

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study of Paul's First Letter to Timothy – Part 18

I. Exposition of Chapter Six (continued).

A. Verse 11 – “But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.”

1. “...man of God...” – This expression is only found here in the New Testament, and in II Timothy 3:17. Warren Wiersbe writes:

“While caring for the needs of his people, Timothy needed to care for himself as well. “Take heed unto thyself” (1 Tim. 4:16) was one of Paul’s admonitions. The phrase ‘But thou’ (1 Tim. 6:11) indicates a contrast between Timothy and the false teachers. They were men of the world, but he was a ‘man of God.’ This special designation was also given to Moses (Deut. 33:1), Samuel (1 Sam. 9:6), Elijah (1 Kings 17:18), and David (Neh. 12:24); so Timothy was in good company.”¹

2. “...flee these things...” – The word “flee” means; “to flee away, seek safety by flight”² Kenneth Wuest adds: “The verb ‘flee’ is in the present imperative which commands a continuous action. Timothy is to make it the habit of his life to be everlastingly fleeing away from a fondness for money.”³ Other scholars make the point that it’s not just the love of money Timothy is to flee from, but anything that is contrary to sound doctrine and holy living.
3. “...pursue...” – In contrast to fleeing from some things, Paul exhorts Timothy to “pursue” other things. The word means; “to follow with haste, and presumably with intensity of effort, in order to catch up with, for friendly or hostile purpose—‘to run after, to chase after,’”⁴
4. “...righteousness...” – Here it means; “integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting”⁵
5. “...godliness...” – “reverence, respect; in the Bible everywhere piety towards God”⁶
6. “...faith...” – conviction of the truth of anything, belief, in the N. T. of a conviction or belief respecting man’s relationship to God and divine things⁷
7. “...love...” – “Love” here is *agapē*, God’s love as produced in the heart of the yielded believer by the Holy Spirit.”⁸
8. “...patience...” – “capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances—‘endurance, being able to endure.’”⁹ (See also Hebrews 6:12; 10:35-36; 12:1-2).
9. “...gentleness...” – “gentleness of attitude and behavior, in contrast with harshness in one’s dealings with others”¹⁰

B. 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.”

1. “Fight the good fight of faith...” – Two times the word “fight” is found. The two are related, the first is the verb form, the second is a noun. They are both an athletic and military term. Warren Wiersbe writes:

“The verb means ‘keep on fighting!’ It is a word from which we get our English word *agonize*, and it applies both to athletes and to soldiers. It described a person straining and giving his best to win the prize or win the battle. Near the end of his own life, Paul wrote, ‘I have fought a good fight’ (2 Tim. 4:7).”¹¹

a. See also: I Corinthians 9:24-27; Acts 20:24).

2. “...lay hold on eternal life...” – The words “...lay hold...” mean; “to seize”; “catch”¹². Dr. Thomas Constable states:

“Our spiritual enemy opposes the Christian's pursuit of godly ideals. Paul therefore urged his younger friend to plunge into this conflict and to fight (cf. 2 Tim. 3:1—4:5). The goal is worth fighting for, and it requires fighting for (cf. Phil.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 235.

² Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 651.

³ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 96.

⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 201.

⁵ Thayer, 149.

⁶ Ibid., 262.

⁷ Ibid., 512.

⁸ Wuest, 96.

⁹ Louw and Nida, 307.

¹⁰ Ibid., 748.

¹¹ Wiersbe, 236.

¹² James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 31.

3:12). In so doing Timothy could obtain the reward that God wants to bestow on every believer: the fullness of eternal life (cf. John 10:10). Some Christians have eternal life but never really take hold of it. Similarly, some people who are alive physically never really enter into the fullness of life because they are never fully healthy and strong.”¹³

- a. **“...to which you were also called...”** – Every believer is called to seize, or grasp eternal life, remembering it’s not just referring to the future but we have eternal life now! A. Duane Lutfin writes:

“To Paul, Christ’s life is the possession of each Christian, not only throughout eternity, but now (cf. 2 Cor. 4:10–12). It is this new life in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) to which every Christian is called...”¹⁴

- b. **“...and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”** – The words **“confessed”** and **“confession”** mean: **to make an emphatic declaration, often public, and at times in response to pressure or an accusation—‘to declare, to assert.’¹⁵ And, “to express openly one’s allegiance to a proposition or person”¹⁶**, respectively.

