Main Point: Flee unrighteousness and fight the good fight of faith.

Current Event: In the summer of 2013, aerialist Nik Wallenda completed a quarter mile tightrope walk over the Grand Canyon’s Little Colorado River Gorge. The walk took 22 minutes and was accomplished without the use of any safety devices. Throughout the walk, Wallenda was heard several times saying, “Thank you, Jesus” and many other references to God and God’s protection. Although Wallenda did stop twice during the walk due to wind and movement on the tightrope, “Wallenda appeared to be walking like any normal person would on a sidewalk” said Grand Canyon park ranger Elmer Philips.  

What do you think motivated Nik Wallenda to try something so dangerous?

Do you think he was irresponsible in doing so, given he has a wife and family?

Illustration: A high school student was participating in a school production. The role the student was asked to portray called for the use of profanity and other derogatory language. The student humbly changed the script during rehearsals, excluding the inappropriate material. When challenged by other classmates, in front of the director, the student replied that although he was portraying a fictitious character, he respectfully asked not to be forced to compromise his beliefs.

How does this student’s boldness mirror a step of faith?

What steps of faith have you taken lately in your work, family and social life?

1 AP, Nik Wallenda completes tightrope walk across gorge near Grand Canyon, www.cbsnews.com
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Background: This concluding section of the letter bears strong similarity to the opening section (1:3–20). Both sections are bracketed by discussion of false teachers (1:3–7, 18–20; 6:2b–10, 20–21). Both contain exhortations to Timothy in light of this false teaching, specifically calling him to fight the good fight of faith against it (1:18; 6:12); and both contain a doxology (1:17; 6:15–16).

1 Timothy 6:11–12
11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

ESV Study Bible: The reference to Timothy as a man of God affirms his authority and stands in contrast with the false teachers, who are not men of God. “Man of God” is used often in the OT of a prophet (e.g., Deut. 33:1; 1 Sam. 9:6; Ps. 90:1). The call to fight the good fight of the faith and to take hold of the eternal life involves both fleeing from sin and vigorously pursuing virtue (cf. note on 2 Tim. 2:22).

What things should leaders run away from? What should they pursue instead?

What does it mean to “fight the good fight of faith?” How does this look practically?

How does fully embracing our future change us for today?

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1 Timothy 6:13–16
13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, 14 to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

ESV Study Bible: While there are some who currently oppose his work in Ephesus, Timothy is to labor on in view of one day standing before God, who dwells in unapproachable light (v. 16). Paul focuses on the glory of God in order that the corresponding smallness of Timothy’s opponents might be seen.
How does the godhead help us stay true to the Gospel?

How do we stain the commandments and ruin our witness to the world?

Who are we to look to when we seek to be great leaders and witnesses?

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1 Timothy 6:17–21
17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. 20 O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” 21 for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you.

ESV Study Bible: The charge directly to rich believers may seem unexpected in this place. However, it provides a corrective to the wrong view of wealth seen in the false teachers (see notes on vv. 2b–10). Furthermore, the downplaying of riches by stressing that they are merely for “this present age” appropriately follows the moving description of appearing before God on the final day (vv. 15–16). The call for the wealthy to use their wealth to prepare for the future either means that how they use their wealth demonstrates whether they are saved, or that they should seek for greater reward in heaven, or both.

How do some people set their confidence in their money and possessions?

Whom should we as believers set our hope in? Why?

What riches should we seek in this life and the one to come?

What does it mean to “guard the deposit entrusted to you”?

What will you do with Christ’s Gospel now, having read 1 Timothy?
Another Perspective:

**Bible Knowledge Commentary: Fight the good fight** is the language of athletic contests. In 1:18 the same English words translate Greek words that refer to a military conflict. Timothy was to give his best effort to this most worthwhile of struggles, the struggle to further the faith. This would involve the complete appropriation (cf. “take hold” in v. 19) at all times of the fact that he possessed eternal life. (Paul’s words, *Take hold of ... eternal life* in no way suggest that Timothy could gain eternal life by his own efforts.) To Paul, Christ’s life is the possession of each Christian, not only throughout eternity, but now (cf. 2 Cor. 4:10–12). It is this new life in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) to which every Christian is called and which Christians confess by baptism (Rom. 6:4) and by word (Rom. 10:9–10). Timothy’s *good confession in the presence of many witnesses* could refer to his ordination but more likely speaks of his baptism.²

**Class Discussion:** Have your class discuss why Paul charged believers to be a military fighting for Christ. List other references in the Scriptures that ask us to fight, stand firm, put on God’s armor and take up the sword of the Spirit. Provide practical examples of how to do this on a daily basis including praying throughout the day, continually being mindful of your circumstances and gathering with other believers for accountability.

**Holman New Testament Commentary:** Paul again broke into adoration of the God whom he loved and served. It was meant to remind Timothy of the greatness of the one who had called him and to whom he ministered. Realizing the eminence of our God can diminish the opposing forces with which we must deal.

This greatness was not evident at his first appearing, however. He came as a baby, naked and vulnerable. He served God and man, learning obedience through suffering (Heb. 5:7–8). But at his second appearance he will come with might, with the word of his strength, invincible, clothed with majesty and glory. No king or president has any power except as given by God. Even this delegated authority is weak in comparison to the commanding strength of God. The purpose of Jesus’ first coming was to rescue sinners; the purpose of his Second Coming will be to save believers.

God is beyond the comprehension of humankind. He is also beyond our full knowing. He is so “other” than we are that no one can experience or approach the purity of his being. And it is to this God that honor and might forever are due.³

**Class Discussion:** Have your class discuss how 1 Timothy has challenged them in their understanding of leadership, the Gospel and God’s expectations for believers. Encourage members to share what they plan on doing now that they have heard Paul’s charge.

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Living like Paul: Kyle and Amy Pierson, missionaries in Harlem (New York City), began their steps of faith at Prestonwood, serving faithfully in several ministries in our church. Now, they are living full-time in New York, ministering to the lost, sharing the Gospel and serving their neighbors. They are missionaries in every sense of the word, and took a critical step of faith to be obedient to what God was calling them to do.

What are some of the difficulties this family might be facing in Harlem?

What might some of the advantages be in Harlem in terms of being able to share their faith?

What essential truths should they focus on in their personal Bible study?

How can a better understanding of these areas equip them to share the Gospel?

What difficulties do we face in Dallas regarding the sharing of the Gospel?

What advantages do we have that allow us to overcome our difficulties?

Challenge: Have each person write down an area in his/her life where a step of faith is needed. Encourage your class to consider Kyle and Amy’s story. Some steps might include increasing faithfulness in tithing, increasing faithfulness in serving in and out of the church, increasing faithfulness in a commitment to studying Scripture personally, and increasing faithfulness in their relationship commitments. Encourage each one to hold the others accountable and to return next week with testimonies of how they have grown in these areas.