

1st Timothy Ch 6

“The Secret of Great Gain”

I have thoroughly enjoyed the richness of this letter and I pray that it's given you more wisdom and insight on what it means to lead a godly life, a life that's set apart to Jesus Christ that He might just continue to use you more and more. Again as to where Ch 1 dealt with the church and it's *message*, Ch 2-3 the church and it's *members*, Ch 4 the church and it's *minister*, Ch's 5-6 comprise the church and it's *ministry* both to itself and in the world. Ch 5 spoke mainly of the integrity and respect that we're to have and to issue one to another understanding that we're all family. No one above the other (though certainly there is church order and authority) but we're all co-equals in Christ and as such we're to be delicate regarding our relationships to one another.

In Ch 6 Paul concludes this epistle with some real practical advise (inspired, or more literally breathed by the Holy Spirit) to you and me regarding a number of things including the way that we're to present ourselves in the world, (primarily in the work place). Ch 6 has almost a military essence about it in that it uses such words and phrases as “*Fight* the good fight” “*Keep this commandment*” “*Command* those who are rich” and “*Guard* what was committed to your trust.” We might understand Paul to be the general, giving orders for Timothy to carry out from the Commander in Chief Himself Jesus Christ and In closing he deals primarily with 4 groups of people that he gives Timothy instructions regarding and again as far as we're concerned we'll say #1 “Employees”, #2 “False teachers” (being men of the world) #3 “True teachers” (the man of God) and #4 The rich, or the wealthy believer. and As for how we're going to divide this ch up if you take notes there are 6 words that sort of attach a handle on this ch that serve to give us just a bit of a grip on hopefully bringing further clarity to the text, and just sort of highlight the passage. If you want to write them down they are as follows #1 in Vs 1-2 “Diligence” when it comes to our respective places of employment we're to be diligent regarding the work that's been committed to our trust. #2 in Vs 3-8 we'll say “Discernment” the Holy Spirit is always seeking to give us better discernment regarding the various issues that confront us in life. In this case the discernment deals with identifying false teachers, and discerning what God would desire to be in our lives as opposed to what they teach and preach. #3 Vs9-10 “Destruction” the end result of the false teachers theology and manner of living (as well as those who follow such destructive doctrines) #4 Vs11-16 the encouragement here is unto “Dedication” don't follow after the deceitful doctrines of heretics but pursue that which makes for true godliness, dedicate yourself to those things which make for your eternal benefit, and will profit you throughout eternity. #5 Vs 17-19 we're going to say, “Distribution” a word to the wealthy allow God to use your life as a funnel through which He can distribute His resources knowing that you're one who utilizes that with which God has blessed you to bless others. and Finally #6 Vs 20-21 “Defend” God has committed so much sound doctrine, so much solid teaching to your trust, defend it, guard it, don't let it be stolen away and ripped off by the wiles of the wicked one or his satanic cohorts, defend the faith, fight the good fight.

Vs1-2

What's the word in view here? "Diligence" "serve them" literally, "Be in bondage and absolute submission to them" how many American lives are summed up by the bumper sticker, "I owe, I owe, so off to work I go" and you feel like you're under the yoke. That is "enslaved" to your employer, but what Paul is saying here is that as believers rather than "abhorring" our employers, we're to "honor" them. That is, "esteem them to the highest degree" why? Because they're awesome bosses, and never doing or saying things they shouldn't? Because they're quick to acknowledge you and give you a raise when you need it? Because they're so easy to work for and never on your case? No, but so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed, the way that you work, the effort that you and I put out at the work place gives off a witness to those people of Jesus Christ and What Paul is saying here is don't take 20-25minute breaks when you're given 15, don't take a 45 minute lunch when you're given a ½ hr, don't come to work 5 minutes late and be ready to leave 15 minutes early. Why, because these things cause the non-believer to blaspheme and belittle the name and doctrine of God, Christians with out exception *should be* (not always are), but *should be* the most diligent and hardworking employees out there. Why, because that brings glory to God, but when you're always "witnessing" on company time, taking extended breaks, coming in late, and being ready to leave early and then always arguing that you're due for a raise, they think you're a joke.

