no comment)

10. What did Paul fight with? **1 Corinthians 9:26-27 [Answer at the beginning of verse 27.]**

EGW: Though Paul was at last confined in a Roman prison --shut away from the light and air of heaven, cut off from his active labors in the gospel, and momentarily expecting to be condemned to death--yet he did not yield to doubt or despondency. From that gloomy dungeon came his dying testimony, full of a sublime faith and courage that has inspired the hearts of saints and martyrs in all succeeding ages. His words fitly describe the results of that sanctification which we have in these

pages endeavored to set forth: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8). {SL 96.1}

11. What are we to war or fight against? **1 Peter 2:11**

EGW: "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," is the language of the apostle Peter. Many regard this warning as applicable only to the licentious; but it has a broader meaning. It guards against every injurious gratification of appetite or passion. It is a most forcible warning against the use of such stimulants and narcotics as tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, and morphine. These indulgences may well be classed among the lusts that exert a pernicious influence upon moral character. The earlier these hurtful habits are formed, the more firmly will they hold their victim in slavery to lust, and the more certainly will they lower the standard of spirituality. {CD 62.5}

12. What two things will Satan (the dragon) and all of Christianity (the woman) war against the saints over? **Revelation 12:17**

EGW: The trying experiences that came to God's people in the days of Esther, were not peculiar to that age alone. The Revelator, looking down the ages to the close of time, declared by inspiration, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." In the near future we shall see these words fulfilled, as the Protestant churches unite with the world and with the papal power against commandment-keepers. The same spirit that actuated those who persecuted the true church in ages past, will lead Protestants to pursue a similar course toward those who will maintain their loyalty to God. Church and state are now making preparations for the last great conflict. {RH, January 23, 1908 par. 20}

13. What more specifically shall we need to fight the attack against and have more faith in it? **Revelation 19:10**

EGW: It was Christ that spoke to His people through the prophets. The apostle Peter, writing to the Christian church, says that the prophets "prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:10, 11. It is

the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10. {PP 366.3}

14. How do we defeat Satan? **James 4:7**

EGW: So we may resist temptation, and force Satan to depart from us. Jesus gained the victory through submission and faith in God, and by the apostle He says to us, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." James 4:7, 8. We cannot save ourselves from the tempter's power; he has conquered humanity, and when we try to stand in our own strength, we shall become a prey to his devices; but "the name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Proverbs 18:10. Satan trembles and flees before the weakest soul who finds refuge in that mighty name. {DA 130.4}

15. How much effort may it take? **Hebrews 12:4**

EGW: The Christian life is a warfare. The Apostle Paul speaks of wrestling against principalities and powers as he fought the good fight of faith. Again, he declares, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Ah, no. Today sin is cherished and excused. The sharp sword of the Spirit, the word of God, does not cut to the soul. Has religion changed? Has Satan's enmity to God abated? A religious life once presented difficulties, and demanded self-denial. All is made very easy now. And why is this? The professed people of God have compromised with the powers of darkness. {ST, September 10, 1885 par. 13}

16. What earthly power will war against the saints? **Daniel 7:21, Revelation 17:6**

EGW: The woman, Babylon, of Revelation 17, is described as "arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness.... And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots." Says the prophet, "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." [Revelation 17:4-6.] Babylon is further declared to be "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." [Revelation 17:18.] The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom, is Rome. The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence

and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome. And no other power could be so truly declared "drunken with the blood of the saints" as that church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. Babylon is also charged with the sin of unlawful connection with "the kings of the earth." It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation. {GC88 382.2}

17. Why are we able to overcome all of the powers of antichrist? **1 John 4:3-4**

EGW: There are two classes in our world, and they are described by the apostle who says: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them." When professed Christians come to a position where they receive words of praise and flattery from the world, and feed upon them as upon a sweet morsel, they are Christians only in name. How pitiful it is to see men and women who have had an experience in the things of God fall completely into the arms of the world, to be swayed and influenced by its voice, and to be dependent upon its favors for strength and success. How manifest it is that such have become alienated from Christ. How full of self-confidence, how full of vaunting and vanity are they! How short-sighted are they in regard to spiritual things! How little discernment have they to distinguish between the value of the counsel of one who is a child of God and the counsel of one who is on the enemy's side, a child of disobedience and unbelief. {RH, July 31, 1894 par. 1}

There are only two classes in the world,--those who are obedient to Jesus Christ, who seek counsel of the Master, that they may do his will; and the children of disobedience. There are many, who, under the profession of godliness, are yet in alliance with the world, and through them souls are being deluded. The fear and love of God have not a controlling power over them. The world is their master, and they are chasing a delusive mirage. {RH, July 31, 1894 par. 2}

