

# Study 11: 1st Timothy Chapter 6

## **Introduction**

The letter concludes with further instructions concerning the situation in the church, as well as some specific instruction to Timothy for dealing with the situation. The conclusion of the letter lack Paul's usual greetings and salutations.

## **Body of the Study**

**Servants and masters**

**Dealing with those who would not listen**

**Our contentment as christians**

**Instructions to Timothy**

**Closing instructions**

## **Homework and preparation for next week:**

- *In what ways is our society obsessed with money and possessions, and how should we as christians react to that situation? What should we do?*
- *Read the notes as a review of the study*
- *Re-read the notes from chapter 3, and from Titus chapter 1 (the qualities of elders) in preparation for the next study.*
- *Think through the functions that an elder performs (the next study will be on the function of the eldership, and the following one on the form of the eldership)*

## Notes for study 11: 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy Chapter 6

The letter concludes with further instructions concerning the situation in the church, as well as some specific instruction to Timothy for dealing with the situation. The conclusion of the letter lacks Paul's usual greetings and salutations.

### ***Servants and masters***

The first two verses follow on from the thoughts of the last chapter (with specific instructions to Timothy for dealing with the situations in the church. Paul's instructions here deal with the relationship between christian servants (slaves) and their masters, and christian masters to their servants – especially if the servants are also christians. “...*All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered...*” (1:6:1 NIV). The population of the Roman Empire was composed of around 50% slaves, so it was undoubted that many of the christian converts would have involved slavery in their families in some form. By showing proper respect to their masters, the genuineness of christianity, and the message that was preached would not be compromised – regardless of whether the masters were christians or not.

In the case where the masters were christians, then “...*Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them...*” (1:6:2 NIV). The servants are not to expect any special treatment – rather in the contrary, they ought to be delivering special services because they are serving brethren. Timothy was instructed to put these things in order “...*These are the things you are to teach and urge on them...*” (1:6:2 NIV).

### ***Dealing with those who would not listen***

Timothy was not to compromise those who would not take notice of the teaching that Paul had empowered him to deliver. Paul very clearly asserts that the teaching that he had given (and he was instructing Timothy to teach) had come from God. “...*If anyone teaches other wise, and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness...*” (1:6:3 NKJV). These people were to be withdrawn from “...*from such withdraw yourself...*” (1:6:5 NKJV). Paul describes the characteristics of these people:

- *he is conceited and understands nothing.*
- *He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and*
- *quarrels about words that result in*
  - *envy,*
  - *strife,*
  - *malicious talk,*
  - *evil suspicions and*
  - *constant friction between men of corrupt mind,*
- *who have been robbed of the truth and*
- *who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.* (1:6:4-5 NIV)

These people are corrupt through and through, and they are not motivated by a love of the truth, but by what they think they can get out of it for their own gain.

### ***Our contentment as christians***

In contrast to those who are out to get what they can for themselves (who are never satisfied), christianity brings us true peace “... *godliness with contentment is great gain...*” (1:6:6 NKJV). When we live a Godly life, and are contented in our situation – whatever the circumstances might

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be – then we will have true peace. Paul was content in whatever situation he found himself (Php 4:11-12), and was focussed on his true homeland (Php 3:20). We need to keep our lives in perspective “...*For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out...*” (1:6:7 NKJV). We need to recognise that we are *strangers and pilgrims on the earth* (1 Pet 2:11; Heb 11:13) and that the things that we have and do here are to prepare us for our permanent home with God. If we have the basic necessities of life, we should be happy, as there are many people who do not even have that “...*But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that...*” (1:6:8 NKJV).

In contrast, those who are seeking to be rich in this world may achieve it, but they are in danger of losing their eternal salvation on the way. “...*People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction...*” (1:6:9 NIV). The reason for this is very clear and obvious “...*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs...*” (1:6:10 NIV). It is not money that is the root of all evil, but *the love of money*. Paul is not saying that it is wrong to be rich. What is wrong is when it becomes an obsession so that we continue to seek to be rich to the detriment of our eternal salvation.

This proverbial statement echoes what had already been said by both Greek and Jewish writers. There is no kind of evil to which the love of money may not lead people, once it starts to control their lives. (NIVBC)

### ***Instructions to Timothy***

In contrast, Timothy (addressed as “*O man of God*” – a similar address to that given to the prophets in the Old Testament) is told to “...*flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness...*” (1:6:11 NKJV). The instruction is not for Timothy alone, but for all who would conform their lives to that of God.

The instruction might be easy to say, but it is certainly not easy to achieve, as we are constantly being snared away by Satan. “...*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called...*” (1:6:12 NKJV). We do not have to fight to achieve salvation – we achieve it by grace as a free gift from God – but we have to fight to keep it, as Satan is constantly trying to snare us away from God (1 Pet 5:8). Timothy had “...*confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses...*” (1:6:12 NKJV) which probably refers to the time of his baptism, but also to the ongoing profession of his faith in Christ as he went about his life as a christian, and his work as an evangelist.

Just as Timothy had made a good confession, so “...*Christ Jesus...witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate...*” (1:6:13 NKJV). Paul is making a play on words here. Timothy confessed (*homologeō*) before many witnesses (*martus*), whilst Jesus witnessed (*martureō*) the confession (*homologia*). Jesus affirmed His position as King, and as the Christ when He was asked by Pilate (Lk 23:2-3; Jn 18:36-37). As a result, it cost Him the ultimate sacrifice of death (Mk 15:17-20).

Timothy was to continue in faithfulness in his work “...*(I urge you – vs 13) ... that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing...*” (1:6:14 NKJV). Paul is referring to the Second Coming of Christ here, and so Timothy is to continually remain faithful. Christ's appearing “...*God will bring about in his own time...*” (1:6:15 NIV).

Paul emphasises the right of God to make the choice of the time, since He is “...*God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords,*<sup>16</sup> *who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen...*” (1:6:15-16 NIV). Paul uses a doxology here, as he often does in his letters.

## **Closing instructions**

In summing up and reinforcing the instructions that have been given, Paul instructs Timothy to “...*Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment...*” (1:6:17 NIV). It is not wrong to be rich, although Jesus reminded the disciples that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt 19:24). The responsibility for the rich is to use the things that they have to do good, and not to trust in riches “...*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.* <sup>20</sup> *But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.* <sup>21</sup> *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...*” (Mt 6:19-21 NIV).

The rich have the responsibility to others, and Paul commands them to remember their obligations. “...*Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.* <sup>19</sup>*In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life...*” (1:6:18-19 NIV).

As a final instruction, Timothy was to “...*Guard what was committed to your trust...*” (1:6:20 NKJV). Paul is referring to the sound doctrine that he has been commanded to put in place in Ephesus, and he is to “...*Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge...*” (1:6:20 NIV). The false teachers were pushing such ideas, and they were to be rebuked for it (1:4:7; 1:6:3-5).

The elders who had led some astray in the church were practicing this false teaching, and “...*by professing it, some have strayed concerning the faith...*” (1:6:21 NKJV).

Paul closes the letter with a short salute “...*Grace be with you. Amen...*” (1:6:21 NKJV).