1 Timothy Chapter 6

Work Relationships; Characteristics of False Teachers; the Dangers of Material Gain; the Pursuit of Spiritual Gain

vv. 1-2

INSTRUCTIONS TO BELIEVERS WHO ARE BONDSELMANS

[1 Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. 2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.]

The word ‘bondservants’ actually translated two Greek words [‘zugon’ and ‘douloi’] literally meaning “yoke slaves” and were indentured servants. Evidently they were free to attend worship services of the local church; in this case Ephesus.

They were not necessarily oppressed and treatment of the Jewish bondservants was prescribed in the Old Testament; see Ex. 21:1-6; Lev. 25:38-43; 50-55; Deut. 15:12-18; 24:14-15.

Although its true that many countries still allow indentured servitude, Paul’s instructions have equal value in any culture’s environment…..the manager—laborer relationship at the workplace. That is, for practical application in a western culture, we could substitute the role of ‘manager/supervisor’ for ‘master’ and ‘laborer/worker’ for ‘bondservant’.

Laborers are instructed to respect their supervisors, irrespective of whether they are Christians or not, and honor them so that the name of God and His doctrine would not be blasphemed. The purpose was not to give the enemies of the Gospel any cause to speak badly [i.e., blaspheme] about God’s Word or His people.

The purpose is always to honor and glorify the Lord maintain a credible faith. It has been said that Christians are their own worst enemies—that is because on the one hand unbelievers are constantly looking for excuses to accuse believers and on the other justify their godless behavior.

Paul is saying that laborers [“bondservants”] should obey and respect their supervisors [“masters”] for the sake of their Christian witness. In this way the world won’t be able to speak negatively about Christians and the Gospel they proclaim. Also, they won’t be able to ‘hide’ behind a wall of criticism and will be forced to take believers’ message seriously.

Those servants who have believing masters have a greater challenge in that they may feel they are owed partiality or favoritism from a believing brother or sister in Christ. However, both the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures preclude showing favoritism because it is considered evil by God and can lead to all sorts of division and strife. Refer to Ex. 23:3; Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 27:19; Mal. 2:9; Luke 20:21; 1 Tim. 5:21; Jam. 2:1-4, 8-9; 3:17.

When expectations of partiality are not met, it could lead to a believing laborer despising his/her believing supervisor. Paul says rather serve supervisors faithfully and give them grief because they are ones who are able to benefit others who themselves are loved by God.

Timothy was supposed to seriously and consistently teach these things. The obvious reason was so that faith, love and grace would be nurtured within the church.

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1 A good example of such a slave was Philemon’s bondservant, Onesimus whom Paul had led to salvation in Jesus Christ after he ran away [Phil. 1:10].
vv. 3-5  THE CHARACTERISTICS & ‘FRUIT’ OF FALSE TEACHERS

[3] If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.]

Paul shifts gears and turns again to the importance of the subject of spiritual health; that is, sound doctrine and practical application of one’s faith. In doing so he will expose the true nature of false teachers, summarize their traits and reveal the spiritually toxic consequences of tolerating their false teaching.

Paul first describes the underlying schemes of a false teacher; which are (a) teaching things different from the Apostle Paul’s teachings; (b) not accepting [lit. ‘come towards’] the words of the Lord Jesus Christ and (c) not accepting sound doctrine consistent with godly living.

He then gives several traits that characterize a false teacher: (i) pride, (ii) ignorance and (iii) obsession with disputes and arguments over words. All of these things are contrary to living a godly, Christ-like life.

PRIDE is something God hates {Prov. 6:16-17} and is the opposite of the Christian quality of humility, which is appropriate in all circumstances. The Greek word used here literally means ‘envelop in smoke’; that is, puff up with gas. 2

IGNORANCE is inexcusable {Rom. 1:20} and demonstrates the futility of human wisdom, hardness of heart, understanding that has been darkened and a life alienated from the things of God. The two Greek words used here literally mean “to comprehend or understand no one and nothing”. Note that this eventually leads to an ungodly and greedy lifestyle. [In vv.9-10 we will see how serious this really is.].

