

Fight

Last thing at night, what to read? "Fight the good fight." I looked up the reference:

Fight the good fight. 1 Timothy 1:18b

But you, man of God,
flee from all this [corrupt mind, temptation, love of money, harmful desires,
wandering from the faith]
and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.
Fight the good fight of the faith.
Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called... 1 Timothy 6:12a

There is nothing passive about this instruction: flee, pursue, fight, take hold. Fleeing is running away from something evil; pursuing is chasing after something good. Fight the good fight of faith in Jesus Christ.

Almost a month later I was mindful of the instruction to fight spiritually but somehow just not motivated to do it. This morning, whilst still in bed, the idea came to me for us to go to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in Exeter, UK. We had not been since its award-winning redevelopment, so we went.

We entered gallery 5 which had a temporary display of World War I posters. The exhibition was entitled 'Paper Persuaders', featuring posters commissioned by Lord Kitchener, UK Secretary for War, to encourage civilian men to sign up. This country, amazingly, recruited on a voluntary basis unless a man had already signed up as a part-time soldier before the war. Britain had a tiny army of 45,000, supplemented by 250,000 part-timers.

Two posters quoted the German Kaiser's threats to crush and destroy the English; the second one revealed his deception that it was God's plan. To some extent these posters revealed the manipulative methods in words and pictures, using smears against manhood, emotional blackmail, guilt and fear to shame men into signing up. Nevertheless it was, at least in the early years, a matter of individual choice.

When I was about a third of the way round this amazing collection, I was convicted of the vital importance of fighting evil. It came like a thud in my chest. The two world wars had to be fought; there was no alternative. But more relevantly for me, the thump to my heart was a revelation from heaven that I have to be a fighter, by being a prayer warrior. Praying in faith makes a difference. The enemy has never changed: ultimately it was not Germany, just as it is not ultimately IS or Boko Haram. It is Satan. As a son of God, I have a responsibility to commit to the fight—for myself, for my family and country, but first and foremost for God's kingdom. As a believing Christian I am not a civilian, therefore the obligation is to fight. Paul wrote that no soldier gets involved in civilian affairs. He also wrote that our weapons are not carnal [worldly] but mighty in God; prayer being the greatest. The spiritual war is as real as the First World War and the nature of the enemy has never changed.

I realised that this challenge, this command, was why the Holy Spirit had sown the idea of visiting the museum. God used the posters to get to my heart, not just my mind.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF THE FAITH.

So how? The first battle is for my own mind, to believe God's word and his promises and to reject the subtle lies of Satan.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Romans 12:2

I decided to write down some things that I already knew, and that I practice in part:

1. Don't react to what we see or hear the enemy is doing but be proactive by finding out what God is doing and then participating with him.
2. Rejoice. The power of joy, praise, thanksgiving, gladness, not only brings glory to God, it strengthens us individually and takes the battle to the enemy, releasing God's power against the enemy because God and his angels respond to faith.
3. Prayer. First through worshiping God and resting in his presence so that we can discover God's revealed wisdom and obey his instructions.
4. Make our actions in the opposite spirit to the world: giving sacrificially, forgiving and blessing even our enemies, being gentle (a gentle word turns away wrath), building up and encouraging others.
5. Feeding on the word of God, meditating on them until they become faith, and choosing to turn from the ungodly entertainments and distractions of the world.
6. Tongues. Praying more and more in tongues to by-pass the intellect and access the spirit realm.
7. Intercession. This can only be done when we have discovered the specific will of God so that we pray in agreement with his perfect will.