**1 Timothy: 6:1-21 – Fight the Good Fight**

As Paul closes his letter to Timothy in Chapter 6, he leaves his young mentor and the church in Ephesus with a fierce challenge to finish strong. In the beginning of the chapter he briefly deals with a controversy among believers and then reminds Timothy one final time to be on the look for false teachers. This needs to be a reminder to God’s leaders of the importance of: 1) Knowing God’s truth and 2) Guarding our hearts and minds with God’s truth. When you read scripture and you see a theme repeated it means pay attention. As Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-25 that anyone who hears his word and obeys it is like a person who built their home on a solid rock. That when the rains and winds and floods beat on the house it did not fall because of its foundation. A solid blueprint starts with the right foundation to build on. In closing, Paul challenges Timothy and all His children with words of encouragement and challenge.

Everyone studying this letter read 1 Timothy 6: 1-21 on your own. Then if you are in a group setting, have someone read it out loud.



**Observation:** What do you see?

1. What stands out in the sixth chapter as being important?
2. Are there any comparisons or contrasts that stand out in the chapter?
3. Key words or phrases that are used?
4. The issue of slave owner/slave comes up in verse 1-2. Where else do we see this in Paul’s writings? (Cross reference Philemon)
5. Pay mind to Paul’s words regarding wealth. Compare them to what Jesus said about wealth. What should the believer’s mindset be towards treasures on earth?

**Honor Your Master – vv 1-2**

Paul spends chapter 5 dealing with a number of items to instruct the church on and he begins Chapter 6 with a final word of instruction to those who were Christian slaves. The topic of slavery is a very controversial topic in our world today. But in Roman times it was a common part of the culture. While slaves were the property of the owner, in many ways they were better off than people were providing for themselves. The slave had food and shelter provided for them and could perform many different functions from general laborer to a lawyer. In many ways it paralleled an employer/employee relationship. Paul addressing this topic points to the fact that some in Ephesus were struggling with their work ethic in this slavery environment. His goal is to point to their testimony in Christ.

** *Helpful Notes:*** **OVERVIEW OF 1 TIMOTHY 6:1-2:** Paul starts by charging any who were under the yoke of slavery to regard their masters as worthy of honor. Again this must be put in context. By understanding that the master was providing the slave with housing, provisions, and allowing them to start a family; many slaves had a good life. This is not what we typically envision with slavery as there are many evils that are associated with the practice. This is not the context that is being addressed here. In verse 1, Paul is speaking about masters who are not believers. That even non-believing masters deserved the honor from the slaves. Paul gives a reason for this as well: That God’s name and teaching would not be reviled. This is a reminder that no matter what the circumstance our testimony is always on trial with the world. Our attitudes and choices have consequences. If we act outside of the commands of God’s word we put God’s name and teachings in question by those who do not believe. This is not the testimony God wants for His people.

Paul then addresses the slave whose master is a fellow believer. In these cases the slave had the mindset that since they were both Christians, they could take advantage of their mutual love for the Lord and slack on the job. But Paul contradicts that thinking by saying that because their master was a brother in Christ, they should all the more put in their best efforts to honor their fellow believer and master. He the closes verse 2 by saying TEACH and URGE these things. This emphasis points to the importance of righteous living by the believer.

**What is the master’s responsibility to the slave? (See Ephesians 6:5-9)**

One last thought regarding the topic of slavery. The practice is still going on in many places of the world. The question often gets brought up, “***Why did God not end slavery?”*** It is important to understand a few key points regarding this topic:

* Slavery is a system that is a direct result of a world fallen in sin.
* God’s word never condones or praises the act of slavery.
* God’s word teaches believers how to honor God in even the most difficult of circumstances.
* Jesus and the church’s direct mission is to reach the lost with the Gospel. It is not to create a social revolution.
* Only with the Gospel and transformed lives can the true issue of slavery be addressed completely.
* God will judge sin.

**Read 6:3-10 – The Motivation of False Teachers**

Paul revisits the topic of false teachers again but does so by exposing their motivations. By exposing their motivations, he put Christians leaders on notice to guard themselves from this type of sin.

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**Interpretation – Ask a Question:** What’s the author’s main intent or purpose?

1. Paul explains 3 characteristics that define a false teacher in verse 3-4:

- They teach a different doctrine

- They do not agree with sound words of the Lord. They deny the true teachings of the Scriptures. They reject teaching in accord with godliness. Their lives will be marked by sin.

