

1 Timothy Study Notes

Godliness in the Church

By James West

Background information:

H. Richard Hester succinctly describes the possible circumstances surrounding this epistle:

‘Paul wrote this letter in A.D. 63 while visiting churches in Macedonia. Paul’s missionary journeys spanned approximately the years A.D. 48-56. From 56-60 Paul was slowly moving through the Roman courts, arriving ultimately at Rome. For two years, 61-62, he was held under house arrest in Rome, at the end of which time he was acquitted by the Emperor and released. He was probably forced to leave Rome. From Rome Paul was accompanied by Luke, Timothy and Mark and perhaps others. He took Timothy to Ephesus where he left him after a time. Then he took Titus to Crete where he left him after a period of time. Going back to Macedonia where he was ministering among churches, Paul expected to rejoin Timothy in Ephesus but did not know when he could go (3:14-15; 4:13). So he wrote to Timothy in Ephesus and to Titus in Crete to encourage each in a difficult situation. Thus the approximate dates for 1 Timothy and Titus could perhaps be placed around 63. Some of the early Church Fathers wrote of a ministry in the west that could indicate a visit to Spain, which was a long-time desire of Paul (Romans 15:24). After being recaptured and once again imprisoned, Paul wrote Timothy a second letter, his last letter before his imminent death as foreshadowed in 2 Timothy 4:6-8. Thus we could place 2 Timothy around A.D. 66 to fit with a date of A.D. 67 for Paul’s martyrdom.’ (H. Richard Hester, *New Testament Bible History*, p. 212)

Timothy’s grandmother and mother were both Christians. He probably had a Greek education. Although his mother was a Jewess, he would have been considered illegitimate by the Jews, seeing that his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1). It was therefore to his ministerial advantage that he was circumcised later by Paul. Timothy was possibly converted in his home town of Lystra (in Galatia) during Paul’s first missionary journey, when he also may have seen Paul being stoned (Acts 14:19). In Acts 16, we see that Paul returns on his second missionary journey, and takes Timothy to be his associate. Timothy participated with Paul in many missionary ventures. It seems that Timothy may have had a natural tendency to be timid. For this reason, Paul had to encourage him to ‘be strong’, to ‘war a good warfare’, not to be backward in using his gifts, and to be courageous.

Throughout the book Paul exhorts Timothy to:

- Stand against the false teachers in Ephesus.
- Preach sound doctrine
- Be an example
- Keep order in the church
- Understand and teach the responsibilities of church members and office bearers

Paul’s main purpose in writing is to promote godliness in the church. 1 Timothy 3:15 may be a key verse for the book.

Chapter 1: Warring a Good Warfare

(v. 2) Notice what affection Paul has for Timothy (v. 2), in calling him ‘my own son in the faith.’ What affection parents need to have for their own children—to see them as precious; to desire God’s

grace, mercy, and peace to be theirs continually. What tenderness we ought to have for those who have looked to us for guidance and comfort in spiritual matters.

(vv. 3-11) Paul reminds Timothy of the command he gave him in Ephesus to charge false teachers not to teach their errors. If there are no leaders to stand up against false teaching in a church, the sheep will be fair game for many of the devil's deceptions. In order to protect the flock, pastors and spiritual men in the church must be willing to be firm and say difficult things at times. Without such courageous leaders, a church will disintegrate over time, and become susceptible to being diseased and scattered spiritually (Proverbs 6:23). Some wanted to talk vainly, but Timothy needed to silence them.

The purpose behind the law is love, but some had missed its point, and were using it to teach other things. (v. 9) '...Not made for a righteous man...' seems to be adequately explained by the following commentator '...in proportion as he is inwardly led by the Spirit, the justified man needs not the law, which is only an outward rule (Rom 6:14; Ga 5:18, 23). But as the justified man often does not give himself up wholly to the inward leading of the Spirit, he morally needs the outward law to show him his sin and God's requirements.' (JFB) (No doubt, the false teachers were trying to emphasize the ceremonial aspects of the law.) The law is made to teach sinners, which prompts Paul to reflect upon God's grace toward himself, saying that God had chosen him to be a pattern of God's grace for others to see.

The purpose of the law, or even for the whole word of God, is not for the self-righteous to pat themselves on the back with it, or for sophisticated elocutionists to pride themselves in it. Its purpose is rather to cut like a sword to the dividing of soul and spirit; it is to convict, convince, and reprove. The teacher who is not willing to be cut to the heart and reprov'd by the very Scriptures that he delights to rehearse, has no business proclaiming the glorious Gospel. This leads Paul to marvel that God chose him for such a task. Only a heart humbled by the law of God can know how to use it rightly for the edification of others.

(v. 12) We ought to be thankful for all enablement that Christ Jesus has given to us, in enabling us to attain to the level of stature and fruitfulness we presently enjoy. It is so important for us to look back, and to remember what we used to be, for surely we will see something of the undeserved mercies of God, and hopefully we will see much. Psa 18:35 'Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.' When we had almost destroyed ourselves, God intervened.

(v. 13) It is frightful to consider what lengths of disobedience Paul's ignorance and blindness was driving him to. What was it that God saw in Paul to privilege him with such a ministry? God sees into the depths of our hearts, therefore we should never be wilfully disobedient, or play games with God. He knows whether we are serious about doing his will or not.

(v. 14) Whereas Paul used to be a small-minded monster of a man, God's abundant grace poured faith and love into this man's heart. Can we see something of this working in our lives? It is not our doing. How was it that I was so unbelieving and self-centred in times past? Experiencing God's grace, and growing in grace is what makes and fashions every masterpiece of the Saviour (Eph 2:8-10).

'And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.' It is as if Paul is saying to Timothy, 'Timothy, look at this undeserved merit and help with which I was credited! Here is a pattern for you, Timothy, and all others who will believe. Look at what our Lord, our tender Shepherd-Saviour—both mine and yours—did for me! Whereas before I was blinded by unbelief and bitter hatred toward all and sundry, God pierced the darkness, giving me the light of

faith. I now know and believe his great love toward me, and have been filled with that love for the purpose of ministering to others. What wonders are made possible in the realm of Christ Jesus!

(vv. 15-16) Paul describes himself as the chief of sinners. He was converted from being a raving, fuming, threatening, injurious, merciless, madman to being a compassionate, caring, and courageous disciple of Jesus Christ. He was not ignorant of God's plan in all of this. God was using him as a pattern—a demonstration of God's willingness to save any kind of sinner. 'All longsuffering' is the attribute of Jesus Christ. It is that which he intends to show forth in us. We struggle with impatience towards others, and even with the plan and purpose of God in our lives. But if we could catch a glimpse of our great sin, and of His great long-suffering, we would only thank Christ Jesus who hath enabled us. It is all about His wonderful character, not our own greatness.

(v. 17) Paul is then filled with grateful praise for the King of immortality, invisible and unsearchable, yet controlling all things by His wise and loving plan, who had personally called and saved Paul out of his wretched deadness, conferring on him His own immortality, and putting him on the upward path to glory.

(vv. 18-20) It is possible for every believer to war a good warfare. Success in spiritual warfare and fruit-bearing is God's will. Just as God had a special plan for Timothy's life, there is potential for much fruit in every believer's walk. Timothy had received the encouragement of certain prophecies made over him personally. We don't have those, but we don't need them. Besides the promises of Scripture, which are for every believer, we may point to peculiar encouragements that God has given to personally spur us on in the battle. There will be no excuse for not warring a good warfare.

Paul was able to war a good warfare, and he was a pattern for all. Timothy is therefore commanded to war a good warfare. The key is faith (looking unto Jesus) and keeping a clear conscience before God. Paul warned him against making shipwreck, like two other individuals whom Paul had delivered to Satan so that they would learn not to speak irreverently.