If you're employer is a believer, don't expect extra hand outs or slack rules when it comes to your job performance or company protocol because after all "you're brothers" or she's "your sister" "So how could they ask that of me" or "They should understand and give me a break because after all it's kingdom business that I'm about." We're not to expect special treatment from Christian employers, nor are we to hold it against them when they expect a hard days work out of us, but rather we should serve them all the more because the one who is being blessed and benefited isn't just some heathen who's going to squander the increase you bring them, but rather it's a fellow believer who will glorify God with what He's entrusted to them. So no matter whether you work for a believer or a non-believer, I'm to teach and exhort you to be diligent in the work place, don't let God's name bear reproach because of your performance, and seek to be a *blessing* to that brother, or that sister rather than a *burden*. and Know in your own heart that in reality no matter where you're employed, you do what you do as unto the Lord, not as unto man, and if you agreed to work for a certain wage, then why do we complain when that's what we're paid? Col 3:17 sums up what our attitude is to be, "*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*" You're serving the Lord, show diligence as unto Him.

Vs 3-5

If anyone teaches otherwise, or in a manner that is contrary to what he's saying here, so as to take the position that seeks to use godliness as a means of personal financial gain rather than to consent to the words of Jesus Himself who said, *"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves."* Luke 22:25-27 and *"Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave -- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* Matt 20:26-28 You see, the doctrine that accords with godliness will produce a servants heart, one that seeks to bless, not benefit, true godliness doesn't take the position "What's in it for me?" Jesus didn't come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life away, to serve *others*, to bless and benefit *others*. and Paul is saying here that whenever someone seeks to twist God's Word so as to manipulate the circumstances for their own personal gain, they seek to utilize godliness, either in the lives of others or as a cloak for themselves to try and profit personally, then this marks him out as a false teacher and someone who is not true to the principals and precepts of God's Word, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ

But rather they're proud (#1), knowing nothing (#2) and Obsessed (#3) or more literally "sick" or have a "morbid and unhealthy interest" in or with disputes and arguments over words that they like to twist for their own material benefit.

They're *proud* or arrogant, now this should immediately send off a warning signal because Jesus said that to learn of Him would be to learn what? Meekness, gentleness and *humility* of heart, remember, *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart."* Matt 11:29 So the arrogant individual may be learning from someone, but it isn't Jesus, because the one who's learning from Jesus will be *humble* not *haughty*. and So the things they spit out are heretical, now they may sound real spiritual, but as Peter put it they're just blowing smoke, they're full of hot air, *"For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption."* 2 Peter 2:18-19

You see they allure people through the lusts of the flesh, they tell you that if you name it and claim it, by faith it can be yours. "You want that new Mercedes get out there and lay your hands on it in the name of Jesus Christ and claim it for yourself, after all you're a child of the King and Kings kids aren't poor!" and They allure through the lusts of the flesh all the while they're nothing but slaves of corruption themselves. As Peter said, *"They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness."* 2 Peter 2:15

They seek to place your mind on the temporal things of this world, rather than on the things of eternal value. and It results in envy (because I guess they have more faith than me that's why they've got it and I don't) it results in strife, as I do everything I can to get the bigger better in the name of God, reviling, evil suspicions, (Vs5 through "means of gain").

Now that's a serious indictment from the Holy Spirit isn't it? "Corrupt minds and destitute (or absolutely robbed and desolate) of the truth" Why, because they don't teach you to be faithful and work hard (as Paul does here) but rather they teach you to work the faith so you can be rich, ever hear teaching like that? They suppose godliness is a means of financial prosperity, they enter the ministry not to teach the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ but rather to seek a big salary. They seek to manipulate you so as to give to their ministry so God will in return send you some big money, and it's a rip off, it's not biblically sound doctrine. They're self-seeking men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth. Now what are you to do about that situation? How are you to handle that type of circumstance? Try and reason with the guy, or seek to be a light to him to see if you can't convince him to repent? No, "From such with draw yourself" just get away from them lest they begin to persuade *you*, and allure *you*, as they continually appeal to *your* flesh, just remove yourself from that situation and have nothing to do with it.

Vs6

Now the type of men that Paul is speaking of will say, "Godliness brings great gain which will bring about contentment in your life" but that's not what the Holy Spirit says. The Holy Spirit says, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Notice it doesn't say, "godliness with covetousness is great gain" to many "ministers" seek to blend godliness and covetousness, but that is to error greatly, God calls us to contentment, the opposite of covetousness is contentment.

