

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 1 TIMOTHY 6 (PART 2)

PAUL HAS WRITTEN THIS LETTER TO TIMOTHY TO AID HIM IN SETTING UP GODLY AND HEALTHY CHURCHES. PAUL, UNABLE TO BE WITH TIMOTHY AT THIS TIME FOR THIS WORK, WRITES ABOUT WHAT ONE SHOULD LOOK FOR, WORK TOWARDS AND HOLD UP AS THE FOUNDATIONAL STANDARD FOR GOD'S PEOPLE. AFTER A THOROUGH WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS AND THOSE WHO WILL STEP AWAY FROM THE WORDS OF CHRIST, PAUL GIVES SOME FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS YOUNG MINISTRY PARTNER. HE HAS JUST HIGHLIGHTED QUALITIES AND CHARACTER TRAITS THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED BY A SERVANT OF THE LORD (WITH SOME SPECIFIC TIME SPENT ON GREED AND IMPROPER DESIRE FOR MONEY AND MATERIAL POSSESSIONS). AND NOW PAUL TURNS TOWARDS HOME WITH SOME FINAL WORDS TO TIMOTHY.

1 TIMOTHY 6:11-16 - FINAL CHARGES TO TIMOTHY: FLEE & PURSUE

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE? A WALK? A JOURNEY? A PATH? A RELATIONSHIP? THOSE METAPHORS CERTAINLY HAVE THEIR PLACE IN DESCRIBING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - BUT FOR PAUL, THE PICTURE HE PAINTS IS ONE MUCH MORE INTENSE AND AGGRESSIVE THAN A SUNNY WALK ON THE BEACH ADMIRING FOOTPRINTS. PAUL DOES NOT LOOK AT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS A CASUAL OR PASSIVE AT ALL. IN HIS LETTERS, HE WILL FREQUENTLY USE THE LANGUAGE OF TAKING ACTION, OF ATHLETIC COMPETITION AND EVEN WARFARE. LET'S CONSIDER THE CHARGES HE GIVES TO TIMOTHY AS THIS LETTER ENDS.

FLEE - TO FLEE SOMETHING MEANS YOU ARE RUNNING AWAY FROM SOMETHING DANGEROUS OR EVIL OR PERILOUS AND TOWARDS SAFETY. WHEN YOU "FLEE" YOU'RE NOT CASUAL OR WALKING AT A NICE PACE - THINK HIGH SPEED CHASE RATHER THAN SUNDAY DRIVE. PAUL URGES TIMOTHY TO RUN AWAY FROM THE THINGS ADDRESSED IN THE PREVIOUS SECTION (CONCEIT, FOOLISHNESS, CONTROVERSY, DISPUTES ABOUT WORDS, ENVY, STRIFE, ABUSIVE LANGUAGE, EVIL SUSPICIONS, FRICTION, GREED, LACK OF CONTENT, DESIRE FOR RICHES, LOVE OF MONEY). DON'T ENTERTAIN OR MAKE PEACE WITH THEM, DON'T LIVE ACROSS THE STREET FROM THEM, DON'T VISIT THEM FROM TIME TO TIME - TIMOTHY, RUN AWAY FROM THESE THINGS, YOU'RE A MAN OF GOD!

PURSUE - THIS WORD MEANS TO TO PUT TO FLIGHT AND IS MOST OFTEN THE WORD TRANSLATED ELSEWHERE AS "PERSECUTE." TO PURSUE SOMEONE IS NOT TO JUST FOLLOW AFTER THEM LIKE WHEN YOU TAKE A HIKE OR FOLLOW ANOTHER CAR TO ARRIVE AT THE SAME LOCATION - PURSUIT IMPLIES FOLLOWING AFTER WITH THE INTENT TO GET OR OVERTAKE WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE FOLLOWING. WEBSTER DEFINES THE ENGLISH WORD "PURSUE" AS "TO FOLLOW IN ORDER TO OVERTAKE, CAPTURE, KILL, OR DEFEAT". WE USE THE WORD WHEN WE SPEAK OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE "PURSUIT" OF A CRIMINAL. THEY WILL NOT STOP UNTIL THEY GET 'EM. TIMOTHY, **PURSUE** RIGHTEOUSNESS, GODLINESS, FAITH, LOVE, PERSEVERANCE AND GENTLENESS.