Questions from Introduction and Chapter 1

1. What were the two other epistles that Paul wrote in between his two imprisonments in Rome?
2. What were two of the main points that Paul was addressing in the epistle of 1 Timothy?
3. *Paul's main purpose in writing is to promote _____ in the church.
_____ may be a key verse for the book.
4. *What will happen to the flock of God if pastors and spiritual men in the church are unwilling to be firm and say difficult things at times? (3 things)
5. '...As the justified man often does not give himself up wholly to the inward leading of the Spirit, he morally needs the outward law_____.'
6. Who can properly use the law of God for the edification of others?
7. What makes and fashions every masterpiece of the Saviour? (2 things)

Chapter 2: Portraits of Godliness in men and women

(vv. 1-6) Prayers and thanks should be offered for all men, including those who are in authority. A few words are here used to describe the process of intercessory prayer:

1. Supplications: These are formal petitions, brought before a king. We ought to remember that when we pray for others, we have access to the very throne-room of the King of kings, who can do above all that we ask or think in the lives of others.
2. Prayers: This is the normal word for prayer in the New Testament.
3. Intercessions: Concerning the verb form of the word: 'The verb signifies to *fall in with a person; to draw near so as to converse familiarly.*' (Vincent's Word Studies); This reminds us of Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah. He was called 'the friend of God'. If we want our prayers for others to be effective, we must know God intimately by spending much time with Him.
4. Giving of thanks: Paul always found reason to be thankful in relation to those he prayed for, even if he was praying for his enemies. For example, he rejoiced in the fact that even his enemies were publicising the name of Christ (Philippians 1:18). When we lose our thankfulness, we begin to lose our power with God (Neh 8:10).

The reason for this is '...that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.' It is good to desire righteousness in government for the sake of the spiritual welfare of the country. It is quite right for Christians to pray for an environment which is conducive to their peace and freedom. Some Christians have prayed for persecution to come upon other Christians, so that the light of the Gospel might shine the more brightly. However, we must consider that when persecution arises, it falls upon the spiritual Christian as well as the carnal Christian. It is a terrible hardship, even for those who sincerely love God. It brings untold suffering to innocent people. When rulers are kindly disposed towards the Gospel, however, it allows for evangelism to take place more easily. This is why the text states that God wants all men to be saved. There is only one God, and He desires all men to acknowledge this. Furthermore, Christ has made provision to be the mediator and Saviour of all, and so this is why we must pray for all to be saved. There could be no clearer text in Scripture that what we find in verse 6, to refute the error of limited atonement, in which the Calvinists assert that Christ died for the elect only. '...Testified in due time.' We who live in the end times are so privileged to see what wise and godly men before the time of Christ have longed to understand. Let us not lightly esteem the Gospel of Christ, or the revelation of His self-sacrificing love towards us (Titus 3:4-7).

(v. 7) If we consider that this epistle was likely to be read publicly before the assembled believers in Ephesus, it is no surprise that Paul should be so passionate in the defence of his office -- that office being not only one of preacher and apostle, but also teacher for the Gentiles. There were possibly some Judaizers within the congregation at Ephesus, who questioned not only Paul's authority, but

also his mission to the Gentiles. To question Paul's mission was to question his apostleship, and Paul maybe wanted to bring things to a head in order to make Timothy's job a little easier.

(v. 8) Men ought to pray with holiness and without anger. "[Anger] is a fever in the heart, and a calenture [a fever occurring in tropical regions] in the head, and a fire in the face, and a sword in the hand, and a fury all over; and therefore can never suffer a man to be in a disposition to pray. For prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest; prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts; it is the daughter of charity and the sister of meekness" (Jeremy Taylor, *The Return of Prayer*, Works, 1835, I, p. 638).

Doubting goes along with wrath. It all has to do with our view of God. If our view of God is wrong we will either think: 'I am unhappy, because I don't have what I need (this is wrath/anger),' or we will think, 'What if I don't get what I need (this is doubt/anxiety)?' A quiet and settled disposition of mind is what every man needs to have, in order to pray properly. He can have this mindset if he remembers that God is already providing everything that he needs (Ps 23:1; Phil 4:19). This essentially goes back to what a man thinks about the character of God.

Unrighteous anger and doubt are things that 'un-man' men as spiritual leaders. They are a great hindrance to godly man-hood. In like manner, women are given instructions unique to themselves.

(vv. 9-10) 'In like manner' shows that these instructions for woman are for godly behaviour, just as the instructions for the men. Women ought to dress modestly. 'Modest' means 'orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest' (Vine's Dictionary). The clothing must therefore be nice, but not provocative (which would be disorderly in the moral sense). 'Shamefacedness' has the idea of being bashful toward men, and having reverence toward God. 'Sobriety' has the idea of soundness of mind, and self-control. We see, then, that the outward appearance and behaviour of the woman will often flow from the condition of her mind and heart.

The godly woman's emphasis will not be on her outward beauty, as worldly women, but on her inner character. Good works are more important to her than good looks. If we compare with 1 Peter 3:1-6, we see that it is not wrong to wear jewellery, etc., for then Peter's words would imply that it is wrong to wear clothes! Rather, the outstanding feature of a woman's life ought to be her godly character.

(vv. 11-14) Women ought to learn in silence and submission, for the following reasons:

1. Adam was formed before Eve. David Cloud comments: 'The woman was created after the man to be his helpmeet and not his head.'
2. Adam wasn't deceived, but the woman was. The Greek signifies that she was deceived completely. Paul does not mean to imply that the man did not transgress, but rather that the woman *came to be* in a state of transgression through complete deception. 'The woman was not created to lead but to serve and she was given the equipment to do the latter and not former. As a result of this, she is more easily deceived.' (Cloud)

(v. 15) Satan very much wants to deceive women today, whether they be married or single. He knows that they are easily deceived, and he uses that to cause them great pain. This is a difficult verse to interpret, but the meaning seems to be this: The pain experienced during child-bearing is part of the curse God has allowed upon women. However, despite this fact, she can be 'saved' (protected) from deception (by which woman originally fell) if she continues in faith, love (agape), holiness, and sobriety (self-control; sound-mindedness).

Questions from Chapter 2

1. What happens when rulers are kindly disposed toward the Gospel?
2. What verse of Scripture effectively refutes the erroneous Calvinistic doctrine of limited atonement?
3. What does every man need to have in order to pray properly?
4. *What two things are a great hindrance to Godly manhood and prayer?
5. What ought to be the outstanding feature of a woman's life?
6. *How can a woman protect herself from deception?

Chapter 3: Qualifications for pastors and deacons

(v. 1) From this text, we understand that it is not wrong to have a *holy* ambition to serve God's people in a leadership capacity. Sanders may be pretty close to the point when he writes:

'In Paul's day, only a deep love for Christ and genuine concern for the church could motivate people to lead. But in many cultures today where Christian leadership carries prestige and privilege, people aspire to leadership for reasons quite unworthy and self-seeking.' (J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 14)

A pastor is an overseer, which is the meaning of 'bishop'. It is interesting that Paul directs the attention of one who desires the office to the *work* entailed in that office: '...he desireth a good work.' A man should not seek great things for himself. He should rather seek to be servant of all. This involves hard work and sacrifice. The following account of J. Hudson Taylor's (missionary to China in the mid-1800's) ministry experiences – the experiences of a man who sacrificed so much for Christ -- will serve to illustrate this point:

'...Associated with every fresh advance, every access of power and blessing, there was in Mr. Taylor's own experience a corresponding period of suffering and trial. Deeper down, deeper down that life had to go, in God. Outwardly it might seem, at times, that the work was carried on a floodtide of success. Glorious steps of faith were taken; glorious answers to prayer were received. But the preparations of heart beforehand and the steady burden-bearing afterwards were known only to those who shared them behind the scenes. One stands silenced before such profound heart-searchings, such trials of faith, such exercise of soul. Given a man prepared to go all lengths with God, prepared to die daily in quiet, practical reality, prepared to be the servant of his brethren (least of all and servant of all), prepared to stand for them in ceaseless intercession, not only bearing with their failures and weaknesses, but bearing them up in creative faith and love that lift to higher levels – thus and thus only is such spiritual success possible.' (Dr. & Mrs. Howard Taylor, *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret*, p. 213)