Vs7-8

In other words, people spend all this time, trying to amass all this stuff and for what? You didn't bring anything into this world, and you certainly aren't going to take anything out. So as far as this world is concerned if you've eaten anytime lately, and you have clothes on your back, then be content because God has graciously provided your needs. All the man of God needs to be content are these 2 things, food and clothing.

God knows your needs, and He's promised that if you'll seek 1st the kingdom of God and His righteousness, than He's going to meet (not your greed's) but your needs. So learn to be content where you're at, I'm not saying it's an *easy* lesson, but I am saying it's an *essential* lesson. The one who is truly rich is the one that's able to say, "Father, whatever you send my way, be it a little, or a lot will be fine with me because I trust in you." and So you work hard, and you trust in the Lord, and be content with what He entrusts to you, why? Ps 84:11 "*For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.*"

“Wait a minute Jeff, I was tracking with you until now, what do you mean the Lord will withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly? I’m serving the Lord, I’m trusting in the Lord and I don’t have a new Mercedes and a million dollars in the bank.” Then that’s not a good thing for you, if a new Mercedes and a million dollars would be a good thing for you then God will supply that for you in His time. But He knows what’s going to be good for you, what’s going to distract you, what’s going to draw you near to Him and that which will drive you away from Him.

If God chooses to bless you, or to bless me, then praise the Lord what a wonderful thing, but if what I think would be great, God knows to be a mistake then I say, “Ok, Father you know what’s best for me, I’m going to work hard and whatever you entrust me with I’ll be content with that.” So we’re discerning here what’s godly, what’s not, things we’re to withhold from, and things that God desires of us, not covetousness, but rather contentment. Think about it for just a minute. Jesus; God come in the flesh, could’ve had anything He wanted, but chose to live in great simplicity, and yet His life was so full that people would leave everything to follow Him. Why, because of His clothes? Because of His huge house? Jesus said, *“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”* Matt 8:20 But there was a quality of life about Him that drew thousands of people to follow Him; He was content with a meal now and then and a robe to cover Him.

Vs9-10

Let me narrow the scope here for you just a bit, greed will destroy your life. Jesus said, *“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”* Matt 6:24 There’s not room in your heart for 2-1st loves, you either love Christ or you love money. and It’s not that being rich, in and of itself is the problem, if God blesses you, that’s great, but it’s the “Desire” the “will”, the “want” to be rich that will catch you in a snare and destroy your life. It’s not money that’s the problem (Vs10) it’s the “Love” of money that’s the root of all kinds of evil. Or to understand it another way, its greed that’s at the core of all sin, of all evil, what monstrosity is there that hasn’t been committed over greed? Wars, rapes, robberies, murders, molestations, drug trafficking, prostitution, what’s at the root of it all? Greed, even from the beginning what God Satan flung like lightning from Heaven? He wanted a position that wasn’t his, covetousness, pride, and greed, Eve; wanted to be like God; greed, and because of greed there are some (many unfortunately) who have strayed from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. If God blesses you that’s great, but don’t strive after material riches (notice).

Vs11

Timothy, this is what *they’re* doing, this is what you’re to do; Paul is setting sharp contrast between Timothy and these self-seeking individuals. *They’re* men of sin, *he’s* a man of righteousness, *they’re* men of the world, *he’s* a man of God. and As to where they’re following after temporal gain, he’s seeking eternal gain.

But *you* O man of God, flee these things, what things? The man of God understands that there are certain things in this world that he is to flee, as Joseph did when Potiphar's wife was seeking to force herself on him. The bible tells us to *flee* youthful lusts, to *flee* from idolatry, to flee *sexual* immorality. and In this context we're told that we need to *flee* these things, that is the things associated with the love of money, the drive for material riches, the cloaking of covetousness with godliness in hopes of financial gain. You see not all unity is good, and not all division is bad, there are certain times when the servant of God must take a stand against false doctrines, godless practices and separate himself from them making it very clear that he refuses to identify with such corruption.

