



Having the Game of Your Life

I Thessalonians 2:17-3:10 (NIV)

But, brothers and sisters, when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. ¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way. ¹⁹ For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy. ³ So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. ² We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, ³ so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them. ⁴ In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know. ⁵ For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain. ⁶ But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. ⁷ Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. ⁸ For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. ⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

1. Know what you are competing for! (I Thessalonians 2:19)

2. Know that you are made for this! (Ephesians 2:10)

3. Know there is a real enemy!

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NIV)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

The first key to spiritual victory is spiritual awareness.

"The Christian life is not a playground, it is a battleground."
- Warren Wiersbe

"Know your enemy and know yourself and you can fight a hundred battles without disaster."
— Sun Tzu, Chinese General

- Satan's desire is to stop the Gospel from being spread.

II Corinthians 4:4 (NIV)

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- Satan's desire is to keep me focused on selfish living.

4. Find your holy discontent! (I Thessalonians 2:17; I Thessalonians 3:1a; I Thessalonians 3:5a)