18. How do we beat back such evil? **Romans 12:21**

EGW: How good it would be if among all who are engaged in carrying out God's wonderful plan for the salvation of souls, there were no idlers! How much more would be accomplished if every one would say, "God holds me accountable to be wide awake, and to let my efforts speak in favor of the truth I profess to believe. I am to be a practical worker, not a day-dreamer." It is because there are so many day-dreamers that true workers have to carry a double burden. Writing by the Spirit, Paul says: "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to

another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." {RH, June 20, 1912 par. 6}

19. What do we need to be to gain the victory? **Ephesians 6:10**

EGW: When thinking on the conflict, Paul writes to his Ephesian brethren, exhorting them to "be strong," not feeble, not wavering, tossed to and fro like the waves of the sea. But in what are they to be strong? In their own might?--No. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." He says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." What is the "all" that they are to do? Is it the many good works, upon which they may rely, and flatter themselves that they are good Christians?--No, the class that Jesus represents as stony-ground hearers trusted in their good works, in their good impulses, and were strong in themselves, in their own righteousness. They were not "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." They did not feel that eternal vigilance was the price of safety. They might have put on the whole armor of God, and have been able to stand against the wiles of the enemy. The rich and abundant promises of God were spoken for their benefit, and believing the word of God, they might have been clothed with a "Thus saith the Lord," and been able to meet every wily device of the adversary; for when the enemy should come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord would have lifted up a standard against him. {RH, June 7, 1892 par. 9}

20. What shall the last generation have victory over? **Revelation 15:2**

EGW: The worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandment--since this is the sign of His creative power and the witness to His claim upon man's reverence and homage. The wicked will be distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator's memorial, to exalt the institution of Rome. In the issue of the contest all Christendom will be divided into two great classes--those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond" (Revelation 13:16), to receive the mark of the beast, yet the people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beholds "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" (Revelation

15:2) and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. {2SM 55.1}

21. What shall we exercise to gain the victory? **1 John 5:4**

EGW: Daniel and his companions were captives in a strange land, but God suffered not the envy and hatred of their enemies to prevail against them. The righteous have ever obtained help from above. How often have the enemies of God united their strength and wisdom to destroy the character and influence of a few simple persons who trusted in God. But because the Lord was for them, none could prevail against them. Only let the followers of Christ be united, and they will prevail. Let them be separated from their idols and from the world, and the world will not separate them from God. Christ is our present, all-sufficient Saviour. In Him all fullness dwells. It is the privilege of Christians to know indeed that Christ is in them of a truth. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." All things are possible to him that believeth; and whatsoever things we desire when we pray, if we believe that we receive them we shall have them. This faith will penetrate the darkest cloud and bring rays of light and hope to the drooping, desponding soul. It is the absence of this faith and trust which brings perplexity, distressing fears, and surmisings of evil. God will do great things for His people when they put their entire trust in Him. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Pure and undefiled religion will be exemplified in the life. Christ will prove a never-failing source of strength, a present help in every time of trouble. {2T 139.2}

22. What else will it take to overcome? **1 John 5:5**

EGW: Shall our faith ever falter again? What stronger evidence could God have given us that Jesus is the Son of God? What greater evidence could be given of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ than that which has been given by those who were eyewitnesses of his Majesty? Will those who claim to believe in Christ as a personal Saviour, dishonor God by doubting that he to whose guardianship they have committed their souls will keep that which has been committed to his trust against that day? Jesus is a risen Saviour. He came forth from the grave to vindicate his previous claims, to confirm the faith of his followers, to establish the truth of his Godhead before men, to make doubly sure the assurance that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {ST, May 30, 1895 par. 8}

23. What do the overcomers have abiding in them? **1 John 2:13-14**

EGW: "I have written unto you, young men," John writes, "because ye are strong." What makes them

strong?--Eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. Thus they grow up into Christ, their living head. "And the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." This battle is to be fought over and over again. Be not content with your present experience. Sink the shaft deep in the quarry of truth. Truth, eternal truth, is the treasure for which you must seek with unremitting diligence. Do not rest until all that is superficial in your life is supplanted by a deep, fervent, solid experience. This will make you reliable in every place, because the Lord is your strength, his word your daily bread. Your religious experience will then give you strength to brace your mind against the counter-working influence of hereditary and cultivated-tendencies. {RH, August 21, 1900 par. 4}

24. What shall we receive if we overcome? **Revelation 21:7**

EGW: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Revelation 21:6. This promise is only to those that thirst. None but those who feel their need of the water of life, and seek it at the loss of all things else, will be supplied. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." Verse 7. Here, also, conditions are specified. In order to inherit all things, we must resist and overcome sin. {GC 540.2}