

1Tim. 6:1 ¶ Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed.

I think it is important to note that this instruction is being made to Christian servants or slaves, whether by choice or not (from the Greek). Paul is teaching that Christian servants are to serve their masters well because God's honor is at stake since they claim His name. Fair or not, God is more often judged by the testimony of those who claim His name than He is by the life exemplified by Jesus, God in flesh, or the teaching in His word, the scripture. When we declare ourselves to be "Christians," our lives should reflect righteous character as described by God in His word. Others should be able to depend upon our word and should not have to question whether or not we can be trusted or will provide an honest day's work for a day's wage.

Of note is the fact that Paul is not addressing the morality of slavery. It was acceptable according to the laws and customs of that day, and Paul wanted Christian servants / slaves to understand that their service to their master directly reflected on the honor of God's name.

I think it is important to note that servitude and slavery are prominent throughout scripture. God used slaves / servants to accomplish great things. Because Joseph was a slave in Egypt, he was positioned to provide for his family as they began to grow into the nation of Israel. Daniel was taken captive to Babylon to serve in the king's court and positioned to receive and reveal prophecy from the Lord that identified much of the plan and purposes of God until the time that Messiah comes to take His throne. All through scripture, however, God emphasizes that servants / slaves should be well treated and provided for.

Deuteronomy 5:14 "But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou."

Deuteronomy 24:14 "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates:"

Ephesians 6:8-9 "...Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

Colossians 4:1 "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

1Tim. 6:2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren; but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

Again, it is interesting to me that Paul feels the need to give instruction as to how servants are to serve even their Christian masters. He seems to be implying that the servant might try to take advantage of his/her master in light of Christian love, mercy and forgiveness. Frankly, my experience of working in the Christian community gives evidence of just such propensity. When you work for or with Christians, you tend to have higher expectations of their work ethic (at least I do). It was really frustrating to have to acknowledge that pagans were often better to work with than some Christians in that respect. I want to clarify that working with other committed and motivated Christians have been some of the most enjoyable work experiences in my life. And that is as it should be.

Paul reminds Timothy that he should determine to teach and encourage the Christian community according to all the instructions he has given him to this point. I don't think this admonition applies only to the first two verses in this chapter; I think it applies to all the instruction he has given him in this letter.

1Tim. 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

1Tim. 6:4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

1Tim. 6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

My summary statement of these verses: Any person who teaches in any way that is not consistent with the teaching of the word of God is to be avoided.

The Greek for the word *wholesome* makes reference to that which promotes sound health and is not corrupt. Teaching the "doctrine which is according to godliness" is teaching so as to promote holiness and reverence for God by the way one lives according to the truth revealed in His word. Paul describes those who refuse to teach accordingly as being "proud and knowing nothing."

When one refuses to teach the whole counsel of God, the result is false teaching. When one teaches scripture out of context, the result is going to cause division, trouble and/or wrong conclusions about the truth. The Pharisees were prime examples of those who had taken the word of God out of context to establish a set of traditions and laws that were held to be of greater importance than the actual word of God as revealed to His prophets. These traditions and laws were a collection of the wisdom and thinking of men; they had strayed far from the truth as revealed by God to His prophets. Does that remind you of any false religions today?

I thought the NLT translation of verses 4-5 was quite to the point: *"Anyone who teaches anything different is both conceited and ignorant. Such a person has an unhealthy desire to quibble over the meaning of words. This stirs up arguments ending in jealousy, fighting, slander, and evil suspicions. These people always cause trouble. Their*

minds are corrupt, and they don't tell the truth. To them religion is just a way to get rich."

My, what an apt description of so many of the most popular "spiritual leaders" in America today. So many want to "quibble over the meaning of words" and twist the scripture to say what they want it to say to support their sin. They aren't promoting unity in the body of believers; they are causing division. They aren't concerned about the honor of God's name; they are concerned about making a name for themselves. Many are using religion as a way to get rich through the marketing of books and "spiritual tokens" intended to fleece the unsuspecting flock. They are more concerned with appealing to the masses and bringing in large numbers of people than they are in teaching the truth of the word of God. I think it is important to note, however, that the flock is also guilty in that they don't spend enough time in scripture to recognize they are being fleeced or misled.

I want to emphasize that Paul says we are to avoid these kinds of teachers. You won't be able to identify the false teachers if you aren't familiar with the truth. Spending time in the word of God is vital to the spiritual health of every child of God.

1Tim. 6:6 ¶ But godliness with contentment is great gain.

1Tim. 6:7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

1Tim. 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

I decided to look further into the meaning of *godliness*. The Greek made reference to *piety*, which Webster defines as "...loving obedience to the will of God, and earnest devotion to his service." In other words, when we choose to serve God in obedience according to His will we will gain far more than anything this world has to offer. I think this is the correct implication since Paul emphasizes that we are both born and will leave this world empty handed. No earthly treasures will go with you when you die; it will all be left behind for others to enjoy. The only things we truly need in this life are food or nourishment and clothing.