OBSESSION WITH DISPUTES & ARGUMENTS is a major distraction and detrimental to the spiritual life and growth of any church. The word translated ‘obsessed’ literally means ‘to be sick’ from a diseased appetite and in the New Testament is used only here. Metaphorically the word describes an ailment of the mind, a mental illness, and as such a perverse fondness of something. In this case getting sick pleasure out of causing disputes, questions and arguments over words.

The word for ‘disputes’ used here means to seek out a controversy or cause doubts and questions.

The phrase ‘arguments over words’ used here translates a single compound Greek word [‘logomachia’], which literally means ‘to war over words’. [Note that the word ‘macho’ is derived from the latter half of this word]. The word implies arguing over trivial differences or interpretations of words; it refers to someone who is looking for a fight over words. In the New Testament the word is used only here.

2 The picture that comes to mind is the scene from The Wizard of Oz where the wizard is behind the curtain and pulling levers to make all that smoke and noise and so artificially make himself bigger and scarier than he really is. This word is used in Matt. 12:20 as an adjective for smoldering flax and elsewhere in the New Testament is used only by Paul here; also in 1 Tim. 3:6 where the word is translated as ‘puffed up with pride’ and 2 Tim. 3:4 where it is translated ‘haughty or conceited’.
Being preoccupied with sustaining disputes and arguments over the meaning or definition of some Biblical words and phrases is useless, vain and a waste of one’s time and energy. Such activity will naturally produce spiritual stagnation and confusion among the body of believers. This is such an important issue that Paul will reiterate this danger in his second letter to Timothy by saying, “But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife” {2 Tim. 2:23}.

Note that these three ungodly traits basically describe the state of an unbeliever! In his separate letter to the church at Ephesus Paul describes this more fully;

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.—Eph. 4:17-19

The seeds of pride, ignorance and obsession with disputed words will naturally produce corresponding bad fruit—it’s the ‘law of sowing and reaping’. The underlying themes and traits of false teachers will have consequences; there are results that are inevitable.

So Paul next lists five results ['bad fruit'] produced by false teachings: (1) envy, (2) strife, (3) reviling, (4) evil suspicions and (5) useless wranglings. These are all to be considered “works of the flesh” {Gal. 5:19-21}.

Let’s take these one at a time.

**Envy** here means ‘ill-will’ and comes from a word that means ‘to shrivel or wither’ as a result of being spoiled or ruined by any process. Figuratively, it refers to the ‘rot’ of moral compromise over being jealous over something or someone. This word is used to describe the religious rulers ['“chief priests and elders”'] that handed Jesus over to Pontius Pilate {Matt. 27:18; Mk. 15:10}.

**Strife** here means ‘quarreling’ and a general attitude of contention and feuding.

**Reviling** here is the Greek word ['blasphemia'] which is usually used in relation to speaking evil about God’s character and the things of God. It refers generally to any mocking or injurious speech such as slander against another person, which of course includes God3.

**Evil suspicions** here are from two Greek words meaning to have your mind clouded under hurtful or malicious thoughts; refers to ‘surmising or associating evil intentions’ to others.

**Useless wranglings** here translates a single Greek word ['diaparatribe'] from which we get our English word ‘diatribe’. It refers to constant arguing that is intended to cause friction and irritation. The KJV translates this as “perverse disputings” and the NAS as “constant friction”. It would describe a person who is constantly ‘stirring the pot’ to cause trouble and friction between church members.

3 The word “Devil” ['Diabolos'], which literally means ‘to throw at or through’ with the intent of knocking down, is actually used to describe a ‘slanderer’ and is one of his major traits; such as his questioning, “has God said?” in an effort to continually cast doubt about God’s character and purpose.
Paul now gives three additional traits of false teachers which produce this spiritually harmful “bad fruit”. In addition to (i) pride, (ii) ignorance and (iii) obsession with disputes and arguments over words; false teachers are (iv) corrupt in their thinking, (v) destitute of the Truth and (vi) believe that godly living is a means to obtain wealth.