- They are puffed up with conceit and lack understanding of God’s truth.

1. In verses 4-5 we see that false teachers thrive on controversy. The root meaning of the word “controversy” refers to speculation or arguments over words. This simply means that because the false teachers lack a true understanding of God’s word, they create divisions by attacking parts of Scripture. These “word battles” result in:
* Envy
* Dissention
* Slander
* Evil Suspicion
* Constant Friction

He calls those who believe the false teachers “depraved in mind.” The word depraved means morally corrupt. Paul also calls them “deprived of the truth.” The word deprived means to steal or rob. The false teachers were stealing truth from those who would follow them into apostasy. All the while the false teacher’s motivation is exposed as using “godliness” as a means of gain. A contemporary example of this today is defined by the “Prosperity Gospel.”

1. Godliness produces contentment **(vs. 6-8)**
	* The true marks of someone spiritually wealthy is a person who is content in whatever they have and living a godly life. **(See Philippians 4:11-13)**
	* Tangible items should not be our motivation. We came into the world with nothing and cannot take any of this world with us. But we can store treasures in heaven. **(See Matthew 6:19-21)**
2. The Destruction of the Greedy **(vs. 9-10)**
* The greedy, in this case the false teachers, but all who desire to pursue wealth become consumed by the pursuit and accumulation of worldly possession. It is described by Paul as:

- A Temptation - A Snare

- Senseless and harmful desires

* The end result is described as plunging people into ruin and destruction. Because THE LOVE of money (not money itself) is the root of all kinds of evil. Resulting in apostasy and self-destruction.

** *Helpful Notes:*** **HIGHLIGHTS OF 1 TIMOTHY 6:11-21:** **FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT!**

**vs. 11 –** Paul exhorts Timothy to flee these things (the love of money and anything associated with false teaching. He calls him a “Man of God” which means someone who speaks for God and is in direct opposition to the false teachers he was facing. Instead of worldly treasures Christians and their leaders should be pursuing, Righteousness, Godliness, Faith, Love, Steadfastness and Gentleness.

**vs. 12 –** Fight the good fight is a call to war against the spiritual forces of darkness. The word fight is a military and athletic term referring to “agonizing.” It is the picture of self-discipline and extreme effort which are required in this spiritual battle. Paul tells Timothy to gain a complete grasp of the matters surrounding the truth of his salvation to which he was called and witnessed publicly to others.

**vs. 13-16 -** Paul charges Timothy with the task of keeping the commandment of God until the return of Christ. By using the example of Christ before Pilate, Paul is saying that just like Christ kept his testimony in the face of his own death, so should Timothy remain faithful. This commandment is the full testimony of God. It is the truth that all God’s pastors are required to keep and remain faithful to. The task is to keep it unstained and free of reproach (disapproval) until Christ returns.

**vs. 17-19** Paul calls Timothy to exhort the rich to humble themselves. To not put their faith in their possessions or position in life but rather on God, who is the provider of everything we can enjoy. If they are to be rich, let them use their wealth for good works. To be generous and ready to share. These are good works that they can store up as treasures in heaven to enjoy when we enter eternity.

**vs. 20-21** Paul closes his letter with one last charge to Timothy to guard the Word of God entrusted to him. He must avoid the traps of false teachers and their word battles. He must not fall prey to false teaching that is “false knowledge” which has led to apostasy of some.

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**Application – Put into practice**

• **Honor Your Master** – ***Colossians 3:23, Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.***We must teach God’s people that by honoring their employer they are bringing honor to the name of the Lord and their testimony of His word.

**• Avoid the Love of Wealth –** The temptation to trade godliness and sound teaching for the treasures of wealth is a weapon the enemy uses to disqualify leaders of God. Pastors and all of God’s children must find peace that comes from Godly living which makes us eternally rich in heaven verses the temporary wealth of this world that will ultimately burn away.

* **Fight the Good Fight –** Ephesians 6 speaks of spiritual warfare. We are in a battle, and we must be laser focused on the objective of the ministry we are called to, which is to make disciples of Christ. It is easy to get distracted and sadly many have fallen away but, if we hold firm to the salvation we are called to and faithfully teach the whole truth of God’s Word we will be found faithful in the end.



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