(v. 2) Paul proceeds to list the qualifications for a pastor (See also Titus 1:6-9). We must remember that no one man will perfectly fulfil all of these requirements, but the pastor must be a man who basically exemplifies these qualities. First, he must be blameless. In conduct and speech, he ought to be above reproach. The Scriptures here say that he must be 'The husband of one wife'. Does this mean that he must be married? My personal opinion is that it is an advantage if he is married, but I am not convinced that this is Paul's point. I note Paul himself was not married when he planted and shepherded his churches. Assuming that a pastor was suddenly bereaved of his wife, would he then need to step out of the ministry? In many ways, he would be all the more qualified to minister to those members of his congregation who have lost a loved one. The literal Greek rendering of these words are: 'a man of one woman.' I don't believe this means that he cannot have been widowed and remarried, or even divorced in the past. Paul's intention must be to focus on the man's status in the present. If a man is a womaniser, or has multiple wives, he must not be in the ministry. A polygamous marriage will obscure the pure truth of the commitment that Christ has to his bride, the church.

A pastor must also be characterised by vigilance: He must be circumspect, considering all reasonably possible circumstances. A pastor must not let down his guard. He must look for the dangers that threaten the flock, and be attuned to the people's needs. He must be sober: '...sober-minded, clearheaded. The word originally connotes abstinence from alcohol, but here it has a wider, metaphorical sense...' (Rienecker & Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*) A pastor must not be willing to let any activity or substance cloud his thinking and judgment, whatever he is doing at any time of the day. He must have a disciplined mind, and this will require a disciplined life

(Prov 31:4). He must be of good behaviour: This comes from a Greek word which means 'orderly'. Everything about a pastor ought to be orderly. His inner life must be in order, and his outer life ought to reflect that inner orderliness. This orderliness will impact upon his routines, his relationships, his demeanour, his habits, his study, his prayer life, his Bible reading, his clothing and appearance, his finances, his household, his diet, etc. etc. An orderly life is more useful to Christ. He must also be given to hospitality. The Greek word also signifies 'a lover of guests.' If he is not willing to open his home to guests, then how can he truly minister to them at a relational level? He must also be apt to teach: In other words, not only must he be skilful in teaching, but he must be 'instructive.' This does not mean that he must be constantly trying to teach, but that he is attuned and ready for the many opportunities that arise to teach. This, then, shows us that an overseer must also be a teacher, and must therefore study to show himself approved in the same.

(v. 3) A pastor must not be given to wine. The Greek word *paroinos* shows that he must not stay near wine (Prov 23:30). Paul may have been speaking about wine which was quite weak in alcoholic content, compared to what we have today. Everything that is available on the market today would have been considered 'strong drink' in those days, and is therefore off-limits for the Christian who wants to live a good testimony for Christ. Partial abstinence is a joke. Total abstinence is the only way of safety. A pastor also must not be a striker. That is, he must not *hit* people. One would think it should go without saying, but I have heard of a pastor who felt that this was a valid form of church discipline for his members! A pastor must also not love money. If he allows his heart to go out to it, it will be the doorway to many foolish and hurtful lusts, and will ruin him spiritually (1 Tim 6:9). Rulers ought to hate covetousness. If a pastor loves money, then his heart will grow insensibly cold towards God and the souls of men, and will freeze, without him even knowing it! He will find himself looking for personal gain as a reason for the ministry (Mal 1:10; 1 Pet 5:2), and it will corrupt his principles. A pastor must also be patient and peaceful towards men (2 Tim 2:24). He must not be covetous.

(v. 4) A pastor must have rule over his own house. His conduct must be such that he has not only his children's attention, but also their hearts. His mind, attitude, demeanour, and actions toward his family will set the tone. 'Gravity': 'Dignity, stateliness. It describes the characteristic of the man who carries himself with the perfect blend of dignity and courtesy, independence and humility to his fellowmen...The word avoids the suggestion of sternness yet retains the idea of natural respect...' (Rienecker & Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*) 'It does not mean that he should be severe, stern, morose - which are traits that are often mistaken for gravity, and which are as inconsistent with the proper spirit of a father as frivolity of manner- but that he should be a serious and sober-minded man. He should maintain proper "dignity" (σεμνότης *semnotēs*); he should maintain self-respect, and his deportment should be such as to inspire others with respect for him.' (Barnes)

(vv. 5-6) If the pastor doesn't know how to keep order in his own household, how is he going to keep order in the church? Eli failed in this regard, and it affected the whole nation of Israel. If a pastor is not faithful with his own family, he will ultimately drop the ball somewhere along the line in church ministry also, and probably in a big way. Paul is warning Timothy against putting a novice, or newly-saved Christian into the pastorate. When God wants to mould a leader, he has to first humble him, and take him through many things, in order to make him teachable of spirit, and to know that God is his only strength and goodness, and that there is nothing in himself to fit him for the work, except God's gracious working in him. If a newly saved man steps into the pastorate, Satan will catch him out in pride, and he will likely have a terrible fall. 'The condemnation of the devil' signifies either Satan's legal accusations against men before God, or the way in which Satan himself fell – ie. through pride.

(v. 7) A pastoral candidate must have a good testimony generally in the world. Unsaved people should be able to say that he is an honest man. Demetrius was a man who had a good report 3 John 1:12. Paul was very interested in knowing the integrity of the men he worked with and recommended. The devil loves to destroy the testimony of Christianity by catching pastors out. If there is a dishonest or worldly pastor, Satan will want to use that to cast a slur upon a church, churches, or Christians in general. Putting a man into the ministry when his character has not been tested and proven is very unwise. Even a man who has potential as a deacon must be proven first, and so why should it therefore be any less so when considering a man for the pastorate?

(v. 8) What is a deacon? The word 'deacon' literally means 'servant, minister, or attendant'. The word is used in a general sense in the New Testament to speak of men who were serving Christ faithfully. It is also used in a specific sense to refer to men who held a particular office as helpers. I believe that the men in Acts 6 were the first deacons, and to them was delegated the practical task of caring for widows, so that the apostles, who acted as pastors and overseers, could continue to give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). Like pastors, the deacons must be men of good character, and it is to be assumed that a candidate for the deaconate will have a servant's heart. In reality, the qualifications listed here should be aspired to by all of the men of the church, for they are fundamental to good character. If this is the case, then all the qualifications listed for a deacon, including servant-hood, should be especially exemplified by the pastor also. Men must demonstrate the qualifications that follow *before* being allowed to hold the office of a deacon. Some churches rotate the office of deacon, for the purpose of giving everyone 'a fair go'. This is unbiblical, and will ultimately hinder the effectiveness of a church, when every member ought to be rather abounding more and more in fruitfulness. 'Backing off' is just not a routine part of God's plan.

Men aspiring to the deaconate must be 'grave', which means 'serious, dignified, stately'. See also comments on verse 4, with regard to gravity, for it is essentially the same Greek word. He is also not to be 'double-tongued'. He should not be a person who says one thing to one person, and then something contradictory to another person. For example, he should not pretend to be loyal to the brethren, and then verbally cut them down behind their backs. He also should not be a man of drink, or a lover of money (see comments on verse 3).

(v. 9) A deacon must live a life of integrity and maintain sound doctrine, if he is to keep a pure conscience. The truths of the faith are so high, lofty, and mysterious, that a man will do great damage to his conscience if he holds his sin in the one hand, and the mystery of the faith in the other. His conduct will also bring disgrace on the purity of the Gospel if he does so. For an understanding of the mystery of the faith, examine the truths in verse 16.