Q - WHAT DOES THE LANGUAGE USED HERE (*FLEE AND PURSUE*) COMMUNICATE TO YOU?

Q - WHICH OF THE THINGS TIMOTHY IS TOLD TO **PURSUE** STANDS OUT TO YOU THE MOST?

FIGHT - (ἀγωνίζομαι *AGONIZOMAI*) - THIS WORD MEANS THE FIGHT OR STRUGGLE, TO CONTEND FOR A PRIZE. THE FIGHT HERE IS THE "GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH" - THE FIGHT TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO JESUS CHRIST, TO REJECT THE WORLD, TO STAY PURE AND LOVING AND SOBER MINDED. THIS CHARGE WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN TO TIMOTHY IN 1:18 WHERE HE WAS REMINDED OF WHAT WAS PROPHESED ABOUT HIM - IN 1:18 THE WORD FOR "FIGHT" IS A WORD WHICH MEANS TO MAKE WAR. HERE IT IS MORE LIKE COMPETING IN THE COMPETITION. TIMOTHY, **FIGHT** THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH.

TAKE HOLD - NLT - "HOLD TIGHTLY". THIS WORD MEANS TO ATTAIN OR TAKE POSSESSION OF. TIMOTHY IS TOLD TO "TAKE HOLD OF THE ETERNAL LIFE" HE WAS CALLED TO - THE PRIZE GIVEN TO THE WINNERS OF THE FIGHT. PAUL ALSO REFERENCES THE CONFESSION THAT TIMOTHY MADE AS WELL AS THE CONFESSION JESUS CHRIST MADE. JESUS CONFESSED BEFORE PILATE THAT HE WAS THE KING/MESSIAH (MATTHEW 27:11, JOHN 18:37) EVEN WHEN FACING PROSECUTION AND DEATH. TIMOTHY'S CONFESSION WAS THAT JESUS IS LORD AND HE WILL SERVE HIM, COME WHAT MAY. TIMOTHY, YOU HAVE ENTERED THE COMPETITION, STARTED THE COMPETITION AND HAVE A PRIZE WAITING FOR YOU AT THE END OF THE COMPETITION - **TAKE HOLD OF IT!**

KEEP (THE/THIS COMMANDMENT) - THE CONTEXT AND LANGUAGE HERE IS PROBABLY REFERRING TO THE COMMANDMENT PAUL JUST GAVE AND THE CHARGE PAUL HAS GIVEN TIMOTHY IN THIS LETTER (RATHER THAN ANOTHER/RANDOM COMMANDMENT). NET, NLT, CSB, NIV ALL TRANSLATE "OBEY/KEEP ~~THE~~ THIS COMMAND." PAUL CHARGES TIMOTHY ON THESE THINGS IN THE "PRESENCE OF GOD AND JESUS CHRIST", STRESSING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS AND THAT THIS ISN'T JUST PAUL'S ADVICE. TIMOTHY, THIS IS THE GREAT TASK OF YOUR LIFE. DO IT RIGHT AND WELL AND UNTIL YOU SEE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

HERE'S THE PROGRESSION OF WHAT PAUL IS SAYING - RUN AWAY FROM THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD AND RUN TOWARDS THE THINGS OF GOD - IT'S GOING TO BE A STRUGGLE AND FIGHT ALONG THE WAY BUT ONCE YOU HAVE TAKEN HOLD OF FAITH AND TRUTH AND THE THINGS OF GOD - DO NOT LET IT GO!

1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19 - INSTRUCTIONS FOR RICH

THIS IS AN INTERESTING WORD FROM PAUL. AS WE SAW IN THE FIRST PART OF THIS CHAPTER, THERE ARE SERIOUS WARNINGS ABOUT RICHES, WEALTH AND GREED. WE DISCUSSED HOW LOVE OF MONEY AND THE DESIRE FOR WORLDLY THINGS IS AN INSIDIOUS AND POISONOUS THREAT THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. AND YET PAUL GIVES INSTRUCTIONS TO THOSE WHO ARE "RICH" ABOUT HOW TO USE THEIR WEALTH IN A GODLY WAY. THE CALL TO "SELL ALL YOU HAVE AND FOLLOW ME" IS NOT A GENERAL STATEMENT TO EVERY CHRISTIAN, FOR GOD IS GOING TO WORK THROUGH THOSE WHO ARE GIFTED, FORTUNATE, AND OF MEANS TO SUPPORT AND FURTHER HIS WORK AND CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE.

