

1st Timothy 6:

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In ch6, we are moving outwith the immediate context of the local assembly, and we have practical teaching dealing with our daily lives in this world, in the workplace, and our attitude to earthly riches. These aspects of our lives impact on the testimony of the local assembly.

WE Vine – ‘Much of this chapter is devoted to practical exhortations against yielding to ideas and practices which believers might be tempted to adopt under the influence of the world.’

Note also several direct references to “**our Lord Jesus Christ**” (vs3,14).

Ultimately all Christian living is based upon a likeness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

v1-2: The duty of bondservants under the yoke of their masters

Christ was the perfect Servant of God (Isaiah 42v1).

v3-5: The need for sound teaching and recognition of false teachers

Christ was the perfect Teacher, speaking spiritually health-giving words (John 6v68).

v6-10: The practical expression of godliness & the perils of earthly riches

Christ was the perfect expression of “**godliness with contentment**” (1st Peter 2v23).

v11-14: The desired character of the man / woman of God

Christ was the perfect Man of God, whose testimony before men was exemplary (v13).

v15-16: Christ manifested as the coming sovereign Ruler

Christ will be manifested as the perfect Ruler over this world.

v17-19: The charge given to the rich

Christ is the perfect Benefactor (2nd Cor 8v9); He went about doing good (Acts 10v38).

v20-21: The concluding charge to Timothy

Christ was the perfectly faithful One in everything committed to His trust (John 17v4).

Every desired character of the man or woman of God, we find in Christ the perfect example.

v1-2: The duty of bondservants under the yoke of their masters

v1: Deals with Christian slaves who were under a permanent yoke of service to unbelieving masters.

Those masters were still to be counted “**worthy of all honour**” and served well, for the sake of testimony for God, “**that the name of God and (the Christian) doctrine be not blasphemed**”.

This would still apply if the master was abusive & oppressive (see also 1st Peter 2v18).

As employees, we are to be good & reliable workers, for the sake of our Christian testimony.

v2: Believing servants under “**believing masters**”; possibly both in the same local assembly. They are to be respected, and served with all the more diligent service, “**because they are brethren**”, and “**because they are faithful (believing) and beloved, partakers of the benefit**”. The motivation for the more diligent service is love for a believing brother or sister. In the assembly, we are all saints of equal status (see Gal 3v28); but that does not change our individual status in society or in the sphere of employment.

The teaching of the Lord and the NT apostles was not intended to upset existing social relationships or political conditions, but to give instruction to believers as to how they should live for God & glorify God in their existing social conditions & relationships at that time. Christian principles applied in society would lead to the abolition of such a practice as slavery.

Paul instructs Timothy “**These things teach and exhort**”, because human relationships in the assembly need constant positive public teaching.

v3-5: The need for sound teaching and recognition of false teachers

Ch1v3-11: Danger of legalism; the Judaistic false teachers; the enemy is the flesh.

Ch4v1-5: Danger of asceticism; satanic-inspired false teachers; the enemy is the devil.

Ch6v3-10: Danger of materialism; ungodly humanistic false teachers; the enemy is the world.

v3: Warning against teaching contrary to the spiritually health-giving “**wholesome words ... of our Lord Jesus Christ ... the doctrine which is according to godliness**”.

This would include the teaching of the NT apostles, who spoke for Christ who had sent them.

Practical godliness of life is based upon doctrine; “**This is the way, walk ye in it**” (Is 30v21).

v4-5: Recognition of false teachers based upon character, performance & what they produce. They are inflated with pride, with no right conception of truth, and taken up with unprofitable debates & quarrelling about words, producing the very opposite of wholesome teaching. The outcomes produced - “**envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings ... perverse disputings**”.

There is invariably a moral as well as doctrinal degeneracy, “**men of corrupt minds**”.

They are “**destitute (bereft) of the truth**”; defecting from truth previously held.

Their motivation is material & societal gain; “**supposing that godliness is a means of gain**”.

