

Introduction

- Paul's closing charge to Timothy, to pursue godliness and flee from evil - in the confidence of God's vindication, as he vindicated Jesus himself.
- Tackle this by looking at some of the key verbs Paul uses through this passage...

Flee (v.11)

- Very active word - more than just avoid!
 - these things are dangerous...
 - what is "all this"?
 - particularly love of money, identity in that...
 - the leadership mistakes of chapter 5...
- How do you flee from all this?
 - how do you flee anything else?
 - run! in the opposite direction!
 - away from where the danger is
- Flee love of money - avoid things that encourage that attitude
 - eg gadget shows, magazines that focus on things, home shows... where we reflect and see them beginning to shape our thinking...

Pursue (v.11)

- How do you pursue these things?
 - righteousness
 - godliness
 - faith
 - love
 - endurance
 - gentleness
- How do you pursue fitness? Coaching, training, and match fitness
 - coaching - instruction from someone else, perhaps Bible teaching or mentoring...
 - training - practising yourself, perhaps learning discipline of good spending habits at a time when the pressure is off?
 - match fitness - putting yourself in situations of actual service that demand the things you've been cultivating - SU camps, Summer Focus, actually having a go at offering to pray for someone when a crisis comes up, or giving your testimony, or chatting about what lies behind your voting priorities at the Election...
 - this is character stuff...

Fight (v.12)

- Fight is about service, I think:
 - sometimes it will be a fight to develop character and godliness grow...
 - but I think this term more refers to the struggle, the fight, to serve God
 - opposition and distraction and temptation and so on round times of service
 - easiest to see at something like a camp or Holiday Club or a weekend away or Summer Focus...
 - mustn't lose sight of fact that same fight is going on every time you go to work, with the opportunities to love your neighbour, to bear witness to the Saviour...
 - or when we are coming to volunteer in some capacity at church, clean the loos or lead Bodybuilders or....
- Its a struggle, and we'll need help, by implication
 - so pray...
 - and realising it will be a fight not be put off by the mere fact of difficulties...

Take hold (v.12)

- Foundation for both Christian character and Christian service is our identity in Christ:
 - so we are to "take hold" of it, to focus on what Jesus has done for us, to nurture our relationship with him...
 - date night to nurture and nourish a marriage relationship?
 - do things that will help us "take hold" of our relationship with Christ - personal and corporate times of prayer, in the Scriptures, in worship, Christian reading...

Charge (v.13)

- Only one of the key verbs not addressed to Timothy - a description of what Paul is doing
- Paul's charge:
 - (note seriousness - before Christ, and alluding to his faithfulness in time of trial)
 - "the good confession" is almost certainly a way of saying he stuck with his trust in God even when on trial for his life, and is suggestive of the church Ephesus, and its leadership, themselves being in the midst of or facing a time of trial that would include arrest and possible execution...

Keep (v.14)

- "this command" is the fleeing and pursuing, the fighting and the taking hold
 - a further encouragement to flee, pursue, fight, take hold of...
- Set in the context of Christ's return:
 - keep it until he appears, until his return in glory
 - which God will bring about in his good time
 - he is utterly dependable, the blessed, the ruler, the king, the lord, the immortal one, unique, holy ("unapproachable light"), unseen, worthy of all praise and honour...

Command (v.17)

- Return briefly to the particular challenge of the love of money
 - but Paul's charge to Timothy here is that he **command others**, that he **teach and pass on** the true instruction in ways that bring growth and health - indeed treasure in heaven!

Guard (v.20)

- What has been entrusted? Critically right teaching
 - teach it, being careful to do so faithfully
 - guards are alert to attack, watchful, always ready to defend...

Conclusion

- *So, rooted in grace (v.21) get on and serve!!*
- *Are we just getting stuck in to serving Christ where we are now?*
 - or are we waiting for something else to happen, some other perfect (easier?) opportunity to come round?