

Fighting the Good Fight

A Study in First Timothy

LESSON SIX

Prayerfully read through 1st Timothy, chapter six.

Paul gave Timothy some instructions in the last chapter on the treatment of different groups of people in the church. As we begin chapter six, we see his attention on another specific group of people in the church, namely slaves and slave owners. As we look at this group of people, we need to remember that slavery was prevalent during this time, even commonplace. It is said that there were some 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire, and while the Bible never encourages slavery, we see from all the way back in Genesis that He did allow it. People became slaves for all different reasons. Some became slaves after being captured as prisoners of war. Some were born into slavery, and some voluntarily became slaves to pay off a debt. Those voluntary slaves were known as “bondservants.” Christianity is what eventually abolished slavery.

As we look at the first two verses in the opening of this chapter, much of what is addressed to slaves and their masters can be applied to **employees** and **employers**.

1. Looking at the **first half** of **verse 1**, what does Paul say to the slaves (or bondservants)?
2. Looking at the **second half** of this verse, what **reason** does he give?
3. The reason Paul gives in verse 1 was something of the utmost concern to him. How would you relate this to an employee and employer? Have you ever thought about how your behavior toward your boss and your attitude at work can affect your witness for Christ? Do you have an experience you can share concerning this? Share your thoughts.

4. Record Paul's encouragement to slaves and bondservants in **verse 2**.

Paul ends this verse telling Timothy to **teach and exhort these things**. This was an important instruction for both the believing slaves and the believing slave owners. **David Guzik** shares, **“This teaching was especially important in the ancient world, where slaves might be treated very differently from master to master, and where there was sometimes intense racism and hatred between slaves and masters.”**

5. While there were still **positions of authority** in place, Christianity changed attitudes towards the value and worth of all humanity. Look up **Galatians 3:28** and **Colossians 3:11**. What do these verses teach us about the value of those who are in Christ?
6. In **verses 3 through 5**, Paul draws Timothy's attention back to the subject he first addressed at the beginning of this letter, in chapter one. Paul had personal experience dealing with the false teachers who were creeping into the churches. Looking back at **1 Timothy 1:3 & 4**, Paul urged Timothy to charge “some” that they **teach no other doctrine**. What did he state in the second half of **verse 4** of **chapter one** would be the result of allowing these false teachers to remain?
7. Back to chapter six, in **verse 3** Paul says, **“If anyone teaches otherwise...”** and he mentions **three things** that they must **“consent to.”** Name the three things Paul states here.

8. How does Paul describe those who refuse to consent to these things? From **verse 4 & 5**, write down Paul's description these people.

9. At the end of **verse 5**, Paul speaks of those who "**suppose that godliness is a means of gain...**" The first thing we might think of are those ministries that try to swindle people out of their savings with deceitful promises. But what about those who come to Christ because of what He might do for them? Look up **John 6:2** and **6:26**. What do these verses say were the reasons many of these people came to Jesus?

10. How about **us**? Are we sometimes guilty of coming to the Lord only to get our own needs met? How does this speak to your heart? Share your thoughts.

11. In the last part of **1 Timothy 6:5** what does Paul tell Timothy **his response** to those pursuing "godliness as a means of gain" should be?

David Guzik writes, "**While not ignoring the blessings of following Jesus Christ, we must proclaim the need to follow Jesus because He is God, and we owe Him everything as our Creator. What is right before God, and what glorifies Him, is more important than whatever benefit we may gain. We need to see Christians who are more concerned with what glorifies God than with what benefits me.**"

12. Write out Paul's statement in **verse 6**.

The Greek word used for "contentment" is *autarkeia*, which means "self-satisfaction" or "sufficiency." Commentator **William Barclay** states that contentment is "**...a frame of mind which is completely independent of all outward things, and which carries the secret of happiness within itself. Contentment never comes from the possession of external things.**"

13. This self-satisfaction and sufficiency is not something we can attain from ourselves, however. Look up and record Paul's words in **2 Corinthians 3:5**.

14. Paul gives us good reasons in **1 Timothy 6:7 & 8** for why true contentment is such an important mind-set for us to maintain. Write out those reasons stated in these verses.

15. Paul illustrates the opposite of contentment in **verse 9**. Write down his statement in this verse below.

16. We notice in **verse 10** that money itself is not evil, but the **love** of money. Record the following verses that speak of this.