Beware & avoid those who are personally enriched excessively from a Christian ministry; who have “**ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward**” (Jude v11).

v6-10: The expression of godliness & the perils of earthly riches

v6: The “**great gain**” of “**godliness with contentment**”, sufficiency in God, giving satisfaction whatever the circumstances, free from dependence on the possession of material things. The apostle knew of this contentment in his God (see Phil 4v11).

v7: Material things are transient & temporary (see also Job 1v21; Ps 49v17; Eccl 5v15).

v8: To be content with “**food and raiment**”, i.e. sustenance & covering (clothing / shelter). God’s kind provision & presence with us should be the basis for our contentment (Heb 13v5). Jacob expressed contentment in having the LORD with him & helping him (see Gen 28v20).

v9-10: Warnings against the sin of covetousness.

For unbelievers who set their hearts upon riches, it can lead to a downward spiral, a “**fall into temptation and a snare**”, ending in the “**destruction and perdition**” of eternal ruin & loss.

Scriptural examples would include Achan, Gehazi and Judas Iscariot.

“**For the love of money (silver) is a root of all (kind of) evil**”; for believers, such covetousness can lead astray from the life of faith, leading to self-inflicted injury and “**many sorrows**”.

We must not fall into the prevalent materialistic mindset of the world.

v11-14: The character of the man / woman of God

The word ‘man’ in v11 is *anthropos*, i.e. the generic word, indicating “**man / woman of God**”.

v11: Their course, “**flee these things**” (consider Joseph) , “**follow after ...**” (consider Caleb).

v12: Their conflict, “**Fight the good fight of (the) faith**” (consider Joshua).

v13-14: Their charge in the presence of God and Christ, to “**keep the commandment without spot, unrebukeable**”, in view of “**the appearing (manifestation) of our Lord Jesus Christ**”.

v11: Paul calls upon Timothy to be God’s man for that time & in that place in Ephesus.

The need to “**flee**” from all that is detrimental to a believer’s life, and positively “**follow after**” these Christ-like attributes of “**righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness**”.

v12: We are in a constant spiritual conflict while in this world; “**the good fight of (the) faith**”.

We must “**lay hold on eternal life**”, and be in the enjoyment of the gift we have received.

Timothy had shown definitive past evidence of his salvation, and had “**professed a good profession before many witnesses**” (see also Acts 16v2).

He could count on continuing divine help for all future spiritual conflict.

v13-14: In view of the solemn charge Paul is giving to Timothy, he needed to be:

- Looking up to the living God, conscious of being ***“in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things”***, the God who ***“preserveth all things alive”*** (RV), His care is unfailing.
- Looking back to the example of the Saviour, ***“who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession”*** as to who He was, why He had come into this world, and His coming kingdom.
- Looking within, keeping himself ***“without spot, unrebukeable”***, living a pure life, unspotted from the potential contamination of this wicked world.
- Looking forward, ***“until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ”***, in view of His soon coming glorious manifestation in this world & coming kingdom.

v15-16: Christ manifested as the coming sovereign Ruler

God will ***“in His (own) times”*** manifest His Son, thus revealing Himself in the Person of Christ. God is going to reveal Christ, and Christ will then fully reveal God as ***“the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords”***, to whom all earthly rulers will be subject.

God alone ***“hath immortality”***; He is not subject to death.

Mortal man cannot be in the dazzling presence of His glorious light, ***“dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto”***; consider Moses (Exodus 33) & Israel’s high priest.

Christ has manifested & declared the invisible God (see John 1v18; Col 1v15).

v17-19: The charge given to the rich

v17: The rich are to be marked by humility, ***“be not highminded”*** (see Rom 12v16).

We cannot ***“trust in uncertain (earthly) riches”*** (see also Ps 62v10; Prov 23v5; Matt 6v19-20).

We can only depend upon a beneficent ***“living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy”***.

v18: The rich are to be marked by liberality; willing to share with others in greater need.

v19: Proper use of present resources lays ***“a good foundation”*** in view of ***“the time to come”***.

Such liberality is how we can ***“lay hold on eternal life”***, the life which is life indeed, characterized by the selflessness of Christ Himself, in contrast to selfish indulgence.

v20-21: The concluding charge to Timothy

A tender & earnest entreaty, invoking Timothy to be a faithful defender of the truth of God; ***“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust”***, guard that deposit of divine truth, with no compromise concerning the truth of Christ.

Don’t be sidetracked by unprofitable human intellectualism, which can derail a person’s faith.