(v. 10) A man must prove himself faithful, before being committed to the office of deacon. Time allows for observation, and if there is some serious flaw in a man's character, it is likely to manifest itself.

(v. 11) If deacon's wives must be qualified, then it is to be assumed that a pastor's wife must be no less qualified! In other words, the pastor's wife should study this list also! Satan likes to deceive wives, and when men follow their deceived wives, as Adam did, it can get the family and the church into a lot of strife. The wives of pastors and deacons are a target for Satanic attack, and that is why their marriages must be kept strong in the Lord.

The deacon's wife must be 'grave'. See comments on verse 8. They must not be slanderers (false accusers). The Greek word is *diabolos*, which is also translated 'devil'! Wives must not behave like devils, needlessly passing along tid-bits of juicy information. Their husbands ought likewise to be vigilant, in order to keep their wives from bitterness, and to help maintain right attitudes toward

others. The wife needs to be sober (clear-headed and vigilant), in order to keep her focus on the Lord.

(v. 12) Concerning a deacon's marital status, see as per a bishop (comments on verse 1). They likewise must bear good rule in their homes.

(v. 13) A deacon who is fruitful in his position has truly profited spiritually. The heat of the spiritual battle to which he is exposed, and the development of character which his position requires ensure this. A man who both stays and prospers in his office as deacon is doing well spiritually. This argues against casually rotating the responsibilities of deacon among various candidates in the church. Such a practice misses the point entirely, and gives no opportunity to advance in this 'good degree.' A man who has purchased (acquired) this good degree will have great boldness (Prov 28:1).

(v. 15) The message of the epistle would help Timothy to understand how to bring himself, and then others into line with God's plan for the church. The behaviour of believers in the local church is so important, seeing that it is where the truth is being proclaimed. High and holy truth requires high and holy conduct. The truth must be conspicuously displayed, of all places, in the midst of God's people. It must be displayed by their speech, attitude, and lives. Collectively, the body of Christ functions as the pillar and ground (support) on which the truth may be held aloft for all people to see. The outworking of this, of course, is in local churches.

(v. 16) Here we see what great truths are to be borne by the church (which is truth's pillar and grounding). The sacred truths embodied in this verse also provide the reason for the high qualifications and dignified conduct of the church's office-bearers and members. We are to believe the Bible by faith, and if we live carnal lives, it will weaken our faith, and dishonour the truths of God's Word. 'The mystery of godliness' refers to the mystery which is the basis of all godliness, or to the fact that it encapsulates holy things. Both what God has done is mysterious, and the results of it are beyond human comprehension, and we see both listed here:

First, 'God was manifest in the flesh'. This is astonishing, and beyond our comprehension, that Christ can be fully man and fully God at the same time; that he could enter into the sphere of mortal existence through the womb of a virgin! Yet it is so.

'Justified in the Spirit': This probably refers to the Spirit's power and manifestation in relation to His ministry; e.g. At his baptism, through his miracles, through the resurrection from the dead, and testifying in the hearts of men.

'Seen of angels': Most commentators think this refers to the attendance of angels at various points in his ministry, something which served to highlight his divine origin and mission. 'The work of Christ, though despised by people, excited the deepest interest in heaven.'—Barnes; For angelic beings to participate as they did in the events of Christ's life was a mark of God's approval.

'Preached unto the Gentiles': The fact that the apostles went preaching into all nations, encountering hardship and persecution, shows that they believed Jesus to be truly the Son of God. This was a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.

'Believed on in the world': It is a miracle for anyone to believe the high and glorious truths of the Gospel, if we consider the wickedness of the human heart. But the fact is that people did believe, and are still believing, every day, in various parts of the globe. This can be attributed to nothing else, but the convincing power of the Holy Spirit.

'Received up into glory': The disciples witnessed his ascension into Heaven, and now Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Such truths are worthy of our contemplation, and will certainly have an impact on the way we conduct ourselves as believers, and in the church.

Questions from Chapter 3

1. A man should not seek great things for _____. He should rather seek to be _____. This involves _____ and _____.
2. A literal Greek rendering of 'the husband of one wife' is: '_____.'
3. *A pastor's outer life ought to reflect an _____. This orderliness will impact upon his (*list 3 that stand out to you*) _____.
An orderly life is more _____ to Christ.
4. *If a pastor loves money, then his heart will grow insensibly _____ towards God and the souls of men, and will _____, without him even knowing it! He will find himself looking for _____ as a reason for the ministry, and it will corrupt his _____.
5. *If a pastor is not _____ with his own family, he will ultimately drop the ball somewhere along the line in _____ also, and probably in a _____.
6. *The deacons in Acts 6 fulfilled a practical role of service in order that the Apostles might give themselves to _____ and the _____.
7. A deacon must live a life of _____ and maintain _____, if he is to keep a _____.
8. Deacons' wives must not be _____. The Greek word is _____, which is also translated _____.
9. The sacred truths embodied in 1 Timothy 3:16 provide the reason for the _____ and _____ of the church's office-bearers and members. We are to believe the Bible by faith, and if we live carnal lives, it will _____ our faith, and dishonour the _____.

Chapter 4: The minister's safeguard of himself and others

(v. 1) Throughout the Gospels and the epistles, the Holy Spirit distinctly asserts that apostasy is to become more prominent in these last days, leading up to the return of the Lord. That is why the man of God must be concerned to keep a good conscience, both in doctrine and in manner of life. The man of God must hold the mysteries of the faith in a pure conscience (3:9, 16). Otherwise, he is more likely to open his mind up to error, and to regard deceivers, and false doctrines initiated by demonic beings.

(v. 2) These false teachers will be truly effective, masquerading as upright and good people, when in actual fact they have sinned against their own consciences in doctrine and practice. Yes, they themselves are often deceived, but it is a willing deception on their part. Deep down they have known the truth, but have sinned against it, and are thus called hypocrites. They have deadened their consciences toward the truth of God, just as one may lose feeling in his nerves by a severe burn. This reminds us of many television speakers who are in the business of getting money for themselves. It also reminds us of many contemporary Christian music artists, who are in the business of getting a following, stirring up sensual desires in themselves and others by the way they dress on stage, trying to look cool, tough, or seductive on the front covers of their albums, and covering up their real intentions with a thin veneer of Christianised words. Beyond this, we have the cults, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, etc., who have denied the mystery of the faith, and the truths of 1 Timothy 3:16. Then there is Roman Catholicism, which hides the blood of the martyrs behind a thick tradition of robes, traditions, candles, incense, etc.

(v. 3-5) An instance of Rome's apostasy is in their prohibition of marriage for persons holding office. Of course, the result of forbidding to marry is that all manner of licentiousness and perversion breaks out, as we have seen in the history of priests, monks and nuns. To place a yoke which God has not commanded will either inflate men's pride in their self-righteous ways, or it will cause them to kick over the traces of all restraint at last. This is the intention of the demons. The teachings initially appeal to men's self-righteousness and pride (Col 2:23), but ultimately bring them into bondage.

Unthankfulness is the first step toward apostasy (Romans 1:21), and it can manifest itself in dietary or religious practices of asceticism (on asceticism, see notes on verse 8-9). However, asceticism is not godliness, for godliness displays a humble thankfulness for whatever God has rightfully provided. Thankfulness is what counts toward godliness in God's eyes—not extra-Biblical restrictions and self-imposed laws. Notice that thankfulness is mentioned twice here (vv. 3-4). People that reject the rightful gift of marriage and the gift of food under the guise of holiness are being extremely unthankful for what God has provided for their blessing and enjoyment. It is quite clear that the Old Testament's teaching on clean and unclean meats does not apply to the New Testament Christian. See the following references: Acts 10, 11:1-18; 15:19-29. Verse 5 also shows us that thanking God for our food is a Biblical practice. Thankfulness ought to surround everything that we do in life. Such an attitude is truly attractive to our holy God.