**Corrupt in their thinking** means that their thinking is rotten—they have “stinking thinking”. The word used here for ‘corrupt’ is related to the word translated ‘envy’ in v.4 and means ‘to rot thoroughly, through and through’ referring to the way these men think. The word describes a process that causes something to perish or spoil thus completely destroying its intended purpose or usefulness. False teachers are men who think like the Devil whose teaching comes to rot, destroy and kill the flock of believers!

**Destitute in Truth** where ‘destitute’ is a compound Greek word [‘apo+stereo’] literally meaning to ‘deprive off of’ the truth and refers to starving the truth. It means that false teachers keep back the Truth of God’s Word and spiritually starve people. It results in people that are spiritually emaciated and weak; worthless to accomplish anything for the LORD.

**Believe godliness is a means to get rich** simply means that false teachers are in the ministry for the money and to exploit believers to get wealthy. The ‘name-it-claim-it’ preachers fall into this category. There are several modern examples of this and most of them are on religious TV.

To summarize, false teachers are people who are arrogant, ignorant, disobedient, faithless and greedy, who think like the Devil and whose teaching produces the same kind of people.

If false teachers are not stopped, the final result will be a church seething in unhealthy doctrine and leaving the believers spiritually impoverished—this is a major issue that needs to be identified and avoided.

The solution? Paul simply says to withdraw from such men, which implies having nothing to do with them. Don’t give them any support or a platform for their false teaching. Paul did not want Timothy or any other church leader charged with ‘guilt by association’.

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**vv. 6-10**

**Godliness with contentment is great gain**

[6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.]

[“Now godliness with contentment is great gain”] This is a great Christian proverb. The word translated ‘contentment’ here literally means ‘to be self-satisfied’ and refers to being satisfied with what one has and describes an outlook that is at peace with what one has. It has been said that for a person that considers nothing to be enough—everything is not enough.

The richest man in the world is the one who is satisfied with all that he has. Now add ‘godliness’ on top of that and one really has everything. That is what Paul is saying.
He then reminds us that when we are born we bring nothing of material value with us; only our soul. When we die it is a sure thing that we take nothing of material value with us. So why worry about pursuing all these material things?

When I was employed with the Hughes Aircraft Corp I had to travel to the Hughes Malibu Research Facility in Malibu, California for consultation on a project I was working on. This facility was located in the hills overlooking the beach a couple of miles away. We meet in the second floor office of a key researcher whose window faced directly towards the turquoise blue ocean and down onto the beach—it was a spectacularly beautiful view! As we were discussing the technical aspects of my data I couldn't help but be distracted by the view and I kept glancing out the window. Since I was becoming a little envious I asked him, “How do you get any work done with a view like that?” His reply was simple and unexpected, “Oh, you get used to it.” It taught me that although the ‘grass always seems greener on the other side’ or, in this case, the view is always better near the ocean; contentment in material things is relative. That I too, even though I thought I would be more than content with such a view as this, would eventually grow used to it and apathetic towards it. The view in reality had no practical usefulness in making work more productive. Godliness with contentment indeed is great gain.

A believer is to be content with the basic necessities of life; food and clothing; in a sense, everything else is a bonus.

Jesus describes this perfectly in Matt. 6:19-34: the following are excerpts will suffice to demonstrate how precious godliness with contentment is:

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also......You cannot serve God and mammon......Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?......Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?......Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?......Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble”.

But, on the other hand, those that ‘desire to be rich’ will unavoidably “fall into temptation and a snare”. The Greek word for ‘fall into’ is used to describe someone falling into a pit or into the hands of thieves. This is what the sin does; it causes one to fall into a “pit” of despair, frustration, anxiety, discouragement, envy, fear and ultimately destroys the individual as they spiritually starve and languish in a ‘pit’ of their own making.

The desire to be rich is perfectly illustrated in the following parable that Jesus gave:

Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”—Luke 12:16-21
Note the harmful effects to those that are obsessed with getting wealthy: they “fall into” the following self-destructive things:

- **Temptation**
- **A snare**
- **Many foolish and harmful lusts**

This is Satan’s ultimate goal: he cannot attack or defeat God directly so he does the next best thing; he attacks that which has been created in God’s image—man {Gen. 1:26}. His purpose is to use temptations and snares to destroy mankind physically [the flesh], emotionally [the soul], and spiritually [the spirit]. This is the primary method or scheme that Satan [the ‘accuser’ & ‘adversary’] uses against people.