“Fight the worthwhile battle of the faith, keep your grip on that life eternal to which you have been called, and to which you boldly professed your loyalty before many witnesses.” – I Timothy 6:12 – J.B. Philips Translation

C. Verse 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,”

1. The word **“urge”** means; **“to command, order, charge.”¹⁷**
2. **“...in the sight of God...”** – This is a reminder to Timothy, and us, that God is watching. The New Living Testament reads; **“I tell you this in front of God...”**. This shows the seriousness of Paul’s charge.

- a. **“...who gives life to all things...”** – This is not at all suggesting the doctrine of Universalism. God gives eternal life to all who receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. Thomas Lea asserts:

“To drape his commands with seriousness, Paul summoned Timothy to stand in the presence of the all-seeing Father and Son. He described the Father as one ‘who gives life to everything’ (‘maintains all life,’ Goodspeed). This can suggest either that God is the source of all life or that he can protect his own in the face of all danger. Perhaps an element of both truths lies in the reminder. God had given Timothy life through the gospel and provided him stamina for service.”¹⁸

3. **“...and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate...”** – Not only is Paul giving this charge before God, but also before the Lord Jesus Christ. Regarding this, Gary Leggett writes:

“The references to ‘Christ Jesus and His ‘confession’ before Pilate are a reminder to Timothy that just as Christ made a good confession, so Timothy should also. John records Jesus’ ‘confession’ in John 18:37: ‘Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.’”¹⁹

D. Verse 14 – “...that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing...”

1. **“...keep this commandment...”** – Scholars differ as to what the command is that Paul is referring to. If we take the immediate context, it’s referring to him **“fleeing”** the things mentioned, **“pursuing”** the virtues of **verse 11**, and **“fighting the good fight”**, etc. of **verse 12**.
2. **“...without spot...”** – **“free from vice, unsullied”²⁰**
3. **“...blameless...”** – **“pertaining to what cannot be criticized—‘above criticism, beyond reproach.’”²¹**
4. **“...until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing...”** – This is obviously a reference to Jesus’ Second Coming. The word **“appearing”** means just that and is found five more times in the New Testament – (cf. II Thessalonians 2:8; II Timothy 1:10; 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13.)

¹³ Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 1 Timothy* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2023), 130.

¹⁴ A. Duane Lutfin, “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), 747.

¹⁵ Louw and Nida, 412.

¹⁶ Ibid., 417.

¹⁷ Thayer, 479.

¹⁸ *The New American Commentary*, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus, Vol. 34, Thomas D. Lea & Hayne P. Griffin Jr. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1992)

¹⁹ *The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 904.

²⁰ Thayer, 81.

²¹ Louw and Nida, 435.

E. Verses 15-16 – “...which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.”

1. “...He will manifest in His own time...” – Jesus will return at just the right time. No one knows the day or hour except the Father and Jesus, after He was glorified. (cf. **Matthew 24:36; Mark 11:32**).

“Early in his ministry Paul was convinced that Christ would return soon. Now near the end of his ministry he showed both an awareness that Christ might not return before he died and a desire to encourage Timothy to leave the timing of this great event up to the Lord. Hence Paul stressed that God will bring about Christ’s appearing in His (or ‘its’) own time.”²²

2. “...He who is the blessed and only Potentate...” – The word “Potentate” means; “one who is in a position of authority to command others”²³
3. “...King of kings and Lord of lords...” – He is “King” over every other king (authority). And, He is “Lord” over every other “lord.” The word “Lord” means; “he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has the power of deciding; master, lord”²⁴
4. “...who alone has immortality...” – “a state of not being able to die or degenerate”²⁵ God’s immortality is different, or unique. Gary Leggett writes:

“Paul praised God for His ‘immortality.’ The word ‘only’ signifies a unique kind of immortality: that which is ‘unending life’ from beginning to end. The Christian will experience immortality (see 1 Corinthians 15:53-54), but his will be the kind that extends a life that had a beginning. God had no beginning and will have no ending; He is the ‘immortal...God’ (1:17).”²⁶

5. “...dwelling in unapproachable light...” – Light sometimes is a reference to purity and holiness. Dr. Gordon Fee helps with our understanding when he writes:

