

1 Timothy 6

Read verses 1 – 2

1. Paul starts this final chapter in his letter to Timothy by addressing slaves. We had seen Paul address slaves and masters before. It wasn't that Paul was in favor of slavery, it all goes back to whatever we do as Christians reflects on Jesus. As members of the church if we do not behave properly then it reflects on our church and ultimately on God.
2. To the church at Colossians, Paul wrote that whatever work you do, work as if you are working for the Lord. (Colossians 3:22-23) He was speaking specifically to slaves but we tend to expand to our jobs. I have worked for men that gladly took the praise for things that I did. If you work as if you are working for Jesus, then at least Jesus is getting the praise.
3. To the church at Galatians, Paul wrote "*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" (Galatians 3:28) Paul is saying we are all equal in God's eyes. It doesn't change our earthly situation but we are to remember that our God loves us regardless of our earthly standing. We are to remember to not lose sight of our goal which is in heaven where all are equal in God's eyes.
4. I doubt that Paul viewed masters any different than he did our leaders whether church or otherwise. We are to pray for them. God is in control and He has put them in authority over us, so we should treat them with respect. And again, everything we do reflects on God and our beliefs.
5. In verse 2, Paul says that if the masters are believers then we should not treat them with any less respect. If anything, the believing slave should work even harder because his/her hard work will benefit another believer. Additionally, the slaves shouldn't expect to be able to take it easy because "After all, we are brothers in Christ." They may be brothers in Christ but there is still an order of authority that has to be followed.

Guzik says, "We can almost imagine a slave saying, "My master is my brother! We are equal before the Lord. He has no right to tell me what to do." This attitude ignores the fact that God calls us into many relationships where submission is commanded — in the home, in the church, in the workplace. Our equality in Jesus doesn't eliminate God's order of authority."

Read verses 3 – 5

6. At the end of verse 2, Paul makes sure that Timothy understands that what he is teaching is not just "nice to know". Everything in this letter is to be taught and taught regularly. The NASB says, "*Teach and preach these principles.*"
7. Paul begins these verses with "*If anyone teaches otherwise*". Paul is wrapping up this letter and wants to warn Timothy that what he is being taught is factual. If anyone says anything different, then they are wrong or "conceited and understand nothing". John and Paul ran into numerous false teachers throughout their travels. Paul knew that Timothy would face the same troubles from people teaching an improper gospel. Remember that one of the biggest tools in Satan's tool bag is deception.
8. These false teachers and Satan want to cause us troubles. If we are fighting amongst ourselves then how can we reach others for Christ. Paul lists the results of the "controversies and quarrels about words". He says that they result in:
 - a. *Envy*
 - b. Strife
 - c. Malicious talk
 - d. *Evil suspicions*
 - e. *Constant friction between people of corrupt mind*
9. Paul says that the people of corrupt mind are those "*who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.*" Thinking of godliness as a chance for financial gain makes me think of Philip and the magician in Acts 8. Simon the magician wanted the Holy Spirit, not for salvation but so he could impress people and make money from the magic of the Holy Spirit. Evidently Paul had run into other people like Simon.

10. There are numerous false pastors that view being a man of God as nothing more than an opportunity to get rich. When I was growing up there were numerous faith healers and tele-evangelists that were willing to make you well if you just send or give them money. The whole idea of the prosperity gospel fits what Paul is talking about. They think “If I will believe then God will bless me financially.” The response to this prosperity gospel is John 16:33, “*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*”

Read verses 6 – 10

11. In verse 6, Paul connects godliness to contentment. I think of the difference between “joy” and “happiness”. You can have joy regardless of your circumstances. Paul speaks about being content in your circumstance in Philippians 4:11-13. Read these verses in Philippians 4. He says that we should be “*content whatever the circumstances.*” The strength to be content in all circumstances comes from God.

Holman Commentary says, “For Paul, godliness was the entire scope of the faith—correct doctrine combined with new life, truth measured by right living. The spiritual goals and disciplines necessary to progress in Christlikeness are to be the consuming passion of all his followers. This has nothing to do with material wealth or poverty. Material possessions are irrelevant.

12. In verse 7, Paul says that we had nothing when we were born and when we die, we can’t take anything with us. It is like Genesis 3:19, “*In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.*” This fits what Holman said, “Material possessions are irrelevant.” Or what Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes, “Everything under the sun is meaningless.” Solomon had tried to fill his life with things and women but in the end, true contentment had escaped him.
13. In verse 8, Paul says that you should learn to be content with the clothing on your back and food to eat. Remember what the root of all evil is? It isn’t money, it is the love of money that is the root of evil. This applies to things or

possessions. Evil is opposite of godliness. How can you strive for godliness if you are pursuing things?

