

THIS WE KNOW

PART ONE:
THE PROMISES

THE LESSON: 1 TIMOTHY 6

“...Renounce the devil and all his works, believe in Christ, and obediently keep God’s commandments.”
(Baptism, BCP p. 525)

“Do you here, in the presence of God and of this Congregation, renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh? (I do.)
Do you believe the Christian Faith as it is set forth in the Apostles’ Creed? (I do.)
Will you endeavour to keep God’s holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of your life? (I will, God being my helper.)”
(Confirmation, BCP p. 559)

These are the three promises made in the Prayer Book liturgy of baptism, and then affirmed in the liturgy of confirmation. Do they seem really serious? They should. Baptism is a joyful celebration of new life, but it is also a solemn occasion on which we make public our decision to turn away from sin, we confess our belief in Jesus Christ, and we resolve to live in a new way. So when we choose to undertake either baptism or confirmation, we must solemnly consider the promises that we are making.

Should our life now follow a different course because we have made these promises? Absolutely. But that doesn’t mean we will always get it right or stay on track. That’s why, when we commit to walking in obedience throughout life (the third promise), our vow does not assume that this can be accomplished, except with God’s grace. Instead of simply saying, “I will”, we echo the humble dependence of the psalmist who wrote, “Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 124:8).

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St. Paul had the awesome responsibility of mentoring younger believers, including the young Church leader, Timothy. The letters of Paul included in the New Testament scriptures give us a window into these relationships, but also serve to instruct and encourage us in our faith to this day. Take a look at the concluding words of Paul’s first letter to Timothy.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

During this unit, we’re going to take some of the prayers that come from the liturgies of Baptism and Confirmation and pray them for one another as a reminder and a renewal of commissioning.

Spend some time reflecting on and praying with the words of these prayers:

O Lord of hosts, before the might of whose presence the armies of evil are put to flight, deliver thy servants from the power of Satan. Amen.

Cast out of their hearts every evil imagination and every thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of thee; and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Amen.

Grant that they may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh. Amen.

Grant that they may also be endued with heavenly virtues, and everlastingly rewarded, through thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, who dost live, and govern all things, world without end. Amen.

(FROM THE MINISTRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM TO SUCH AS ARE OF RIPER YEARS, BCP PAGE 536)

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1 TIMOTHY 6: **THE “GOOD CONFESSION”**

³If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, ⁴he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. ⁶Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, ⁷for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

¹¹But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. ¹²Fight 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. ¹³I 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, ¹⁴to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen.

¹⁷As 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. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

²⁰O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge”, ²¹for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you.