I couldn't help but wonder why shelter wasn't a part of this list. As I looked at the Greek for *raiment*, it made reference to "a covering." I wonder if that could be making reference to both clothing and shelter.

Verse 8 is another statement that flies in the face of the teaching of the prosperity gospel that is so prevalent today.

I almost moved on without addressing the reference to *contentment*. The fact that it was paired with *godliness* is important. Frankly, I don't think anyone can find true satisfaction in life apart from the Lord. Only when we yield to His will because of our love for Him will we have the mindset that allows us to accept and/or enjoy the place and position that He places us to serve Him. Only in Christ can one understand that the slave is just as valued by the Lord as the

master; the janitor as valued as the pastor; the wife as valued as the husband; the baby in the womb as valued as the adult; etc.

Romans 2:11 "For there is no respect of persons with God."

Romans 8:16–17 "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

This is a very important truth for the believer in light of the culture of our day that promotes a lifestyle of more and more and tends to place a higher value on those that have more. It's a culture totally focused on a desire for the pleasures and treasures of this world. Our focus is to be on accumulating heavenly treasure that will give eternal pleasure.

1Tim. 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

1Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Again, these are important verses of truth in light of today's culture. Earning and possessing material wealth is not a sin, but it is a burden. Those who are rich by this world's standards are constantly confronted with temptations of the flesh on a much grander scale than those who are poor. Why? Because wherewithal is not an issue in fulfilling those desires and there are many in business to encourage them to do just that.

The pride of man is strong and deeply rooted in our sin nature since it was in pride that man sinned in the first place. I define pride as anything we do in rejection of God's revealed for our lives. It is significant that Paul is addressing those that want to be rich; their focus in life is to accumulate wealth. Their ambition and pride make them more susceptible to justifying questionable ethics as a means to an end. The more money they make, the more powerful they become in the eyes of the world; and history is full of examples of the truth that power whets the appetite for more power. I think recent news (such as that regarding John Edwards and Tiger Woods) tend to make such men falsely surmise that they are entitled and beyond consequence for their actions. As verse 9 warns, their wealth and perceived power serve as a snare to making *foolish (unintelligent from the Greek)* and hurtful choices to fulfill their lusts. Both *destruction* and *perdition* make reference to being ruined.

As I read through the different translations, I thought the NAS95 translation best expressed the intended teaching: *"...the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil."* The Greek for *erred* included both straying from the truth and being seduced. The Greek describes coveting as reaching out for something you desire; in other words, taking action to fulfill that desire. If a believer allows himself to covet money, it is because he has allowed himself to be seduced into straying from the

truth of the faith that he professes to achieve what he desires. This always results in grief and sorrow, especially in the life of the believer.

1Tim. 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Paul here interjects a personal plea for Timothy as a man of God to avoid falling into such temptation; he is to “flee these things.” If we would but avoid or flee from temptations and sin, we would live much happier lives. In fact, as Paul instructs Timothy, the believer is to actively pursue:

- Righteousness = innocence, known for being fair and unbiased
- Godliness = having piety, earnestly devoted to serving God
- Faith = relying on Christ for salvation with assurance
- Love = possessing true gratitude and reverence to God and serving others accordingly
- Patience = cheerful endurance, constancy
- Meekness = gentle, humble, controlled strength or power

How many advertisements on TV promote these character traits? How many people admired by the public possess these traits? How many professing believers give testimony to this type of pursuit in their lives? Do you and I?

1Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Paul often compares the life of the Christian to athletics. In this verse he compares living the Christian life to a fight. The Greek defines this fight as competing for a prize and contending with an adversary; both are true. We are competing to earn heavenly rewards that will benefit us for eternity. In the process we have to contend with the adversary, the devil, as he sets traps and lures to deceive us and entice us to sin and forfeit those rewards.

1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour....”

“lay hold on eternal life” – I think the term “take hold” is a better translation. Scripture is clear in stating that once we “take hold” of eternal life through faith and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the Savior holds us in His strong grasp and He will bring our salvation to completion when He resurrects us to immortality.

John 10:27–28 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

Philippians 1:6 “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”

Ephesians 1:12–14 “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

“earnest” = part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest

“whereunto thou are also called” – Our calling is based on God’s foreknowledge.

Romans 8:29–30 “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called....”

Paul is basically urging Timothy to live up to his public profession of faith, and emphasizes that profession to be a *good* (valuable, worthy) thing.

1Tim. 6:13 ¶ I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

1Tim. 6:14 That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Paul now identifies both God the Father and His Son Christ Jesus as witness to the instruction he is giving Timothy. His appeal is that he gives testimony to his profession in the same way that Christ gave testimony before Pontius Pilate, boldly but meekly (with strength under control).

Paul calls for Timothy to fulfill his commission “spotlessly and irreproachably” (from the CJB) until the Lord Jesus Christ returns. Paul knew that what he was asking was not easy. He most graciously revealed in his letter to the Romans that it was a constant struggle to overcome the flesh.

Romans 7:18–23 “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”

He also stated that though it is hard, we have the power to be overcomers through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

I think this statement also implies that Paul thought Timothy would be alive when the Lord returned. It is certainly the implication in his letters to the

Thessalonians. Point being—All believers since the time of Christ have expected His return in their day. I don't think anyone in the early church expected another 2,000 years to pass before His return.