Luke 8:14 -

Luke 12:16-21 (Read these verses and record Luke 12:20 & 21 -

Revelation 3:17 -

17. In contrast to this, record Paul's admonition to Timothy in **1 Timothy 6:11**.

18. With this pursuit in mind, what further instruction does Paul add to this in **verse 12**?

“Fight the good fight of faith...” This is the title of our study in 1 Timothy. **David Guzik** states, **“This challenge to leave some things and follow hard after some other things isn't just directed to Timothy, but to everyone who would be a man [or woman] of God – as opposed to being a man [or woman] of *this* world. Going God's way – against the flow of this world – won't be easy. Therefore, Timothy had to have a soldier's determination.”**

19. Record what the following Scriptures say about this warfare.

1 Corinthians 9:26 & 27 -

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 -

Ephesians 6:11-13 -

20. This admonition to **fight the good fight**, continues with Paul telling Timothy to **“lay hold on eternal life...”** This wasn't an indication that Timothy, as a believer in Christ, did not already have the gift of eternal life, but that this promise was what he needed to keep **“hold of.”** This was a **battle to the end of the finish line**. It's what his eyes needed to stay focused on. Record the following verses, which speak of the end result of this **good fight of faith**, and the **prize** waiting at the **finish line**.

Philippians 3:20-21 -

Colossians 3:1-4 -

21. This spiritual warfare as a good soldier in Christ was Timothy's calling, and it is also **our calling**. It is the **profession** of our hope, made before the witnesses of all we come in contact with, both inside and outside the church. In verse 14 Paul states this fight is more than an admonition, it is a **command**. Who among the "witnesses" does Paul include in **verse 13** that Timothy had made a good "confession" of faith before?

The example he gives Timothy to follow is the example of Christ's before Pontius Pilate. Paul is telling Timothy that he needs to determine to **maintain** a good confession of faith, even under the most trying circumstances.

22. In **verse 14** Paul tells Timothy he is to keep this commandment, until when?
23. Paul's statement confirms that this spiritual battle will continue, from generation to generation, until Christ returns. It also seems to indicate that Paul thought it quite possible that Christ's return could be in his lifetime. I believe most every generation has held that hope. However, looking at the first part of **verse 15** what does Paul acknowledge about the timing of Christ's coming?
24. Paul goes on, in the rest of **verse 15** and in **verse 16** to declare these glorious truths about our God and Savior. Write these descriptions down.

25. These reminders of Who the God is that we serve, should encourage us in this spiritual battle that we face. What do these other Scriptures add to this?

Romans 11:36 -

Colossians 1:15-17 -

Hebrews 1:3 -

26. In the light of eternity and this great God we serve, how do these Scriptures encourage your heart to **fight the good fight** in the battle you're facing today? Share your thoughts.

27. Looking at life through the perspective of eternity, and seeing how temporary and fleeting this life is, makes evident how foolish we are when we set our minds on the things of earth, rather than the things above. With these thoughts in mind, record Paul's final commands to the "rich" in **verses 17-19 of 1 Timothy**.

28. Paul ends **verse 19** with the same words he had spoken to Timothy back in **verse 12**: that they may **“lay hold on eternal life...”** Missionary **Jim Elliot** once said, **“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”**

The **Bible Knowledge Commentary** adds, **“Wealthy Christians should invest their riches for eternity. Paradoxically it is in this giving away of the possessions which the world considers the key to the good life that a Christian may take hold of the life that is truly life. The alluring but vain and plastic substitutes for life, supplied by an unhealthy attachment to material things, pale into worthlessness when compared with that life which is found in Jesus Christ who is Himself the Life and whom to know is life everlasting.”** Share how this is speaking to your heart today.

29. In **verse 20** Paul concludes this letter to Timothy with this final charge. Write Paul’s words to Timothy below.

These are **powerful words!** This charge given to Timothy, and to all pastors and leaders within the church, is also given to **all believers in Christ**. Paul’s repeated warnings are proof that we need to continually **stay on our guard** against all the persuasive arguments that will come against the pure Gospel we’ve been entrusted to protect. Allowing ourselves to be influenced by “the profane and idle babblings” and the “contradictions of what is **falsely** called knowledge” has led many a believer astray concerning the faith.

Satan’s attack of the **TRUTH** began way back in Genesis, with Eve in the garden. And that relentless attack continues today.

David Guzik states, “Paul had confidence in Timothy and he did trust him. Yet Paul also knew how great the power of seduction is, and how high the stakes are - so he warned, and warned, and warned again. The gospel is a TRUST committed to pastors like Timothy; but also, to all believers. And when that trust is broken, ‘some have strayed concerning the faith.’ We must do all that we can to keep this trust.”

30. Share what your greatest take-away is from this final lesson in chapter six.

31. Looking back on the whole study of this first letter to Timothy, share what spoke most to your heart and what has made the greatest impact on you.

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2023