“The description reflects Psalm 104:2. It arose in Judaism in conjunction with the concept of his blinding glory, which no human eye can see (cf. Exod. 24:15–17; 34:29–35; 1 Kings 8:11). The motif of God as pure light is played on from several angles in the Johannine literature (John 1:7–9; 3:19–21; 1 John 1:5–7). Him no one has seen or can see (cf. ‘invisible’ in 1:17). These clauses reinforce his dwelling in unapproachable light and reflect a common OT theme (Exod. 33:20; cf. 19:21). The emphasis in these last two items is not the Greek one, that God is unknowable, but the Jewish one, that God is so infinitely holy that sinful humanity can never see him and live (cf. Isa. 6:1–5).”²⁷

6. “...whom no man has seen or can see...” – No man, in his humanity can bear seeing God in all of His glory.
7. “...to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.”

F. Verse 17 – “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.”

1. “Command those who are rich in this present age...” – Apparently the church at Ephesus had some wealthy people within their congregation.
2. “...not to be haughty...” – “to be high-minded, proud”²⁸
3. “...nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God...” – Litfin writes:

“Paul had dealt with those who did not possess wealth, but who deeply desired it (vv. 3–10). Now he addressed those who had it, and instructed them as to what their attitude should be toward it. They are not to be arrogant as if their wealth is deserved (1 Cor. 4:7–8; 1 Sam. 2:7). Nor must they put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain and transient.”²⁹

5. “...who gives us richly all things to enjoy.” – All of the good things in this world were placed here by God for His people to enjoy.

G. Verses 18-19 – “Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

1. “Let them do good, that they be rich in good works...” – When God has blessed us with abundance, He expects us to use it for His work to be accomplished on this earth. The only lasting “good works”

²² A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 747.

²³ Louw and Nida, 478.

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), 365.

²⁵ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

²⁶ *The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 905.

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

²⁸ Thayer, 646–647.

²⁹ Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 747.

are the works that help lead people to Christ.

2. **"...ready to give..."** – The word **"ready"** means; **"pertaining to being generous in sharing—'liberal, generous in sharing'"**³⁰

"There are those who [generously] scatter abroad, and yet increase more; there are those who withhold more than is fitting or what is justly due, but it results only in want. The liberal person shall be enriched, and he who waters shall himself be watered." – Proverbs 11:24-25 – Amplified Bible

3. **"...willing to share"** – **"inclined to make others sharers in one's possessions, inclined to impart, free in giving, liberal"**³¹
4. **"...storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life."** – This is basically saying that by having the right attitude toward riches, doing good works and treating others well will result in rewards in heaven. Dr. Thomas Constable states:

"By doing so they would be ensuring that the Lord would reward them for their faithful stewardship. They would be investing in the treasure of a good foundation for the future when they stood before Him (cf. Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 12:33-34; 18:22). Moreover, in so doing they would experience the fullness of their eternal life (cf. v. 12)."³²

H. Verses 20-21 – **"O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace *be* with you. Amen."**

1. **"...Guard what was committed to your trust..."** – The word **"guard"** means; **"to guard or watch, have an eye upon"**³³ Paul ends this letter by giving Timothy some final commands. He needed to keep a watch over his life, his doctrine to remain pure, and over the flock to protect it from false teachers,
2. **"...avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge..."**
 - a. **"...profane..."** – **"pertaining to being profane in the sense of worldly or godless"**³⁴ (This word was also seen in 1:9 and 4:7)
 - b. **"...idle babblings..."** – **"talk which lacks significant content—'foolish talk, empty talk.'"**³⁵
 - c. **"...contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge."** – This is made very clear in the Amplified Bible:

"O Timothy, guard *and* keep the deposit entrusted [to you]! Turn away from the irreverent babble *and* godless chatter, with the vain *and* empty *and* worldly phrases, and the subtleties *and* the contradictions in what is falsely called knowledge *and* spiritual illumination." – I Timothy 6:20 – Amplified Bible

3. **"...by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith..."** – The word **"strayed"** means; **"to go astray as the result of departing from the truth—'to abandon the truth, to lose one's way'"**³⁶ This word is also found in 1:6. (Also remember 4:1-2).
4. **"Grace be with you. Amen."**

³⁰ Louw and Nida, 568.

³¹ Thayer, 352.

³² Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 1 Timothy* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2023), 133.

³³ Thayer, 659.

³⁴ Louw and Nida, 754.

³⁵ Ibid., 431.

³⁶ Ibid., 373.