In this section that we've labeled "dedication" Paul informs Timothy what he should *flee* from, *follow* after, *fight* for and be *faithful* to. and As hard as he's to flee from carnal ambitions, he's to follow after Christ like qualities, righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness, actively pursue, and press towards these things. Don't follow after the lusts of the flesh, because "*Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*" Gal 5:24-25 Pursue the things that make for eternal gain, righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.

Vs12

This is what it all comes down to, "Fight the good fight of faith" and of course this word "Fight" means to "agonize", to "contend earnestly" for the faith (that is the contents of the word of God) that was once for all delivered to the saints. It describes concentration, discipline, conviction, and whatever effort necessary to win, we're called to fight the good fight of faith. and Of course Paul, just before he was martyred said, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*" 2 Tim 4:7 and I pray that such would be the testimony of everyone of us here when we see Jesus Christ face to face, that we might stand before God and man with a clear conscience saying, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." As I've said many times, Jesus never said, "Well *begun* good and faithful servant" He said, "Well *done*" so many begin well, but the Lord would say, "Don't give up, fight the good fight, and finish well."

This "good confession" in regards to the confession of Jesus as Lord, confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, having confessed the good confession before many witnesses, don't fall short now, finish the race.

Vs13-16

So the charge to be faithful to the word of God, the commands that he's received, charged before God, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate. What's Paul doing here? He's encouraging Timothy with the fact that he knows it's not always the easy things to stay faithful to the sometimes-offensive truth of the word of God, but he's to keep the charge before God and Christ Jesus who was faithful even at His own life and death trial.

Jesus witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate. We read in John 18:37 where, *“Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ ‘Jesus answered’, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’”* He witnessed the good confession before Pilate, and we’re to witness the good confession before those whom God would place before us until the day of the Lord’s appearing. Jesus is coming again, but until He does we’re to be faithful to the Word of God, *“Well when will that be?”*

In His own time, in the fullness of time, or in due time, when the time is right, just as He came the 1st time (at the appointed time) so He’ll come again to receive us to Himself *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”* 1 Thess 4:16-17

But in the meantime lets receive the exhortation to *“Fight the good fight of faith.”*

Vs17-19

Jesus said, *“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.”* Matt 6:19-21

It’s been rightly said that you can’t take it with you, but you can send it there in advance. This is the section we’ve labeled, “distribution” you see Paul made a pretty hard case against the pursuit of riches, but lest one think that he just a thing against rich people he adds this here to say, *“It’s not about what you have or don’t have”*. To the Phil Paul said, *“I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* Phil 4:11-13 But if you happen to be one whom God has blessed with material gain, then don’t place your trust in the uncertainty of those things, but rather in the living God who gives us freely all things to enjoy. Don’t think in your heart that you’re rich because of all your hard work, or because of all those years of study. But rather, *“Remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth.”* Deut 8:18 and Paul says here that if you’re one whom God has blessed in that way, then allow yourself to be a conduit through which He can distribute His goodness to others. Be rich in good works, ready to give, and willing to share, lay up for yourself a good foundation for the time to come.

Vs20-21

We're not to be getting all wrapped up and side tracked by those vs 4-5 kind of people, but rather we're to be careful to "Defend" or to *guard* what's been committed to our trust. There's been so much that's been committed to our trust even in this letter. There has been a large "deposit" of truth that's been invested into each of us, the doctrine of Law vs grace, the message of the gospel, waging the good warfare through faith and a good conscience, the priority of prayer, the protocol of church order. What it means to be a man or a woman of godly integrity, what it means to be a good minister, a godly minister and a growing minister, the respect and love that we're to have one for another in the body of Christ. Jesus said, *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* John 13:35 How we're to work hard and love God, separate ourselves from those who don't teach and preach the truth but seek personal gain. We're to flee those things, worldly ambitions, and follow hard after godliness, having eternal ambitions, being content with such things as we have, "the secret of great gain" godliness with contentment. We're to fight the good fight of faith and keep the charges of the Word of God. "O Timothy, Guard what was committed to your trust." God help us to defend it, to carefully guard it, investing it into the lives of others who will do the same. Grace be with you. Amen.

If you're here today and you don't Jesus Christ you've never confessed the good confession, confessed Jesus Christ as Lord, opening your heart letting Him come inside, to wash you and purge you of sin and unrighteousness, then today God's giving you that opportunity.