Paul is saying that this is especially true of those who are covetousness and greedy to get rich. It also explains why con artists are so successful, by tangling ‘get rich quick’ schemes in front of people that are gullible they ensnare and take advantage of them because they want to easily get rich. The temptation leads them right into the snare as Paul says here.

In Eph. 6:11 Paul tells us; “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

It is interesting to note that the Greek word translated ‘wiles’ in this verse is [‘methodeia’] where we get our English word ‘method’. In the Greek it literally means ‘to travel with’ so another rendering of this verse would be “…..that you may be able to withstand traveling with the devil.”

The word for ‘temptation’ used here is the classic one which literally means “putting to the proof or test” as an assayer would do to gold ore. Oftentimes this word is used in connection with God allowing a believer to go through adversity or some kind of trouble to serve as a test to prove a person’s godly character, faith and personal holiness.

Not carefully, God does not ‘tempt’ anyone for evil’s sake; He ‘tests’ individuals to help them grow spiritually and to bring out the faith in them [metaphorically this is what an assayers job is].

In the context used here ‘temptation’ describes the negative testing of a carnal desire for wealth. Such a strong desire will have the effect of putting oneself in a situation which is doomed to failure and which leads to further foolish and harmful lusts.

The word for ‘snare’ used here refers to ‘a trap’ specifically described by a box or cage propped up by a notched stick that is attached to a string. When the bird or animal is inside the cage the string is pulled suddenly and the cage drops down trapping the unsuspecting animal. Such is the sinister trap of the desire to be rich.

The word for ‘foolish’ literally means ‘instead of or without thinking’ and could be graciously translated ‘unwise’ or more commonly, ‘stupid’ or ‘dumb’. Paul is saying that desiring to be rich is **not a very smart thing to do**.

The word for ‘harmful’ literally means ‘injurious’ and implies a self-inflicted injury. It reminds me of the joke where the patient is telling the doctor; “Doctor, doctor!—it hurts when I do this!” and the doctor’s reply is, “Well then don’t do that!” Note that this is the only time in the New Testament that this Greek word is used.
Interestingly, the word translated ‘lusts’ here comes from a Greek word which embodies the idea of ‘panting after’ in a display of hot-blooded passion. The Psalmist on the other hand, says that our souls should “pant after God” instead {Ps. 42:1}.

This is all reminiscent of the joke about a mother calling out to her little boy who is in the cookie pantry, “Johnny, what are you doing in there?” and the little boy’s response, “I’m fighting temptation!”

The cookie pantry is not the place to be if you are fighting the urge or temptation to eat a cookie!

Paul is saying that the desire to get rich puts one in harm’s way as far as temptation is concerned. It’s like shooting yourself in the foot because when you desire to eat cookies your desire it puts you in the cookie pantry so-to-speak. This is not the place you want to be if you want to avoid many foolish and harmful cravings for cookies. Now extend this analogy to something more serious and dangerous to one’s spiritual life.

Note that allowing oneself to be overcome by temptations, snares, foolish and harmful desires have an inescapable consequence; in the end they drown people in destruction and perdition.

The Greek words translated ‘destruction’ and ‘perdition’ used here are related; they are the same words but the latter basically has the prefix ‘apo’, meaning ‘away from’, added to it. Paul uses both words because there are various degrees of destruction.

The word translated ‘destruction’ means ‘to destroy or bring to ruin’ so that the object which is destroyed is rendered worthless for its intended use.

On the other hand, the word translated ‘perdition’ takes this a step further. The word literally means to ‘destroy away from’, i.e. to ‘fully and utterly destroy’, and infers that the destruction is beyond repair—it is permanent. The object which is destroyed is metaphorically sent to oblivion—as if it never existed!

Note, this word is directly related to a word used for the name of the king of demonic angels released from the “bottomless pit” {Rev. 9:11}; the “Destroyer” [‘Apollyon’]. In the Old Testament, the equivalent word [‘Abaddon’] refers to a place rather than a person {see Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Prov. 15:11; 27:20}. In the New Testament this place could refer to either SHEOL/HADES or ultimately the LAKE OF FIRE, burning with brimstone {Rev. 20:19} from which of course there is no return.

