

**THE STRUGGLE IS REAL**

Sunday Sermon

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1/27/19

**I. Introduction:****II. The Meaning of the Struggle****a. Thayer's Definition<sup>1</sup>**

- i. Entering a Contest (Competition)
- ii. Contending against Adversaries (Fighting)
- iii. Used Literally and Figuratively

**b. CDJ (Uses in Scripture)**

- i. Literally: A physical fight or struggle against an opponent
  1. Jesus clarifies that His servants would fight for Him if His Kingdom were physical, Jn. 18:36
  2. Only NT example of physical fighting
- ii. Figuratively: A battle against obstacles to obtain a goal
  1. The Lord instruct striving for entry into the Kingdom, Lu. 13:24
  2. Other Examples to Follow

**III. The Believer's Struggle****a. In the Flesh**

- i. Similar to World's Struggle
  1. Accomplished in Own Strength
  2. Accomplished by Setting Goals to Achieve<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **78 ἀγωνίζομαι**

**ἀγωνίζομαι**; imperfect ἠγωνιζόμεην; perfect ἠγώνισμαι; a deponent middle verb (cf. Winer's Grammar, 260 (244)); (ἀγών);

**1.** *to enter a contest; contend in the gymnastic games*: 1 Cor. 9:25.

**2.** *universally, to contend with adversaries, fight*: followed by ἵνα μή, John 18:36.

**3.** *figuratively to contend, struggle, with difficulties and dangers* antagonistic to the gospel: Col. 1:29; 1 Tim. 4:10 (L T Tr text WH text; for Rec. ὀνειδιζόμεθα); ἀγωνίζομαι ἀγῶνα (often used by the Greeks also, especially the Attic), 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7.

**4.** *to endeavor with strenuous zeal, strife, to obtain something; followed by an infinitive*, Luke 13:24; ὑπέρ τίνος ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς, ἵνα, Col. 4:12. (Compare: ἀνταγωνίζομαι, ἐπαγωνίζομαι, καταγωνίζομαι, συναγωνίζομαι.)\*

- ii. Characterized by Succumbing to Spiritual Enemies
      - 1. Spiritual Enemies Unbeatable by Worldly Means
      - 2. Spiritual Failures Displayed through Believer's Actions
  - b. In the Spirit
    - i. The Believer Able to Recognize Struggles Spiritual
    - ii. The Believer Able to Identify Spiritual Enemies
    - iii. The Believer Able to Walk by Spirit, Gal. 5:16
    - iv. The Believer Able to Live Standing Victory over Spiritual Enemies (cf. Jn. 16:33)
    - v. The Believer Able to Be Energized by God, Col. 1:29
    - vi. The Believer Able to Struggle through Communication of Saints, Col. 4:12
  - c. Examples of Spiritual Struggles (Noun)
    - i. Paul stated his suffering as a struggle on behalf of the Christ, Phil. 1:30; 1 Thess. 2:2
    - ii. Paul characterized his struggle for the Colossians by labor and working that was energized by God, Col. 2:1
- IV. **The Encouragement to Struggle**
  - a. Paul encourages Timothy to struggle in ceasing eternal life, 1 Tim. 6:12
    - i. Eternal Life Potentially Impeded by Circumstances
      - 1. Timothy Attacked and Afraid
      - 2. Timothy Unable to Show Forth Life
    - ii. Eternal Life a Possession for Believers
    - iii. Eternal Life Attained in Present Tense by Indwelling Christ
    - iv. Eternal Life Seen from Believer through Position
  - b. The Author of Hebrews Establishes Christian Race as Struggle, Heb. 12:2
- V. **The Purpose of the Struggle**
  - a. To Show Forth Inherent Goodness
    - i. The Believer's Struggle Called Good
      - 1. Paul encourages Timothy in this Struggle, 1 Tim. 6:12
      - 2. Paul summarizes his Christian Life as identified with this struggle, 2 Tim. 4:7
    - ii. The Good Works for the Believer, Eph. 2:10
      - 1. Laid out by God Afore
      - 2. Established for Believer to Walk in (cf. Gal. 5:16<sup>3</sup>)
  - b. To Receive Reward
    - i. Similarities are seen to worldly contentions, 1 Cor. 9:25
      - 1. The Difference of God's Power

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<sup>2</sup> Example: "I'm not going to do..." This attitude assumes that you have the ability by the force of one's own will to forego or interrupt an activity. ("Cold Turkey"; stop smoking, stop being mean, etc.)

<sup>3</sup> Peripatao

2. The Difference of Eternal Reward

ii. Paul anticipated a crown resulting from his struggle, 2 Tim. 4:7

VI. **Conclusion:**