1Tim. 6:15 Which in his times he shall shew, *who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;*

1Tim. 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

Paul is declaring that **when** the Lord returns it will be according to His determination that the time is right. At that time it will be obvious to all that He is the only Potentate (the only Authority), the King of kings (greatest of all the kings of the earth), and Lord of lords (Supreme Master of all beings—natural and supernatural). He is the only immortal being (not subject to death) though He will impart immortality to those in His kingdom.

1 Corinthians 15:51–54 “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

“dwelling in the light....” – I think this phrase is used to describe how different God is from man in that the light in which He dwells is beyond our ability to see. I think more verses from 1Corinthians “shed light” on this understanding.

1 Corinthians 15:40–41 “There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.”

The illumination of the planets is directly related to the importance of each as understood by man. The glory of the Lord Jesus Christ will be so bright as to leave no doubt to His being the one deserving of all honor in deference to His power as the source, the Creator, of all life.

1Tim. 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

1Tim. 6:18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

1Tim. 6:19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Paul instructs to Timothy to, in turn, instruct others accordingly. He again gives words of wisdom for those that are rich “in this world.” They should guard

against becoming arrogant in their attitude toward others; nor should they trust in the fact that they have money. They should continue to trust in “the living God” Who is their true benefactor. They only have because they have been given (be it through inheritance or through talent and intelligence that they have parlayed into riches). Because God has blessed them, they should be ready to bless others—not only by sharing their wealth, but by “doing” good works. By using one’s wealth for good instead of selfishly and choosing to serve others before the Lord, you are investing in treasure that will benefit you for eternity—the place where the child of God will enjoy life to the fullest. In fact, we aren’t even able to imagine the joys that await us.

1 Corinthians 2:9 “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

The Spirit gives us some insight according to the revelation God has given us in scripture, but I think it goes even beyond that. I think the Spirit testifies to our Spirit so as to give us an expectation that is beyond our understanding because God is beyond our understanding.

Isaiah 55:8–9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

It makes sense to me anyway that life in the presence of one so full of glory and so beyond our understanding will be full of joy unimaginable. Paul was given a glimpse and declared it to be so amazing an experience that God gave him a “thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me” to prevent him from becoming arrogant and considering himself a cut above all other men because he had been so privileged.

1Tim. 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 1Tim. 6:21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

Again Paul urges Timothy to remain faithful in the ministry that has been entrusted to him. He warns him to avoid two things:

- Profane and vain babblings
- Oppositions of science falsely so called

I think these are very important words for the believer today. Our culture is full of those who profess to possess wisdom based on human reasoning and “scientific” facts. Truth is that the wisdom and science upon which they base their reasoning is false at its core. Those who profess to be atheists criticize the “Christians” for their faith, while refusing to acknowledge that their belief that there is no God is based on faith as well. Those who believe that our existence sprang from a godless big bang refuse to admit that creation screams the

existence of an intelligent, all-powerful Creator. Scientists continue to learn more about the universe in which we live and often have to admit that what was once accepted as truth has to be acknowledged as wrong and a new standard accepted. They also have to acknowledge that there is much that science cannot explain. Paul is telling Timothy that there is a danger in engaging in such dialogue with those who have no reverence for God and whose hearts are hard and stubborn. Some have been led astray from the truth by engaging in such activities.

This instruction goes hand-in-hand with Peter's admonition to be prepared to give an answer for what we believe.

1 Peter 3:15–16 “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.”

The key seems to be in exercising discernment as to the motives of the one trying to engage you in such discussion. I am a big supporter of Ravi Zacharias and others like him who defend the faith in the public arena for the benefit of those who are seeking truth. Though I am sure there are many attending whose motives are to attack the Christian faith, many are there in order to learn how to defend their faith and to find answers in their own search for truth. There are people like Mr. Zacharias and William Craig who are called into the ministry of apologetics and who have especially prepared themselves through the study of scripture to deal with the lies and deceit used by those who would seek to deceive others concerning the truth through their charm and/or perceived intellect. I think as the time for the return of the Lord gets closer and the power of the enemy is allowed to exert even more influence, this type of ministry is important for defending the truth. Those who become involved, however, should be strongly rooted in their faith and in knowledge of the word of God.

It is important to note that Timothy was serving as a pastor/teacher at this time. Paul did not want Timothy to experience unnecessary problems in the church by allowing troublemakers to intimidate him with the “wisdom of man” and possibly cause him to question his faith. He needed to stay focused in his faith and on ministering God's word to the body of believers.

Paul closes with a blessing for God's grace to be with Timothy. I love what the Greek says about *grace*; it is “the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life.” I think this is a prayer for Timothy to be yielded to the Spirit so as to glorify God as He uses him to accomplish His purposes.

The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana.

This addendum tells us that Paul wrote this letter while in Laodicea, the chief city of Phrygia. The IVP NB Dictionary states that Phrygia is the land associated with King Midas and eventually became part of Galatia.