Note what James says about the progression of temptation:

> Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.
> — Jam. 1:13-15

But note also that those who resist temptation, they who endure it and overcome it by faith {1 John 5:4-5}, will be blessed and also; “…..receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” {Jam. 1:12}.

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4 In 2 Tim. 4:8 Paul will write about another crown; the ‘crown of righteous’, which will be given to all those in Heaven who have longed for and loved Christ Jesus’ appearing.
The mind that is set on getting wealthy for wealth’s sake will be prone to having many foolish and harmful cravings which ultimately end in being overcome [drowned] by self-destructive behavior. Such desires sadly leaves a ‘wasted’ life in its wake.

Here’s how James puts it:

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that”. But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.—Jam. 4:13-17

Note the physically and spiritual harmful results of loving money or greed:

*Succumb to all kinds of evil* = would include bribery, bearing false witness, and could include murder, drugs, sexual immorality [i.e., pornography] and theft—the four big sins that people during the GREAT TRIBULATION refuse to repent of! {See Rev. 9:21}.

*Stray from the faith* = literally wandered away from their faith.

*Pierce themselves through with many sorrows* = sorrows which penetrate through completely and sink down with consuming pain.

There are many Biblical examples of those whose greed became a trap sending them into destruction and death. See the examples of the rich young ruler {Matt. 19:16-22, Mk. 10:24-25} and Ananias & Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11.

My wife and I knew a young pastor in a former church in Orange County who was greatly beloved by his closest friends and confidants. One couple, whose husband had become wealthy as a real estate agent at the time, gave this pastor a large monetary gift to show their love and appreciation for him. The gift was a substantial sum of silver holdings in the stock market. He told me later that silver was a curse. Every morning this pastor would normally get up, spend time in prayer and studying God’s word. But after he got the silver all he could think about was how is his silver doing today—the asset had become a disruption to his spiritual life. Then one day the ‘bottom’ fell out of the silver market as those who had a corner in it sold it off. This pastor sold his as well and now could testify that it was the best thing that could have happened.

For this pastor, at least for a while, the money he had in silver become a snare and he pierced himself through with many sorrows. Not until he got rid of this source [i.e. snare] of greed could he return to a godly and contented life.

This is why Jesus said,

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”—Matt 19:23-24
v. 11-12 ➢ CHRISTIANS ARE TO PURSUE SPIRITUAL GAIN

[11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.]

Paul continues the theme of this part of his letter [a believer’s spiritual health] and elaborates on the secret of godliness with contentment.

In order to be godly and content, the first thing Paul says is to flee from the snares and temptations that are spiritually harmful and which would cause a person to stray from the faith.

To flee means to ‘run away and escape’. Note the things that God’s word tells believers to flee and not stand around with:

- Sexual immorality {1 Cor. 6:18}
- Idolatry {1 Cor. 10:14}
- The love of money/desire to be rich {1 Tim. 6:11}
- Youthful lusts {2 Tim. 2:22}

Note that in similar fashion in 2 Tim. 2:22 Paul exhorts Timothy to flee from youthful desires but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace as he does here in v.11. This should be a significant clue that pursuing spiritual gain and not wasting time pursuing material gain is extremely important for a believer.

Instead of straying down a path that takes one away from the Faith, Paul admonishes Timothy, and all believers, to flee the temptations that the love of money offers and instead pursue those things that result in spiritual gain.

He then lists six things that characterize a life of obedience and faith to Jesus Christ and sound doctrine and these are in direct contrast with the traits of false teachers.

- Righteousness
- Godliness
- Faith
- Love
- Patience
- Gentleness

In so doing, the believer engages himself/herself in a spiritual battle, fighting the ‘good fight of faith’. It is interesting to note that it is in his letter to the same church [Ephesus] that Timothy was a pastor that Paul writes about the SPIRITUAL ARMOR GOD has given believers to fight this ‘good fight of faith’ {ref. Eph. 6:12-18}.