(v. 6) God's minister (servant) must remind the people of certain things. In particular, Paul has just been talking about the heresies of the end times. A pastor who properly warns and instructs his people, pointing out heresies, and directing the flock into sound doctrine, shall find himself to be nourished by God. This is because the studying and teaching of sound doctrine causes an honest man to take heed to himself as well as to those he is teaching (v. 16). This safe-guarding process will force him to continually examine the soundness of his own faith in God's Word, and his footing in right doctrine. Apart from the correct interpretation of God's Word, there is no other way to refute the evil heresies of the end times.

Scripture also shows us that all of God's people should be teachers of one another, and able to admonish one another. The Dead Sea in Israel takes in, but never gives out, and so has no life in it. Every Christian ought to be discipling those around him, and giving out of what he himself has received from God. Heb 5:12 'For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.' Paul said that the Roman believers were able to instruct one another. Rom 15:14 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.' Notice he said that they were 'filled with knowledge.' To be filled with the knowledge needed to benefit ourselves and others, we need to study God's Word.

(v. 7) Such strange ideas as mentioned in verse 3 are here referred to by Paul simply as *profane* (or 'unhallowed') and *old wives fables* (fables is literally 'myths'). He is willing to call a spade a spade, and not to get caught up in that nonsense. If we are exercising ourselves in godly living, we will probably be able to recognise a lot of nonsense as soon as it starts clowning its way across the stage of truth.

(v. 8-9) 'Bodily exercise': figuratively, asceticism. 'The "bodily exercise" is a metaphor which refers back to the errors of the heretics against which the author has been warning. It is best to see in this phrase not the Hellenistic culture of the body, but an external dualistic asceticism as propounded by the heretics and reflected in the warnings contained in v. 3.' (Rienecker & Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*). Asceticism holds severe self-discipline and self-denial as ends in themselves. Godly living is contrasted with asceticism, because it truly respects God's desires (Col 2:18-23). Godliness will fit a Christian for God's purposes in this life, and will be rewarded in the next. That is a faithful saying, which Timothy needed to fully comprehend and believe. See next verse.

(v. 10-11) Since we serve a living God, we know that He will reward us, and we are therefore willing to suffer in our pursuit of godliness, and the preaching of His Gospel. God wants all men to be saved, even though they will not (See 2:1, 4). 'These things command and teach.' Timothy was to command and teach (continually, and the present imperative implies) the believers in the pursuit of godliness, the rejection of error, and the evangelising of the lost. Note that 'these things' is a phrase Paul uses throughout the epistle, and usually with an emphatic command to Timothy. Paul did not want one good piece of instruction to fall to the ground in Timothy's life and ministry.

Paul knew that Jesus Christ was the only hope of mankind, and so in this book he speaks insistently about God and the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all men (see 1:1 and 2:3). That is why he was willing to labour and suffer reproach. 'Saviour of all men' runs against Calvinism entirely! 'Specially' simply refers to the fact that only those who believe can enjoy salvation. Those who don't believe will not war a good warfare, and will not hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

(v. 12-13) Timothy was to be an example of the believers both in speech and life. He was to be a pattern and an example in love, in attitude, in faith (believing), and in purity. 'Purity' refers to innocence and integrity of heart in every area of life, not just sexual. He was to give attention to public reading of the Scriptures, exhortation (application of the Scriptures), and doctrine (understanding of the Scriptures, upon which exhortation rests).

(vv. 14-15) Timothy was to use the gift imparted to him. Some special empowering or gifting from the Holy Spirit is evidently referred to here – a gifting which was supernaturally granted by God when the elders of the church laid their hands upon him. A prophecy was evidently made over Timothy's life and future ministry, and Timothy was to be encouraged by the memory of it. In 2

Timothy 1:6, Paul reminds him again of this event. Evidently Timothy needed to be urged on to make full use of God's provisions and encouragements to him. In the Greek, 'neglect' (v. 14) and 'meditate' are used in contrast to one another. Timothy was not to neglect (be unmindful) of his gifting. He was rather to meditate (be mindful) of what Paul was now admonishing him to do with that gifting. So if God has given you some small encouragement in the use of your gifts, don't dare consider burying those gifts!

Another principle here is that any person who truly gives himself wholly to the study, meditation, and application of the Scriptures will be a public testimony of spiritual progress. God intends for the spiritual progress of every believer to be apparent to all of those around. He wants us to be examples to others of what it means to be 'nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine.' That is His plan.

(v. 16) Once again, Paul exhorts Timothy to pay attention to himself (his life) and his doctrine. Timothy was to be disciplined in life and preaching. A preacher needs to pay attention to his manner and words while he is in the pulpit, but he needs to make thorough preparation while he is out of it also. Indeed, every Christian ought to be very attentive to God's Word, and take every opportunity to further his knowledge in it, so that he will be able to disciple those around him.

Life and doctrine are the two important areas for a preacher and any Christian to maintain. Paying attention to those areas will safeguard himself, and those around him – and we need to take responsibility for those around us.

Questions from Chapter 4

1. False teachers will masquerade as _____ and _____ people, when in actual fact they have sinned against their own _____ in doctrine and practice.
2. To place a yoke which God has not commanded will either _____ men's pride in their self-righteous ways, or it will cause them to throw off all _____ at last.
3. * _____ is the first step toward apostasy, but _____ displays a humble thankfulness for whatever God has rightfully provided.
4. The studying and _____ of sound doctrine causes an _____ man to take heed to himself as well as to those he is teaching.
5. Every Christian ought to be _____ those around him, and _____ of what he himself has received from God.
6. If we are exercising ourselves in _____, we will probably be able to recognise a lot of _____ as soon as it starts clowning its way across the stage of truth.
7. Asceticism holds severe _____ and _____ as ends in themselves.
8. Paul did not want one good piece of _____ to fall to the _____ in Timothy's life and ministry.
9. *We should not _____ our gifting, but rather _____ on what God wants us to do with that gifting.
10. God intends for the spiritual _____ of every believer to be _____ to all of those around.

Chapter 5: Widows, elders, and those aspiring to ministry

(vv. 1-2) 'Rebuke' indicates 'to strike upon, to strike at, to rebuke sharply. The word contains a note of severity, "to censure severely"' (Rienecker & Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*). Timothy ought to give appropriate respect to all the elderly men (probably not referring simply to the leaders of the church in this context). Striking with the fists is not in view here, but rather striking with words. Instead, Timothy was to beseech or exhort such a man as he would his father.

The younger men were to be treated as brothers, and not in a condescending way. The elder women were to be given the respect he would give to his own mother. His disposition toward the younger women was to be that of a brother, accompanied with purity (chastity, cleanliness; note Romans 13:14).

(vv. 3-4) It had become a point of ministry, at least since the circumstances described in Acts 6, to minister financially to widows within the local assemblies. However, it was necessary to differentiate between those that the church should support, and those that it shouldn't. Timothy was therefore to show honour to those women who were 'widows indeed'. Although this implies that such should be honoured generally, Paul means in particular that Timothy was to do what he could for their financial welfare. The kinds of widows in view: 'Paul means widows who have no other means of support, who have no opportunity for marriage and who have given themselves to the service of the Lord' (Rienecker & Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*). 'The widow who is really in need and left all alone has nowhere to look for help but to God and his people' (A. Duane Litfin, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, edited by Walvoord and Zuck). Anna was such a woman (see Luke 2:36-37). It is, however, the responsibility of children or nephews to provide for widowed parents, which is a mark of true piety (godliness, holiness).

(v. 5) 'Widow indeed': see comments on verse 3. 'Desolate' (isolated): having no descendants or relatives on which to depend. Albert Barnes comments on this verse: 'She has no one else to look to but God. She has no earthly reliance, and, destitute of husband, children, and property, she feels her dependence, and steadily looks to God for consolation and support.' One of God's great purposes in aged widowhood is to draw the bereaved (man or woman) into deeper prayerful fellowship with Himself.

