

# A HERO WORTHY TO BE FOLLOWED

***“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”***  
***(2 Timothy 4:7)***

When we want to start something we plan and put up goals to achieve certain vision that we are impressed to do. With that vision or plan we have certain figure or example that we like to follow to accomplish what we dream of.

Have you been influenced by a certain person? Famous people inspire us; their life events and stories are wide lines that are being followed. Indeed every man and woman's life, before they pass the age of youth they already have reached a conclusion about a certain famous person they like to be; they desire the fame as he achieved, and they want to be mentioned among the well known.

Out of the above notion, people have come out to follow famous national leaders like Gandhi and Mandela. They follow famous cinema stars like James Bond and Sofia Lorraine. They delight the famous singers like Elvis Presley or Madonna, and many star from the Sports world and Olympic champions. You can quickly relate to what you are reading right now because what is written may be applicable to a great extent on your life.

To every one of us, have plans, goals and visions that we want to achieve. But it is worthy to check ourselves in order to have a good start. The best way to do this is to use the word of God, the Bible, as a reflective mirror of truth.

Today's message is inspired by the life of a man of God, who served the Lord Jesus wholeheartedly all his life. He is the Apostle Paul. His former name was Saul. He was one of the zealous persecutors of the early Church. At first, he did not believe in Jesus as Lord and as Saviour of mankind. Moreover, he was a threat to those who believe in Jesus. He did a lot of harm; pursuing Christians, dragging them to the prisons, and doing all his best to end their lives. But in spite of all these, God showed him mercy. One day while he was running after many Christians the Lord Jesus appeared to him in a vision. And that was the turning point of his life. He repented from his sins. He was baptized by water and committed himself to serve God. The spirit of the Lord transformed him and made him a new man; he was filled by the Holy Spirit manifested by love, peace, faith, gentleness, and boldness in speech – preaching the word of God to all the people. His new belief in Jesus' death and resurrection from the dead made him a brave soldier who always followed the will of his Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. Until facing death he boldly and confidently declared:

**1- *I have fought the good fight:*** Apostle Paul diligently preached the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He met lots of difficulties in doing the work yet he continued to encourage every worker and believer as reading about his experience as he wrote: ***“I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received the forty lashes minus one. Three times I***

***was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea. I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.”*** (2 Corinthians 11:23-27) Paul was confronted with all these kinds of dangers and threats because he was preaching the Good News – the message of salvation. Yet he was never ashamed but received strength in the Lord.

**2- *I have finished the race:*** Apostle Paul did not compete to gain better job or position, or better house or car. He did not compete to win power, wealth, honor, treasure or possession. He ran toward reaching new areas, new towns and cities, new people and nations who have not heard yet about the lord Jesus and the message of salvation. He wrote, ***“It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: Those who were not told about Him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.”*** (Romans 15:20-21)

**3- *I have kept the faith:*** Apostle Paul never denied Jesus. He was persecuted heavily, but he set apart in his heart Christ Jesus as Lord. He was not tempted by the beauty and treasure of this world but he kept the faith, and nothing hindered him or discourages him. He wrote: ***“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seems is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”*** (2 Corinthians 4: 17-18) Apostle Paul's' heart and mind was fully committed to serve God; and after doing God's will he confidently said: ***“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.”*** (2 Timothy 4:8-9)

***My dear and beloved:*** As we begin our journey to live for God and serve Him and as we look forward for the best of our interest, let us seek for the better gain- the crown of righteousness that Jesus will reward to those who serve Him wholeheartedly. In doing so, can we find better example than Apostle Paul who committed to serve God all his life? Let us follow his good and victorious example in doing God's will, and together agree to pray.

***“Heavenly Father, thank you for your son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save my life. Thank You for your word that gives me light and insights for my life. Thank you for the new opportunity that you open for me to serve you. O Lord, transform me and consume me by your Holy Spirit. Help me to fight the good fight, to finish the race and to keep the faith until you come again to take me with you to eternal glory. This is my prayer Jesus' glorious name.” Amen.***