SO, FOR THOSE WHO WOULD BE CONSIDERED "RICH" (WHICH CERTAINLY WOULD BE DIFFERENT BASED ON YOUR CULTURE AND CONTEXT), MUST NOT BE CONCEITED OR "FIX THEIR HOPE ON THE UNCERTAINTY OF RICHES" BUT GOD, WHO IS THEIR TRUE PROVIDER.

THOSE WHO ARE RICH SHOULD DO GOOD, BE "RICH" IN THEIR GOOD DEEDS AND BE BOTH GENEROUS AND READY TO SHARE. CHRISTIANS WHO ARE RICH ALSO MUST REMEMBER THEY "BROUGHT NOTHING INTO THIS WORLD AND CANNOT TAKE ANYTHING OUT EITHER" (1 TIMOTHY 6:7) AND LIVE FOR THE TREASURED PROMISES OF THE AGE TO COME.

1 TIMOTHY 6:20-21 - GUARD & STAY FOCUSED

ONE TAKE AWAY OF THIS LETTER IS PAUL'S DESIRE TO KEEP TIMOTHY AND THE CHURCH BY EXTENSION FOCUSED ON THE RIGHT THINGS. WE CAN THINK BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF THE LETTER WHERE PAUL SAID THAT PART OF THE ERROR OF THE FALSE TEACHERS/TEACHING IS THAT IT CAUSES PEOPLE TO MOVE AWAY FROM WHAT REALLY MATTERS.

1 TIMOTHY 1:3-5 (NLT) - WHEN I LEFT FOR MACEDONIA, I URGED YOU TO STAY THERE IN EPHESUS AND STOP THOSE WHOSE TEACHING IS CONTRARY TO THE TRUTH. 4 DON'T LET THEM WASTE THEIR TIME IN ENDLESS DISCUSSION OF MYTHS AND SPIRITUAL PEDIGREES. THESE THINGS ONLY LEAD TO MEANINGLESS SPECULATIONS, WHICH DON'T HELP PEOPLE LIVE A LIFE OF FAITH IN GOD. 5 THE PURPOSE OF MY INSTRUCTION IS THAT ALL BELIEVERS WOULD BE FILLED WITH LOVE THAT COMES FROM A PURE HEART, A CLEAR CONSCIENCE, AND GENUINE FAITH.

I THINK PAUL IS REITERATING THAT SAME TRUTH HERE AT THE END OF HIS LETTER. GUARD WHAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU, AVOID THE THINGS THAT WILL PULL YOU AWAY FROM WHERE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE. THOSE WHO HAVE NOT STAYED FOCUSED AND CLEAR HAVE GONE ASTRAY. PAUL IS PLEADING WITH TIMOTHY TO NOT END UP IN THAT GROUP.

TIMOTHY, GUARD WHAT HAS BEEN GIVEN, THAT WHICH IS OF GOD AND VALUABLE. AVOID THE THINGS THAT ARE A WASTE OF TIME AND ENERGY.

AS WE CONCLUDE PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO TIMOTHY WE CAN GLEAN A LOT ABOUT THE CHURCH GENERALLY AND ABOUT CHURCH LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE SPECIFICALLY - BUT ALL CHRISTIANS HAVE MUCH TO CONSIDER AND FOLLOW FROM THIS LETTER. PAUL IS GOING TO WRITE THIS LETTER AND HAVE IT SENT BY HAND, FOOT AND BOAT PERHAPS TO GET TO HIS FRIEND AND DISCIPLE TIMOTHY. AT THAT TIME THIS WOULDN'T BE ONE LETTER MIXED UP SOMEWHERE ON THE TABLE AMIDST BILLS, FLYERS AND OTHER JUNK MAIL. THIS LETTER WOULD HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY TIMOTHY WHO WOULD HAVE HEARD PAUL'S OWN VOICE AND HEART AS HE READ. THIS LETTER WILL BE WRITTEN ABOUT 30 YEARS AFTER JESUS' MINISTRY AND DECADES INTO PAUL'S OWN WORK - PAUL IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE MOVEMENT, CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH. GOD INSPIRED PAUL TO WRITE A VISION FOR THE CHURCH AT THIS TIME - A FAMILY OF FOLLOWERS OF JESUS COMMITTED TO LOVING GOD AND PEOPLE.

