



Those Are Fighting Words

By Johnny Caruso on August 19, 2021

TODAY'S READING: 1 Timothy 4

I remember as a young student pastor I would use these verses as a call to arms for myself. Even though I did not realize it, I was inexperienced in life. All I wanted to do was see students saved and make a difference in the Kingdom. Little did I know it was my kingdom. Now, being a little older and a little wiser (do not ask Trish about the wiser), I realize the bare bones advice Paul had for his young friend.

You cannot take things personally. If we really believe in God's sovereignty, we must come to grips with the fact that whatever is said or done to us is in God's attempt to conform us to His image. Paul gives Timothy instruction on how to live his life in such a way that people will treat him with respect and honor:

- **In speech:** What comes out of your mouth daily? Are you encouraging or are you a Negative Nelly? Are you marked by gratitude, or do you grumble? Psalm 19:14 says, *"may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing and acceptable to God."* Remember that our mouths belong to Him.
- **In conduct:** How is your life? Does your mouth proclaim the wonderful riches of God and your life deny it? I do not know where I first heard the phrase "practical atheism," but that is how most professing Christians live their lives. Remember Ephesians 2:10 says, *"we are God's workmanship, created in Christ for good works."*
- **In love:** We are to talk and live with love. Are your words and actions drowning in love? Or are you doing right things without love? 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 warns us against loveless actions and deeds.
- **In faith:** Is your life marked by faith in Christ? Hebrews 11:6 says, *"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."* What does your life show you put your faith in?
- **In purity:** Purity is not just what people see; it is also what they cannot see. *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God"* (Matthew 5:8). That kind of purity comes only through the blood of Christ purifying us by the Holy Spirit working in our lives. It is a matter of drawing close to Jesus as we draw near to Him.

PRAYER: Lord, thank You for Paul and His words of encouragement to a young pastor that we can apply to our lives every day.

TOMORROW'S READING: 1 Timothy 5

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