

Living a Godly Lifestyle, Continued

1 Timothy 6:9-16

1 Timothy 6:9-16: *“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. 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. 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.”*

Background Notes

Although the theme of 1 Timothy is Church Order, the epistle is filled with instructions and exhortations and advice about godly living and Christian service for individual Christians. 1 Timothy 6:9-16 has some very important directives for godly Christian living.

1 Timothy was a personal letter from the apostle Paul to his son in the faith, Timothy, who was in Ephesus helping to pastor and build up the local church there. There are instructions in this letter on how to refute false teaching in the church, how to recognize elders and deacons in the church, on the different roles of men and women in the church, on how to care for widows in the church, on how to discipline elders in the church, and other instructions as well.

1 Timothy is an important book to read and follow when believers are planting a new church, structuring a church, or evaluating whether or not a church is true to the New Testament. But because 1 Timothy was a personal letter from Paul to Timothy, there are instructions that apply to us as individual Christians. These instructions challenge us to be characterized by godly living.

Doctrinal Points

1. Godly believers flee the evil love of money.

Verses 10-11: *“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. ¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.”*

It has often been pointed out that verse 10 does **not** say that money is the root of all evil. Rather, it is the **love of money**. Furthermore, it does not say that the love of money is **the** root of all evil, but rather the **love** of money is **a** root of **all kinds** of evil.

Some translations may be misleading at this point. The verse doesn't say that all evil in the universe comes from the love of money. No. But it does say that a lot of the evil comes from the love of money. As an illustration, think of a tree labeled "evil." One of the roots in this tree is labeled "the love of money" - and it's a big root. All kinds of evil branches and leaves grow from this root: selfishness, greed, envy, strife, dishonesty, theft.

Think of the sorrows that have come to individuals and families because of the love of money. A Christian couple I know went into real estate and made a ton of money - but it became more than a job. They fell in love with the money. As a result, they not only strayed from the faith (v10), but their marriage and family fell apart - because of their love for money. They "*pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*"

What should godly believers do? Godly believers should flee the evil of the love of money. Verse 11: "*But you, O man of God, flee these things...*" **Flee these things!** Flee the love of money, and all its associated problems. "Flee" here does not mean try making a lot of money to see if you can handle a lot of money. No! "Flee" means **flee!** Run from the love of money and its associated temptations.

Visualize yourself trying to cope with a rising flood. It won't work. The power of the floodwater will be too strong. You need to get away as fast as you can! **Run** to higher ground before you are swept away!

Notice that we are not only to flee from these things, but we are to run towards righteous living. "*...pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.*" This is the key to victory in this area. You flee the negative by running after the positive. So if you have a problem with loving money, then get more involved in serving the Lord. If you get involved in serving the Lord rather than making money, there will definitely be a positive shift in your priorities and interests!

I've seen Christians who were hung up on money and success and materialism go for short-term mission trips - and return home completely changed. Their focus and priorities have been completely rearranged! They are now fleeing the wrong things and pursuing the right things.

The key to fleeing the wrong things is pursuing the right things! That's the key to victory. Godly believers must flee the evil love of money.

2. God believers fight the good fight of faith.

Verse 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.*" The Greek word that is translated "fight" here is the word from which we get our English word "agonize." The idea pictured by "fighting the good fight" comes more from the athletic arena than from the military battlefield.

a. Dedication to fighting the good fight.

Some of you are athletes, and you can better appreciate this analogy. Just as a wrestler “agonizes” - exerts every ounce of energy - to win, so the godly believer should be 100% committed to serving the Lord, even though it’s hard work and requires a very disciplined and dedicated lifestyle. So *“lay hold on eternal life”* does not mean to work and strive to attain salvation, but to **live out your salvation**. You’ve made a public confession of faith; your baptism testifies to that fact. Now live it out!

Verses 13-14 are a challenge and an encouragement to be bold in fighting the good fight and witnessing for Christ. *“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, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing.”* Paul reminded Timothy that he was being commanded or given a charge **in the sight of God**. That’s a serious command!

But remember, said Paul - God is the source of all life. So no matter what happens to you in the future - even martyrdom - God is in control. And remember that our supreme example is the Lord Jesus Himself. He did not flinch or compromise the “good confession of faith” before Pontius Pilate. What a challenge to Timothy, and what a challenge to us! Godly believers fight the good fight of faith without compromise.

b. Motivation for fighting the good fight.

Verse 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.”* Our motivation for fighting the good fight is that the Lord is coming back! He will return on His own time schedule. He is the blessed and only Potentate, and all power is given unto Him because He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

At His appearing, there will be reward in the kingdom for those who have fought the good fight. Listen to what the Lord says in Revelation 22:12, *“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”* You will never be sorry that you fought the good fight! When He comes, you will receive honor from the King of kings and Lord of lords.

No wonder this section closes with a doxology (v15-16). These verses, by the way, may be part of an early Christian hymn. We’ve applied the phrases of verse 15 to Christ the Son of God, but all of these phrases could be applied to the Father as well.

God the Father seems to be particularly in view in verse 16. *“...Who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light...”* Immortality is His essential attribute. Our future immortality will be derived from Him. Immortality is only conferred on us. God dwells in unapproachable light. He is too glorious for mortal creatures to approach Him, apart from Christ.

“Whom no man has seen or can see.” No person has ever seen God in His eternal essence. John 1:18 says, *“No one has seen God at any time.”* We know from Scripture that people (like Moses) have seen the outward manifestation of God’s glory, but no person has ever seen the essence of deity.

“To whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.” What a wonderful conclusion to this section of Scripture on fighting the good fight. Godly believers fight the good fight of faith, and thus bring honor to God.

Practical Application

Don't try to get rich!

For our practical application, go back to verse 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.”* Notice that the Bible does **not** say it's **wrong** to be rich! God may make you rich through a number of ways, and you will be responsible before Him to use that money wisely for His kingdom. But the Bible **does** say that it's wrong for believers to **try to get rich**.

Notice what the Scripture says here: if you *“desire to be rich”* **you will** *“fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts.”* Notice it does not say that you **may** fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and harmful lusts. Rather it says you **will** fall into temptation and a trap, and into many foolish and harmful lusts. There are no “ifs” or “buts” about it. **You will**. A lot of Christians don't really believe this - but **God's Word** says you **will** fall into a **trap** - ensnared - if you try to get rich.

The very things that cause unbelievers to end up in hell will cost believers a life of ruin and loss. In that last phrase of verse 9, those who desire to get rich *“fall into... foolish and harmful lusts that drown men in destruction and perdition.”* “Drowning in destruction and perdition” is the end result of the desire to be rich. Foolish and harmful lusts are things that cause unbelievers to end up in hell, but they are also the things that cost believers a life of ruin and loss.

So stay away from get-rich schemes to make money. There will be bad fallout from those “perfect” money making pyramids. Don't be tempted and ensnared by some “get rich quick” plan. Don't get burned. Don't get ensnared. **Don't try to get rich!**