(v. 6) Some widows, however, had demonstrated wanton behaviour (Strong's; see verse 15), signified by the word 'pleasure'. 'The word connotes abandonment to pleasure and comfort' (Rienecker & Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*). Such behaviour would betray an unregenerate state, so to call her 'dead' is to describe her spiritual condition before God as an unsaved person.

(v. 7) Timothy was to give the previous commands to the persons in the above-mentioned categories: namely, widows, and the children or nephews of such.

(v. 8) If children or nephews would be unwilling to provide for their widows, it demonstrated an unregenerate condition, and a standard below that of the average unsaved person.

(vv. 9-10) 'The number' refers to a group of widows that a local church would support financially (see verses 3, 11, & 16). If the woman in question demonstrated the following credentials, she would be eligible for the church to assist her financially (Note: Items 4-7 below are probably listed as examples of good works. That is, some may not have had the opportunity to raise children. Foot-washing may not now be appropriate or necessary. A godly woman, however, will take whatever opportunities for service she can.):

1. If she was over the age of 60.
2. If she had been 'the wife of one man' (literally: 'a one-man woman'). This is simply a requirement of her moral chastity (just as in 3:2, 12). It does not prohibit someone previously widowed and remarried, nor does it prohibit those who were previously biblically divorced and remarried.
3. If she had been known for her good works.
4. If she had brought up children.
5. If she had been hospitable to strangers.
6. If she had washed the saints feet. 'The washing of the feet was a service to visitors which occupied a great place in eastern hospitality. The mistress of the house would act as a servant to the servants of God' (Rienecker & Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*).
7. If she had helped those who were in any kind of difficulty.
8. If she had diligently executed every good work.

(v. 11) Younger widows were not to be 'taken into the number' (see comments on verse 9). The reason which Paul gives for this could not be considered as an all-truism, but it had certainly been a problem (see verse 15): A young widow will likely become sexually impulsive, alienating her from any knowledge she had of the things of Christ (i.e. if she never was saved), and she will end up casting off (despising) the faith by her actions, and incur a greater damnation. The impulsiveness of youth is here in view. It is little wonder that Paul says to Timothy, 'Flee also youthful lusts...' (2 Tim 2:22). An older widow who has a track record of godliness is less likely to turn aside in her old age. A young widow has proven little, and may be just as willing to 'sponge' off any man, as she would the church, when she could employ her youthful energies in a healthy way by doing what she can to earn a living. Church folk could then do what they can to help her look after the children, etc., and relieve burdens in other ways.

Paul is not saying that it is a wanton thing for young widows to remarry, otherwise he would not advise it in verse 14. He is simply safeguarding the church from any complications arising from unwise allocation of funds. Paul further observes that young widows who are financially supported by the church will *learn* (note that word!) to be idle (lazy, useless). We often encounter people approaching the church for financial reasons. I have a pastor friend who actually offered to pay such a person to do work. If necessary, this is certainly a better option than 'doling-out' the money. Of course, it helped my friend to judge the genuineness of the need. The church certainly should not be 'learning' people to be idle!

Young widows who are learning to be idle will inevitably become tools in the hands of the devil, and will bring reproach on the name of Christ. One of the ways they will do this is by wandering from house to house, simply because they feel that they have nothing better to do! While on such visits, they will become tattlers (engaging in much useless talk) and busybodies (people who meddle in things not belonging to them). If our minds are not taken up with doing the will of God, then our tongues will likely begin to flap loose, and become a source of fire, division, and strife in the church, as well as giving it a bad reputation in the community.

(v. 14) Paul cannot be encouraging unsaved young widows to remarry here. He is rather thinking about the temptations to which a saved young widow exposes herself if God wants her to be married. The Scriptures here show that it is God's plan for most young women to be married, to bear children, and to rule the children and the household affairs under the leadership of her husband. God has a something for all of us to do, and if we are not found busy in the work that He has prepared for us to do, it means we are not walking in the will of God, and are likely to fall into more

serious sin. If a person is busy and wholehearted in doing God's will, then they will not stumble into serious sin, and thereby cast a slur on the name of Christ, or on the rest of the church folk. Satan loves to get the lost talking about the sins of the church.

Young women (and men) need to develop good character, godly habits, wisdom, and a servant-hearted attitude towards others (especially toward their parents and siblings), so that they will be well-equipped for a successful marriage. If a young person is not preparing himself/herself in these areas now, but rather dreaming about the pie-in-the-sky that they are going to marry, they are wasting some of the best years of their lives. 'Idle hands are the Devil's tools' is how the saying goes. God sees the habits and hearts of young people, and He will reward each one according to their ways. If you are constantly discontent about what your parents or siblings ought to be doing for you now, then that is how you will be after you are married as well. Get busy being a servant in your own home.

(v. 15) Paul knew of some young widows in their midst who had already fallen into sin by not getting serious about doing God's will in their lives.

(v. 16) The children of widows, or the nephews of those widows (see verse 7) ought to take responsibility for them, rather than leaving it to the church to provide financial support for them. That frees the church up to support those widows who have none.

(v. 17) It should be observed that the Scriptures seem to make little or no distinction between elders, bishops, and pastors (see 1 Peter 5:1-3; Titus 1:5-9). The pastor is to be a man who is mature spiritually, is able to rule, and who can feed and tend to the flock of God. To 'rule' implies that the pastor must lead, supervise, and safeguard the people. He is to perform a double role: that of ruling, and that of labouring in the study and teaching of the Word of God. Of course, neither of these can be executed without prayer. The teaching of the Word of God must be done at a personal as well as a public level, in order for it to be effective. God places great importance upon skilful pastoral rule, but if it be accompanied with the fatiguing (as the Greek signifies) labours of study and teaching the Word, it is most honourable. This is why Timothy was instructed by Paul: (2 Tim 2:15) 'Study [i.e. be diligent] to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.' The preacher must labour in private, as well as in public. 'Double honour' includes the idea of respect, but also refers to financial support (see verse 18).

(v. 18) See Deuteronomy 25:4. See also Matt 10:10 and Luke 10:7.

(vv. 19-21) If a pastor needs to be church-disciplined, the church must do so. Any accusation, however, ought to be substantiated by at least two people (Deut 19:15; Matt 18:16). When the church is gathered together, he is to be publicly rebuked, in order that others may be discouraged from sinning also. Paul entrusted this weighty responsibility to Timothy, reminding him of those in Heaven who watch all things that are done here: The Father, the Lord Jesus, and the elect angels – those who saw the rebellion of Lucifer and his followers, and God's consequent retribution upon their heads (Isa 14:12; Ezek 28:16; Luke 10:18). Heaven's eyes of justice will not overlook matters of favouritism when it comes to church disciplinary issues.

(v. 22) The sobering matter of pastoral accountability served to caution Timothy against hasty ordination of men to the ministry. A hasty appointment to the pastoral office is a sin against God's heritage (1 Pet 5:3), and an instance and evidence of spiritual impurity in those ordaining him.

(v. 23) Timothy clearly had a health condition, which included stomach problems and maybe some kind of weakness. The stomach problems may have been aggravated by the stresses of ministerial

work – and possibly from having to deal with cases in which pastors had sinned. Of course, Timothy's health problem was a trial which the Lord permitted and used to keep him humble and dependent upon God. It is apparent that Timothy was in the habit of only drinking water. We are not told why this was, but for health reasons Paul saw fit to recommend the use of a little wine. We may safely assume that, if it was in any degree alcoholic, it was an extremely weak concoction in comparison to what is sold today.

(vv. 24-25) Returning to the subject of ordaining men to the ministry, Paul observes that there are those whose wicked character is manifest early. There are others who hide it, and it comes out later on. It is similarly true in the case of good men. The works of certain will shine, making it truly evident to all that he is chosen for the work. There are others who achieve quietly, modestly, and less obtrusively, yet in time they shall prove their good character. This all shows that it is wise to observe the man over time, remembering that not all cases are the same. All time and consideration must be given to matters of ordination, and beyond this the Great Shepherd of the sheep must be trusted with the future.