14. In verse 9, Paul says that if you are pursuing things and riches then you will fall into the trap that leads to “*ruin and destruction*”. When my youngest son was in high school, our BYF took a group to “Acquire the Fire”. There was a speaker there that gave a good description of a person headed toward this trap that Paul is talking about. He said that people are born with a hole in their lives. They try to fill the hole with everything possible, possessions, money, fame, drugs and alcohol. Nothing fills the hole or the desire to fill it. This is because the hole is Christ-sized. Only Jesus can perfectly fill this hole. Paul recognized this same thing.
15. In verse 10, Paul says what I told you above. The love of money is the root of all evil. If you are focusing or pursuing money, then you are not pursuing God. You are making money your idol or god. In the Old Testament, idols were manmade figures and those that worshiped them, knew what they were doing. Today our gods are anything that takes away God’s importance to us. They may be people or things. How can you love the Lord your God with all your soul, heart and mind if you are pursuing other things?

Read verses 11 – 16

“Those who have chosen to identify with and follow after Christ, those who dare call themselves Christians, are to exhibit God in this world. We do this through our words and lives — our public witness and private disciplines.” (Holman New Testament Commentary)

16. This section in my Bible is labeled “Final Charge to Timothy”. In verse 11, Paul lists what Timothy as a man of God should be pursuing. He says, “*pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.*” Most of these appear on the list of “fruits of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22-23. The fruits of the Spirit are what we as believers should be pursuing with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If we are truly following the Holy Spirit then we will develop these attributes.

17. In verse 12, Paul tells Timothy and us to “*Fight the good fight of faith.*” In Ephesians 6:12, Paul tells us who the fight is against. He says, “*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 closer we get to having godliness the more that Satan will attack you. We have said numerous times before that Satan doesn’t have to attack you if you are not pursuing godliness. He doesn’t have to attack you because he already owns you.
18. When does our eternal life begin? When were born again? When we die? It begins when we accept Christ. Paul tells Timothy to take hold of his eternal life. If we fear death or what happens to us on the earth then Satan is winning. He is preventing us from doing everything possible to reach others for Christ or bear fruit. I think of Kylie Terry. She accepted the call to be a missionary. She is currently living and learning in an Arab country. Her parents cannot tell others where she is. She is fully trusting God on a day to day basis. This is what taking hold of your eternal life means. It is living fully for Christ.
19. In this verse, Paul says that “*God has called you (Timothy), which you have declared so well before many witnesses.*” Some of those witnesses were when Timothy was ordained by the elders. Back in 1 Timothy 4:14, Paul encouraged Timothy, “*Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.*” Timothy was called and he volunteered to reach others for Christ regardless of the consequences. We can choose to deny our calling by God.
20. In verses 13 and 14, Paul charges Timothy to obey his command to serve God as pastor of the church without fail. These verses would be perfect for an ordination service for any pastor taking responsibility for a church. Paul is having Timothy swear it before God and Jesus.

Holman’s Commentary says, “Timothy was to flee from unrighteousness and pursue the fullness of the Christian life. He was to devote himself to growing intimacy with Christ, to compassionate relationships with others, and unwavering guardianship of truth as found in Scripture. The full spectrum of life is to be lived

under the reign of Christ, and it is to be done with consistency so that no sin interferes with such a life.”

21. Verse 15 tells how long Timothy must do these things. It says until second coming of Christ. Paul uses his closing in verses 15 and 16 to exalt God as *“the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever.”* In Paul’s words you can feel how humbled he is toward an all-powerful God.

Read verses 17 – 19

22. The previous part of the letter has stirred in Paul a reminder that Jesus came to save all people even the rich. Remember in 1 Peter 3:9b, we are told that God does not want *“anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.* Paul tells Timothy to tell the rich these things:
- a. *“Not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth*
 - b. *“Put their hope in God*
 - c. *“Command them to do good”*
 - d. *“To be rich in good deeds*
 - e. *“To be generous and willing to share.*
23. Paul says in verse 19 that if they do these things then they will lay up treasures for themselves in Heaven. “The treasure which accumulates in the life to come is not money, stock portfolios, or real estate. The treasure of which Paul spoke is spiritual, and it lasts for eternity.” (Holman) Remember Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-21, “19 *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*
24. How easy is for a rich man to make it into Heaven? Mark 10:25 *“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”* Jesus says that it would be difficult but Paul is telling Timothy to not give up on the rich.

Read verses 20 – 21

25. In verse 20, Paul encourages Timothy to “*guard what has been entrusted to your care.*” Through this letter and other letters, Paul has stated that the Gospel message that he has preached is the accurate and true Gospel. This is what Paul is entrusting to Timothy’s care. At this time there were many people teaching an inaccurate gospel. There were numerous Gnostics teaching that “the mortal body belonged to the world of inferior, worldly powers and only the spirit or soul could be saved.” (Wikipedia)
26. Paul warns Timothy to steer clear of those false teachers. Paul has committed himself to preach the one true Gospel. His true Gospel taken from Philippians 2:6 . . .”*Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

“For most people, becoming a Christian does not entail a dramatic change in occupation, living conditions, salary, or neighborhood. Christ calls us to extend his kingdom from the place we now occupy, whether as CEO, student, mother, clerk, or migrant farmer. Contentment, the pursuit of godliness, and bold identification with Christ are foundational to effective Christian living.” (Holman New Testament Commentary”