Thus, although believers are admonished to flee temptation, armed with prayer and the spiritual BATTLE ARMOR OF GOD they are admonished to stand and fight evil {1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12}—including Satan.
Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.—Eph. 6:10-14, 18

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.—2 Cor. 10:3-6

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.—James 4:7

Note the amazing fact that if a believer resists the Devil by submitting himself/herself to God through prayer, fasting, the Word of God and the putting on the spiritual armor—he will flee from them!

Now when Paul tells Timothy to ‘lay hold on eternal life’ he is not saying “strive for your salvation” as if a believer must do something to gain it. No, he means to take advantage of and utilize what a person who is saved has received: the power of the Holy Spirit, direct prayer access to the THRONE OF GRACE {Heb. 4:16}, the love of God in Christ Jesus, spiritual armor, etc., etc. Note that he will repeat this phrase again in v.19 in the context of storing up treasure [i.e., ‘a good foundation’] in Heaven.

This is similar to what Paul admonishes the Philippian believers to do; “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” {Phil. 2:12-13}.

To LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE means yielding to God in love, faithfulness and obedience.

[“to which you were also called”] Note that both the spiritual warfare AND the benefits of eternal life are ‘inherited’ when a person is converted and saved; that is, when person confesses that Jesus died for their sins and is LORD sins and believes He was raised from the dead.

Unlike the harmful consequences of false teaching {see vv.4-5}, fighting the good fight of faith and laying hold onto eternal life will result in a good testimony and witness before many people.

vv. 13-16 ➤ THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE BELIEVER & THE MAJESTY OF GOD
[13 I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, 15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.]
Paul now urges Timothy [gives him a personal message that is near and dear], invoking the presence of God and His power to give life to all things and before Christ Jesus, to keep his injunction, namely:

- Flee ungodly temptation
- Pursue godly virtues [righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness]
- Fight the good fight of faith
- Lay hold on eternal life

Timothy is to do this without spot [lit. ‘without stain’] and blameless; that is, faithfully, without any guilt, without wavering. He was charged with doing this until the Lord Jesus Christ’s Second Coming [which is always imminent]. In Timothy’s case it was to be until he died and so it is for all believers!

Paul gives the example of Pontius Pilate which can be found in Matt. 27:11-14; John 18:33-38; 19:7-13

Paul then succinctly gives a wonderful hymn of praise and worship to the God of all things—“the MIGHTY”. Compare 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev 17:8-14; Rev 19:11-21.

What are some of the qualities of the King of kings and LORD of lords? Paul lists a few of them here:

- Immortality
- Dwelling in unapproachable light
- Cannot be seen nor is seen by man
- Honor
- Everlasting power

These are all attributes that make God worthy of worship. Note the reasons for worship given among those in Heaven:

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created”.—Rev. 4:11

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!” And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!” Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.—Rev 5:12-14

All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen”.—Rev 7:11-12

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!”—Rev 19:1
Paul closes this section of his letter with an “Amen”—let these things be so.

The fact that Paul used this word in 1 Tim. 1:17 and again in the last verse of his letter {v.21}; as well as using it twice in his second letter to Timothy {2 Tim. 4:18, 22}, indicates that he seems to use “amen” to end major sections or themes of his letter.

In this case Paul closes this letter with a final section {vv.17-21} by giving his final words on the two issues; (1) additional exhortations regarding the proper use of wealth and (2) reaffirming Timothy’s responsibility to protect the teaching of true [healthy] doctrine and stay true to the Faith.

vv. 17-19 ➤ **FINAL EXHORTATIONS FOR THOSE WHO ARE WEALTHY**

[17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.]

Timothy was to command those who were already rich in this life to be humble and remain humble. For scripture says that, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” {Prov. 3:34; Jam. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5}.

The wealthy were not to use their wealth to take advantage of people nor trust in their wealth to get their own way. They were to remember that riches in this life are ‘uncertain’ and can evaporate overnight—“here today, gone tomorrow”. Rather, those who are rich were to trust in the living God who gives all things richly so that everyone can enjoy life.

