

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study of Paul's First Letter to Timothy – Part 17

I. Exposition of Chapter Six (continued).

A. Verses 4-5 – “...he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*. From such withdraw yourself.” – Dr.

Thomas Constable breaks down these verses the following way:

“The apostle first described the actions of the false teachers (v. 3), then their attitudes (v. 4a), next the fruits of their ministry (vv. 4b-5a), and finally their motivation (v. 5b).”¹

1. **“...he is proud, knowing nothing...”** – The word “proud” means; **“to be so arrogant as to be practically demented—‘to be insanely arrogant, to be extremely proud’”²** – Pride is one of the main ingredients in a person's life that leads to deception (i.e. Jeremiah 43:1-2; 49:16; Proverbs 16:18; Proverbs 29:23)
2. **“...but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words...”** – “obsessed” means; **“to have an unhealthy or morbid desire for something”³** The word “disputes” means; **“to express forceful differences of opinion without necessarily having a presumed goal of seeking a solution.”⁴** The phrase **“arguments over words”** is one Greek word and means; **“to argue or quarrel about the meaning or use of words”⁵** This describes many in Christendom today. Though there is a time to argue, or have disputes, over doctrine, **with the goal** of bringing understanding and correction, there are many who just want to argue over trivial things which in the larger scheme of things don't matter. Furthermore, there are those who want to argue because they happen to be good at debating, and out of pride, just want to make others look bad. Just because someone is good at debating doesn't make their position correct.
 - a. **“envy”** – **“a state of ill will toward someone because of some real or presumed advantage experienced by such a person”⁶**
 - b. **“strife”** – **“conflict resulting from rivalry and discord”⁷**
 - c. **“reviling”** – **“to speak against someone in such a way as to harm or injure his or her reputation”⁸**
 - d. **“evil suspicions”** – **“to have an opinion based on scant evidence, often with the implication of regarding a false opinion as true”⁹**
 - e. **“useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds...”** – **“to engage in continuous and repeated arguing”¹⁰** The word **“corrupt”** means; **“to cause someone to become perverse or depraved, as a type of moral destruction”¹¹**
 - f. **“...destitute of the truth...”** – The word **“destitute”** means; **“to cause someone not to possess something—‘to deprive of’”¹²** This could be translated **“...deprived of truth.”**

3. **“...suppose that godliness is a means of gain...”** – Here we come to the motive behind the false teachers. They were in it for financial gain. The New International Version reads:

“...and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.” – I Timothy 6:5

a. Pastor Deborah Gill writes:

“They have become people ‘of corrupt mind’- their thinking has become decayed to the state of complete rottenness. And they have ‘been robbed of the truth.’ In trying to make money off the gospel, they have become impoverished (or have impoverished themselves) from truth. It was their greed all along that led these false teachers down the path of error.”¹³

¹ Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 1 Timothy* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2023), 121.

² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 764.

³ Ibid., 289.

⁴ Ibid., 437.

⁵ Ibid., 439.

⁶ Ibid., 759.

⁷ Ibid., 494.

⁸ Ibid., 433.

⁹ Ibid., 369.

¹⁰ Ibid., 439.

¹¹ Ibid., 769.

¹² Ibid., 562.

¹³ *Full Life Bible Commentary to the New Testament*, French L. Arrington and Roger Stronstad, ed. (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1999), 1256.

4. **“...from such withdraw yourself.”** – The word **“withdraw”** means; **“keep away from, avoid association”**¹⁴ There are certain people that we are commanded to keep away from. False teachers are one. Another would include a believer who is walking disorderly (**pertaining to refusing to work—‘idle, lazy, lazily.’**)¹⁵ - II Thessalonians 3:6.

B. Verses 6-8 – **“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”**

1. **“...godliness with contentment is great gain.”** - The word **“godliness”** can be defined as; **‘to live as God would have us live’ or ‘to live as God has told us we should live.’**¹⁶ So, being godly is simply living a life that is consistent with the Word of God. Remember **4:7-8** where Paul tells Timothy to **“...exercise yourself toward godliness.”**
2. **“contentment”** means; **“satisfaction in one’s circumstance or position in life”**¹⁷ - Warren Wiersbe writes:

“The word *contentment* means ‘an inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of outward circumstances.’ Paul used this same word later. ‘For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content’ (Phil. 4:11). True contentment comes from godliness in the heart, not wealth in the hand. A person who depends on material things for peace and assurance will never be satisfied, for material things have a way of losing their appeal.”¹⁸

3. **“great gain”** – **“a means of making a profit”**¹⁹ Gary Leggett writes:

“The word ‘gain’ is *porismos* and means ‘good business, profit.’ Here in verse 6 it connotes more than material wealth. The possession of things is not the only measure of ‘gain.’”²⁰

4. **“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”** – The meaning of this is very clear. We entered this world with no material goods and we’ll leave with none as well.