Questions from Chapter 5

1. 'Widows indeed' refers to widows who have no other _____ of support, who have no _____ for marriage and who have given themselves to the _____ of the Lord.
2. Who was an example of a 'widow indeed' in the New Testament? _____
3. *One of God's great purposes in aged widowhood is to _____ the bereaved into deeper _____ fellowship with Himself.
4. *If children or _____ are unwilling to provide for their widows, it demonstrates an _____ condition, and a standard below that of the average _____ person.
5. 'The number' refers to group of _____ that a local church would support _____.
6. The church certainly should not be '*learning*' people to be _____!
7. Paul was concerned about the _____ to which a saved young widow _____ herself if God wants her to be _____.
8. Young singles need to develop _____, _____, _____, and a _____ towards others (especially toward their parents and siblings), so that they will be well-equipped for a successful _____.
9. If you are constantly _____ about what your parents or _____ ought to be doing for you now, then that is how you will be after you are _____ as well. Get busy being a _____ in your own home.
10. *The pastor is to perform a double role: that of _____, and that of labouring in the _____ and _____ of the Word of God.
11. 'Double honour' includes the idea of _____, but also refers to _____.
12. If a pastor needs to be _____, the _____ must do so.
13. *A hasty appointment to the pastoral office is a sin against God's _____, and an _____ and _____ of spiritual _____ in those ordaining him.
14. All _____ and _____ must be given to matters of ordination, and beyond this the Great Shepherd of the sheep must be _____ with the future.

Chapter 6: Fight the Good Fight

(v. 1) Christian slaves were to treat their unsaved masters with all dignity. If 'under the yoke' describes severe and difficult circumstances, the believing slave would only be able to honour his master if he did so unto the Lord Himself. We are not to assume that the master was worthy of such honour by his own merits, but that the Christian slave was to treat him as though he were. In our modern day, if a Christian honours his employer with dignity and respect, regardless of how unkind that employer may be, it points to nothing less than the glory of God in his child. To do otherwise makes opportunity for non-believers to speak evil of God and His teachings.

(v. 2) There was a temptation on the part of Christian slaves to despise their masters, seeing that in Christ there is neither bond nor free (Colossians 3:11). However, no two brothers in Christ ought to treat one another lightly, simply through 'Christian' familiarity. Such behaviour is not Christian at all. If we are to treat the unsaved with respect (1 Peter 2:17), then how much more a brother in Christ? The reason for the instruction is that the Christian masters are 'faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit'. 'Faithful' in this context either means faithfulness to God, or believing (probably the later), as the Greek word can indicate either. 'The benefit' doubtless refers to everything believers possess in Christ. Timothy was to be earnest in relaying these instructions to slaves.

(v. 3) There were some who were opposed to such instructions as Paul gave in verses 1-2. We are not told who these men were. However, they were not godly. They did not consent to the quiet and peaceable attitude which Christ taught. We can rightly assume that they were teaching Christian slaves to rise up and rebel against their believing masters. Barnes comments of these people: '...the tendency of their teaching was, instead of removing the evil by the gradual and silent influence of Christian principles, to produce discontent and insurrection.' These individuals did not consent to the health-giving words of Jesus Christ. They would not have accepted Jesus humble teachings, and they would not accept Christ speaking through Paul. They did not really know what godly living was all about. Along with such rebellious teaching went a whole set of attitudes, which Paul now describes.

1. Pride
2. Ignorance
3. Doting about – i.e. *having a morbid fondness and desire* to debate about 'questions and strifes of words'. These men were argumentative, and their cognitive powers were thoroughly controlled by pride. They loved to battle about words, probably splitting hairs about meanings, rather than talking about profitable realities.
4. The foregoing argumentativeness about words demonstrated the following fleshly attitudes and behaviours:
 - a. Envy
 - b. Strife (*contention, quarrels*)
 - c. Railings (*vilification or evil speaking*; Merriam-Webster dictionary: *to revile or scold in harsh, insolent, or abusive language*)
 - d. Evil surmisings (*evil suspicions*)
 - e. Perverse disputings: This Greek word can also mean *useless disputings*. 'A mutual rubbing or irritation alongside, protracted quarrelling, persistent wrangling' (Rienecker & Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*). '...Of men of corrupt minds'. 'Corrupt' means *rotted, ruined, decayed, or destroyed*.
 - f. Destitute of the truth: This shows that they did not have the truth. And that if they did have it, they have become willingly ignorant of it.

- g. Supposing that gain is godliness: They believed you could 'have your best life now', and that if you were not rich, something must be wrong spiritually.

On all accounts it would seem that these perverse men had cut themselves off from the truth. It is not clear whether there was any possibility of their repentance, but God's clear instruction to his servants is not to even spend time with those kinds of people, but to withdraw from their company (Prov 14:7). Unreasonable people cannot be reasoned with, and it is unwise to pursue further conversation in such cases.

(v. 6) There can be a strong temptation for the Christian to somehow feel incomplete if he doesn't have that extra bit of money. The problem is, even if he does have that extra bit of money, he will still not be content. He will want more and more. Godliness with contentment is a great prize to be gained. If one has it, he has everything. Such a man can say, 'My God is enough for me. What he has done for me is enough. I do not need any more in order to be satisfied.' If the man be godly, his use of money will be right, and he will be happy with what God chooses to bless him with.

(v. 7) 'We brought nothing with us into this world, and yet God provided for us, care was taken of us, we have been fed all our lives long unto this day; and therefore, when we are reduced to the greatest straits, we cannot be poorer than when we came into this world, and yet then we were provided for; therefore let us trust in God for the remaining part of our pilgrimage...We shall carry nothing with us out of this world. A shroud, a coffin, and a grave, are all that the richest man in the world can have from his thousands. Therefore why should we covet much? Why should we not be content with a little, because, how much soever we have, we must leave it behind us?' (Matthew Henry's Commentary)

(v. 8) The covetous man no longer uses money for the glory of God, but he becomes a servant to money. Jesus warned about the impossibility of serving both God and money (Matt 6:24). Money becomes the covetous man's idol – the thing that he thinks will meet all his needs. He ultimately begins to think that money is the thing that matters most about his life, and Jesus warned against this mindset as well (Luke 12:15). Paul is here teaching that if one's responsible labours are only enough to cover his basic needs, he should not see it as a cause for anxiety and frustration. He ought to be content – happy and thankful for what the Lord has provided for him.

(vv. 9-10) Those who desire money for its own sake end up falling into the sinful pursuit of riches, and this covetousness becomes a snare to their souls. It influences their thinking in every way, and is then not an easy thing to escape from. It becomes the passageway and floodgate to many other foolish (unintelligent, sensual, unwise) and hurtful (harmful) lusts. The love of money is indeed the root of many other sinful vices that can ensnare men's hearts. It drags them down spiritually and morally, like a heavy weight would sink a boat to the bottom of the sea. It becomes the catalyst for deep spiritual darkness, blinding men to the true light of God and His Gospel, and extinguishing what small light they may have already had in their unregenerate state. If they seemed to be interested in spiritual things before, they err from it, and enter into perdition (spiritual and eternal ruin and destruction). The road downward is a sorrowful and piercing road, even if it is only the backsliding of a Christian.