The Dramatic Example of Solomon—A Case History of Trusting in Riches

- **Deut. 17:15-20** ➤ Prohibitions for Kings.
- **1 Kings 3:1-14; 4:29-34; 10:21-29** ➤ Solomon’s faithfulness & glorious kingdom.
- **1 Kings 11:1-13** ➤ Solomon turns away from the LORD.
- **Eccles. 2:1-11; 12:10-14** ➤ Solomon: Before & After he comes to his senses.

Paul was addressing a society comparable to that of a Third World Country where there was no middle class and there was a great disparity between those who were rich and those that were poor. In comparison to this standard, the western world’s middle class would be considered “wealthy” and most of the Christians in Europe and North America would be considered ‘rich’. Therefore these words would be applicable to them.

The rich are admonished to do ‘good’, which is another way of saying to be faithful and exemplify a righteous, Christ-honoring life. They are not to strive to be rich monetarily, but to be rich in ‘good works’ and have a generous heart and be willing to share. They were to remember that; “We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” {v.7} and “having food and clothing, with these we shall be content” {v.8}.

In this way those that are rich in this life would store up treasure on a good foundation for the life to come in Heaven. By being generous and sharing what they have with the needy they would be ‘rich in good works’ and would be ‘laying hold of eternal life’.

What does it mean practically to ‘lay hold of eternal life’? Paul uses this phrase in v.12 in reference to “fighting the good fight of faith”. And in Phil. 2:12-13 Paul tells believers to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”.

1 Timothy Chapter 6

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It appears that ‘laying hold on eternal life’ means living your Christian faith in this life like you really believe in the next life. Among other things, it means using one’s spiritual gift(s) for the glory of God; it means maintaining a faithful testimony and obediently living out God’s will. In short, it means living every day knowing you have eternal life ahead of you and making decisions with this in mind and acting accordingly.

vv. 20-21  |  **Final Exhortation to Timothy to Remain Faithful & Persevere**

[20 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—21 by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.]

The final words of any letter are noteworthy for they summarize the main purpose. Here Paul admonishes Timothy in a most personal way, “O Timothy”, to guard and watch over the sound doctrine and teaching that was committed to his trust. In other words, he has a big responsibility to maintain and continue the ministry that Paul began in teaching healthy doctrine. Refer to notes on 2 Tim. 1:7-11 to see how successful Timothy was.

While being careful to keep those teachings committed to his trust, Timothy was to avoid being distracted and occupied with ‘profane’ and ‘idle babble’.

The word ‘profane’ ['bebélōs'] literally means ‘step across a door-way’ and refers to that which is common, ungodly and unholy. The word for ‘idle babble’ ['kenophonia'] literally means ‘empty or vain sounds’. In other words we are to avoid (a) unholy and ungodly practices and activities and (b) refrain from wasting our time on vain, futile and worthless discussions related to useless and unproductive matters.

In a special category are contradictions [Gk. ‘antithesis’] that are falsely called knowledge. Note that the Greek word translated ‘knowledge’ here can also be translated ‘science’.

The best modern example of ‘false science’ is Darwinism—the theory of Macroevolution that all biological life is the result of slow and gradual changes initiated through natural selection and mutations and not a supernatural act of God. This belief is founded on a ‘blind’ adherence to the dogmatic belief that the natural world is all there is or can be. Darwinism is also based on conclusions which are contrary to the scientific evidence which, by definition, makes it a false science.

Even those who profess to believe have strayed and followed after false knowledge and subsequently false teaching. Paul is concerned that this trend is minimized by the proper application of sound [healthy] doctrine and sound [healthy] teaching.

Just as Paul opened in his letter with a greeting of ‘grace’ {1 Tim. 1:2} so he closes his letter with the blessing, ‘Grace be with you’. Grace is an undeserved gift and in this case it refers to the blessings of God.

Note that a Christian is to grow in both grace and the [true] knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The apostle Peter closes his second letter with:

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”—2 Pet. 3:18

Paul closes his first letter to Timothy with an “Amen” meaning “let these things be so” or “so be it”. Paul also close his second letter in like fashion {2 Tim. 4:22}. Note that the word ‘Amen’ is also the last and final word of the last book of the Bible; Rev. 22:21.

AND SO BE IT!
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