IF TIMOTHY TAKES PAUL'S WORDS SERIOUSLY, HE WILL SHARE THEM WITH THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS. IF THE EPESIAN CHURCH TAKES TIMOTHY'S WORDS SERIOUSLY, THEY WILL REPRESENT KING JESUS WELL IN THIS EVIL AGE. WILL THEY KEEP THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING OR ENTERTAIN COUNTERFEIT VERSIONS OF THE GOSPEL (1 TIMOTHY 1)? WILL THEY BE A CHURCH THAT PRAYS, THAT CARES ABOUT THE LOST, AND WHO IS MADE UP OF GODLY MEN AND WOMEN OR JUST ALLOW THE WORLD TO DETERMINE THOSE THINGS? (1 TIMOTHY 2)? WILL THEY BE LED BY FAITHFUL AND CHRISTLIKE ELDERS AND DEACONS WHO CARE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE OR SETTLE FOR ANOTHER WAY AND NOT MAKE HARD DECISIONS (1 TIMOTHY 3)? WILL THEY ACCEPT WHAT THEIR CULTURE IS TEACHING AND PROMOTING AND FOLLOW FALSE TEACHERS OR WILL THEY STAY FAITHFUL TO THE LEADING OF SCRIPTURE AND GOD'S SPIRIT (1 TIMOTHY 4)? WILL THEY BE A MULTIGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY OF LOVE AND GENEROSITY OR FORM CLIQUES AND IGNORE THE NEEDS AROUND THEM (1 TIMOTHY 5)?

THE ANSWER TO THOSE QUESTIONS DEPENDS ON THE CHURCH, THE PEOPLE OF GOD OF THAT DAY. ~~THEY~~HAD TO MAKE THAT CHOICE. ~~THEY~~WERE THE DETERMINERS OF THEIR DESTINY. IT WASN'T SOMETHING PAUL COULD DO FOR THEM NOR TIMOTHY FORCE UPON THEM. EACH CHRISTIAN IN THAT COMMUNITY WOULD PLAY A PART IN THIS GOING WELL OR GOING AWRY. SURE THEY WERE NOT ON THEIR OWN OR WITHOUT THE GREAT GRACE AND HELP OF GOD TO EMPOWER AND SUSTAIN AND SUPPORT AND FILL IN GAPS AND THE REST - THE FIRST AND FINAL WORDS OF THE LETTER AFFIRM THAT - "GRACE BE WITH YOU.. (1:2, 6:21). BUT, EMPOWERED BY THE GRACE OF GOD, THE CHURCH MUST FIGHT AND STRUGGLE AND AND STRIVE AND PRAY AND COMPETE AND PAY ATTENTION AND BE INTENTIONAL TO FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST. PAUL WROTE HIS HEART AND OUTLINE OF HOW THEY OUGHT TO DO THAT - THAT'S WHAT WE JUST READ.

AND FINISHING 1 TIMOTHY, WE NOW ARE PRESENTED WITH THAT SAME MOMENT. PAUL WROTE TO TIMOTHY, TIMOTHY GAVE TO THE CHURCH, THE CHURCH PRESERVED THE WRITING AND NOW IT IS GIVEN TO US. AND WE MUST ASK - WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? HOW WILL WE RESPOND? WHAT WILL GOD'S CHURCH DO AND BE AND BECOME IN THIS MOMENT?

I SAY WE GO FOR IT. LET'S BE GOD'S SPECIAL PEOPLE - DISTINCT AND DEVOTED TO THE WAY OF JESUS - WILLING TO GIVE AND LOVE AND SACRIFICE AND MAKE HARD CHOICES AND CONSECRATE OURSELVES TO THIS GREAT CALLING WHICH ULTIMATELY HAS COME FROM A GREAT GOD WHO IS WORTHY OF THE GLORY THAT YOU AND I CAN GIVE HIM TODAY.

1 TIMOTHY 1:17

NOW TO THE KING ETERNAL, IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, THE ONLY GOD,
BE HONOR AND GLORY FOREVER AND EVER.
AMEN.