(v. 11) Here is a charge addressed in particular to one held responsible for the oversight of the ministry in Ephesus, but it is also a solemn exhortation to all believers – those that would call themselves men or women of God, an identity we should all delight to embrace. The man of God is to possess a totally different outlook, disposition, and purpose to those Paul has previously described. Verses 3 through to 10 outline all the abominations of a particular class of men who were of no use to the cause of Christ. Timothy was commanded to run in a direction counter to those. He

was to flee the carnal attitudes and the covetousness they imbibed, and was rather to lay hold on that which would truly profit his soul, a life of godliness. Following is a description of what Timothy was to apply himself to:

- Righteousness: Timothy was to maintain a militant commitment to what was just and true, as distinct from the behaviour of the trouble-makers.
- Godliness: The essential meaning of this Greek word is a reverence and awe which affects one's attitudes, thoughts, and actions. The disciple of Christ is to sanctify the Lord God in his heart, and to live in the fear of God all the time. He ought to be ready to give God the glory, worship, and honour in every situation. This was certainly not true of the perverse disputers.
- Faith: True disciples of Christ must live by faith, not by sight. They must believe the truth of the Scripture, the truth of God, and the truth of His promises. They must not be deceived by emotions and sensations, or be led away by their own wicked hearts. The wicked men in Ephesus were spiritually blind. They could only perceive what they could see with their eyes, or feel with their own natural hearts.
- Love: The Bible tells us that faith 'worketh by love' (Gal 5:6). Without true faith, there can be no true love. Timothy's own love would arise from a life of faith – of seeing the God who is pure, righteous, and loving. Such an attitude distinguishes the true believer from those who attach themselves to religion for inferior reasons.
- Patience: Governed by a commitment to righteousness, animated by godliness, guided by faith, and motivated by love, it is only logical for a believer to then remain under (as the Greek signifies), or humbly submit to God's hand in all situations. He will continue to war against sin in every form, but he will do so under the leadership of God, and not in his own pride.
- Meekness: A mixture of gentleness and humility. Only a soul accustomed to submitting itself under the providence of God will display this character trait. Meekness is something the troublemakers did not possess! It did not fit with their agenda; but it certainly fits with Christ's agenda!

(v. 12) Timothy was to struggle earnestly (agonizomai) in this good fight by following after the qualities of godliness listed in verse 11. It is a 'good fight' for it is beautiful, in that it is for a noble cause. Others may contend in ignoble causes (as we see in verse 4), but the Christian's calling is a high one, and worth agonising for. The command to 'lay hold on eternal life' is not a command to earn eternal life by good works, but rather to seize (as the Greek signifies) a full reward – to stake his whole interest in the eternal realm to come. The believer ought to stake his all upon what will count for eternity: his time, his talents, his treasures, his heart, his soul, his mind, and all his strength. Nothing should be reserved, but all should be invested in that eternal kingdom. God's call is there, and He will not fail us. You may have started well, and many may have seen your good testimony and commitment to the things of the Lord, either at your conversion, your baptism, your ordination (if you happen to be a pastor or missionary), or maybe at some other public occasion, or even just by your life's testimony in general. Surely your success or failure in this battle with either encourage or discourage those who are watching. May we be determined to run well, and finish well.

(v. 13) Paul issues a solemn charge to Timothy in the presence of '...God, who quickeneth all things...' The promise of eternal life in the resurrection (see verse 12) is here used by Paul to strengthen and encourage Timothy. See similar statements in 2 Timothy 2:8 & Titus 1:2. All the created life in nature reminds us that God is the giver of life, and is therefore able to fulfil all His promises to us in eternity. The charge is also given in the presence of Christ Jesus, with reference to his open avowal of the truth when He stood, friendless and alone before Pilate, in the face of impending death. Should Timothy be called upon to suffer, or to give His life for the truth, his sacrifice would be witnessed and honoured by the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. We must

remember that our steadfast commitment to the truth is keenly observed by our Heavenly Father and by the Lord Jesus.

(vv. 14-15) ‘...This commandment’ no doubt refers to what we find in verses 11-12, but probably includes everything else written in the epistle as well. Timothy was to keep this commandment without spot (unblemished), unrebukeable, in readiness for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will appear to us at the time of the rapture, unless we are called to die beforehand. Paul reminds Timothy that Jesus Christ is sovereign over all men (Revelation 19:16), which is probably to comfort him concerning the evil judgments and works that earthly rulers may perpetrate toward believers in the present.

(v. 16) Maybe Paul does not intend now to distinguish the Son from the Father, but rather describing speaking now of the Godhead as one, He attributes immortality to Him. God alone is immortal, in that He is self-existent. Others only possess eternal life as derived from Him. No sinful man can approach to the light in which God dwells, and that is possibly what Paul is here speaking of. We also know that the angels must cover their eyes while in the immediate presence of God. But in some sense believers shall see God (Job 19:26; Matt 5:8; Rev 22:4). None of the princes of this world who persecute Christ and His followers shall see it. It is prepared only for those that love Him (1 Corinthians 2:7-9). Probably still thinking of God’s power in contrast to temporal earthly powers which persecute believers, Paul extols and honours the everlasting God.

(vv. 17-19) Turning now to those believers who are rich in material things, Paul shows that these things are not to become a source of pride, or something to trust in. Such believers are rather to trust in the living God, the giver of material wealth, Who is our ultimate Provider. Paul is not advocating a life of forced poverty or asceticism, for he acknowledges that God gives riches to certain believers to enjoy. If we have wealth, we are to use it to profit others, and in so doing, we will lay up treasure in Heaven (Matt 6:19-21). In this way, rich believers may ‘lay hold on eternal life’, i.e. invest in eternal rather than temporal things. Some may see houses, assets, and retirement funds as ends in themselves, but the wise believer’s use of money will prove to be an investment in Heaven.

(v. 20-21) With deeply concerned and beseeching tone, Paul addresses the younger man, ‘O Timothy’. The urgent command is to keep or guard what has been committed to his trust: namely, the truth – the promulgation of the whole body of Scripture’s truth surrounding the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as the belief and practice of that truth in Timothy’s own life. He was not to become entangled in defiling and fruitless discussions with those who felt they had a superior knowledge (‘science’ means ‘knowledge’). Those he had in mind could have been the early Gnostics, who professed to have higher knowledge. However, we could include in this category other such prideful thought-systems, such as higher criticism, evolution, psychology, as well as antinomianism among professing believers today. In reality, the so-called knowledge is no knowledge at all, but falsehood, darkness, and rebellion. Some had begun to assert these falsehoods, and had strayed from the truths of the Gospel. The true believer can never stray from the saving Gospel of Christ, but just as Timothy, we need God’s grace to avoid error in its multitudinous forms. With the utmost gravity, Paul therefore closes with, ‘Grace be with thee. Amen.’

Questions from Chapter 6

1. If a Christian _____ his employer with dignity and respect, regardless of how _____ that employer may be, it points to the _____ in his child.
2. Concerning the trouble-makers, Barnes states, '...The tendency of their teaching was, instead of removing the evil by the _____ and _____ influence of Christian principles, to produce _____ and _____.'
3. *God's instruction is not to spend time with _____ people, but to _____ from their _____.
4. *A godly and contented man can say, 'My God is _____ for me. What he _____ for me is enough. I do not need any more in order to be _____.'
5. The _____ man no longer _____ money for the glory of God, but he becomes a _____ to money.
6. *The love of money becomes the _____ and _____ to many other _____ and _____ lusts.
7. Timothy was commanded to run in a direction _____ to the trouble-makers. He was to flee the _____ and the _____ they imbibed, and was rather to lay hold on _____.
8. *Timothy was to fight the good fight by following after the _____ of _____ listed in verse 11. This fight is _____, in that it is for a _____ cause.
9. We must remember that our _____ to the truth is keenly _____ by our Heavenly Father and by the Lord Jesus.

10. Paul is not advocating a life of _____ or _____, for he acknowledges that God gives riches to certain believers to _____. If we have wealth, we are to use it to _____ others, and in so doing, we will lay up _____ in Heaven (Matt 6:19-21).

11. *Timothy was not to become _____ in _____ and fruitless _____ with those who felt they had a superior _____.



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BAPTIST CHURCH

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