A. Duane Litfin adds:

“Paul supported his point with a common Jewish and Christian idea (cf. Job 1:21; Ecc. 5:15; Luke 12:16–21) about the complete transiency of material things. They should freely be used and enjoyed to the glory of God if one has them (cf. 1 Tim. 4:3–4; 6:17), but in no way do they contribute to godliness. Christians do have basic material needs for food and clothing, of course, like everyone else; but when these are met a godly Christian can be satisfied (cf. Heb. 13:5–6). Paul knew whereof he spoke (Phil. 4:10–13)”²¹

5. **“And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”** – The word for **“clothing”** here means; **“a covering, shelter.”**²² Most of the time this word is referring to clothing but several scholars state that it was also sometimes used to refer to shelter. Gary Leggett writes:

“‘Having food and raiment’ reminds us of Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:25-34. ‘Food’ (‘nourishments, sustenance’...suggests a full supply for each day. ‘Raiment’...(‘coverings’) includes both clothing and shelter. So Paul was certainly aware he was repeating what Jesus said.”²³

- C. 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.”** – The word **“desire”** means; **“of willing as an affection, *to desire*.”**²⁴ When you have riches as your **“affection”** and goal in life, you can experience temptations to compromise your integrity and end up in a **“snare”**. The word **“snare”** means; **“an object used for trapping or snaring, principally of birds”**²⁵ In other words, this desire can lead into temptations which lead to various kinds of bondage. The word **“drown”** means; **“to plunge into the deep, to sink”**²⁶ So this can lead to **“destruction and perdition”** which are practically synonymous. Dr. Gordon Fee states:

“Paul’s point is that the very desire for wealth has inherent spiritual dangers, partly because (vv. 6–8) wealth itself is unrelated to godliness in any way and partly because (v. 9) the desire is like a trap set by Satan himself to plunge one into spiritual ruin.”²⁷

¹⁴ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

¹⁵ Louw and Nida, 768.

¹⁶ Louw and Nida, 531.

¹⁷ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

¹⁸ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 235.

¹⁹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

²⁰ *The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 903.

²¹ A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 746.

²² H.G. Liddell, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996), 732.

²³ *The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 903.

²⁴ Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 105.

²⁵ Louw and Nida, 55.

²⁶ Thayer, 106.

²⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988)

“But those who crave to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish (useless, godless) and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin *and* destruction and miserable perishing.” – I Timothy 6:9 – Amplified Bible

D. Verse 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.”

- 1. “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil...”** – Many times people misquote this verse by saying **“money is the root of all kinds of evil”** but that is not what it says. It’s our attitude toward money that can lead to all kinds of evil. It’s the love of money that fuels much of the corruption and vices we see in the world today.
- 2. “...for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness...”** – The word **“strayed”** means; **“to cause to go astray, trop. to lead away from the truth to error: to go astray, stray away from:”**²⁸ In the context this would be referring to the false teachers Paul was dealing with. Dr. Bob Utleigh writes:

“Does ‘faith’ here speak of salvation or godly living? In this context the false teachers have left the faith and are trying to influence others (cf. Mark 13:22). Greed and financial exploitation (along with sexual exploitation) is a recurrent characteristic of false teachers. If money becomes ultimate, it becomes a god. ‘Mammon’ in Matt. 6:24 is capitalized in NASB because it is assumed to reflect the title of a money god from Syria. Love of money can become idolatrous. It can cause disastrous results in this life and in the next (cf. 4:1; 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:25–26; Titus 1:16).”²⁹

- 3. “...and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”** – The word **“pierced”** means; **“to torture one’s soul with sorrows,”**³⁰

“For the love of money is the root of all evils. Some people in reaching for it have strayed from the faith and stabbed themselves with many pains.” – I Timothy 6:10 – New English Bible

“The apostle Paul clearly gets to the point of how we should relate to money and the price of being deceived by the love of it. There is nothing wrong with having money or being wealthy, but there may be problems with how we regard that wealth and who we consider to be its source. Contentment does not come from how much money we have, but from the freedom that results from understanding that we are living in God’s provision (vv. 6, 7). Loving money opens our lives to the ultimate deception (v. 10) because the heart of the issue is lordship— a person cannot serve both God and money (Matt. 6:24). We are instead to pursue true riches (Luke 16:11), which are spiritual in nature: righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness (1 Tim. 6:11). For the love of money, Achan brought death to himself and defeat to the army of God (Josh. 7:19–26); Delilah betrayed Samson (Judg. 16:4–6); Judas betrayed the Son of God (Matt. 26:14–16); and Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and were judged (Acts 5:1–10). Job declared that if he put his trust in money, it would mean he had denied God in heaven (Job 31:24–28). Solomon said the person who trusts in his riches will fall (Prov. 11:28). (Luke 16:10–12/Prov. 30:7–9)”³¹

²⁸ Thayer, 66.

²⁹ Robert James Utleigh, *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*, vol. Volume 9, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 83.

³⁰ Thayer, 504.

³¹ Clark Whitten, *Word Wealth: New Spirit Filled Life Bible*, (Nashville, TN, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 1706.