

CONCERNING THE MINISTER

I Timothy 6:3-21

I. To avoid improper motives. 6:3-10.

1. The evidence of wrong motives.

- (1) Teaching different doctrines.
- (2) Opposition to teaching which produces a life of godliness.

2. The nature of wrong motives.

(1) Pride. 6:3-5a.

Paul was positive in his diagnosis of the trouble with the false teachers. He was afflicted with deadly pride. Pride beclouds the mind. Questionings, strife, suspicions and wranglings are the indications of people who are proud of their schemes and intellects. Every sort of strife is the product of fleshly minds, and is not the fruit of the Spirit. Those engaging in these things are in a state of corruption with respect to the mind.

(2) Avarice. 6:5b-10.

The desire to become rich causes men to fall into numerous cravings. One kind of craving finally leads to another. A person who craves riches also generally yearns for honor, popularity, power, ease, and the satisfaction of the desires of the flesh. All of these spring from the same root, which is selfishness.

Desire for gain is an injurious motive. In diagnosing the false teachers Paul indicated that their goal was riches, but their actual gain was temptation, a trap and hurtful lusts. Their corrupted minds caused them to think that by acquiring riches they were reaching the heights. Actually they were progressively falling deeper into ruin.

3. The results of a wrong motive.

First the temptation is welcomed, then the trap ensnares and finally hurtful lusts master. The love of money in the heart of the greedy is a root that produces all kinds of evil in the life. When men reach out to gratify this love of money, they are led farther and farther from the true faith.

When it is too late, they find that they "have pierced themselves through with many sorrows," or consuming grief. Their avarice has been the weapon with which they have committed spiritual suicide. Pangs of conscience, disillusionment, spiritual unrest and many other unhappy accompaniments are the product of this course of life.

These cravings plunge people into ruin and destruction. It is from the faith that these people have wandered away. They have gone astray in inner attitude, in outward conduct and even in the profession of the lips, that is, in the things which they are now teaching. But in so doing they have pierced themselves with numerous pangs. Among these pangs are unrest, boredom, dissatisfaction, gloom and envy. In the pocket of a rich man who had just committed suicide was found thirty thousand dollars and a letter which read in part: "I have discovered during my life that piles of money do not bring happiness. I am taking my life because I can no longer stand the solitude and boredom. When I was an ordinary workman in New York, I was happy. Now that I possess millions I am infinitely sad and prefer death."

II. To Maintain A Proper Walk. 6:11-16.

In order to accomplish this three helpful slogans are set forth here:

a. Flee. 6:11a.

When a person rejects sound or healthy words sickness results. This sickness reveals itself in a morbid craving for controversies and word-battles. The man stricken with such a disease will make mountains out of molehills. Some people take delight in such quibbling or word-battles. God's Word says that the fruits of this are bitter -- envy, wrangling, revilings, base suspicions, mutual altercations and incessant frictions.

Timothy is urged to flee away from such things. We should do likewise. Keep fleeing from these things as you would a pestilence. The minister must continually flee from unworthy motives, which Satan will constantly put in his path.

b. Follow. 6:11b.

Here is the positive duty. His goal is the attainment of the true riches. The six virtues which he must pursue continually are righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness.

c. Fight. 6:12.

Here is an urgent appeal -- "Fight the good fight of faith." It is an inspiring conception of life to view it as a fascinating fight. It is good that the present life is a struggle. Life should be intensely fascinating because of its reality. The Christian life appeals to the very best there is in one. The Christian life is a fascinating fight because it has a superb Leader. When the child of God throws his undivided energies and warmest enthusiasm into this fight for God and truth and against evil, the very best results will be obtained. Our Lord said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

"Lay hold" literally means take possession of something. This does not imply that Timothy and other teachers did not have eternal life. Many children of God fail to possess their possessions in Christ, content with spiritual poverty when their lives might be marked now with an eternal quality.

Another thing that is very important if one is to maintain a proper walk is to honor the Christ. (6:13-16). This will keep any believer on the right course. Christ is the supreme ruler of the universe, the conqueror of death and the giver of life, and the One to be honored and served faithfully.

III. To Warn The Worldly. 6:17-19.

One can have a faithful ministry by directing men toward spiritual goals. All need to be warned that the so-called riches of the present age must not be substituted for the true riches in Christ. Wealthy Christians should not be exalted in mind. They should trust God and not their riches. At the same time they should be good stewards. Daily they should be storing up treasures for eternity. It is wonderful to be rich in good works.

IV. To Guard The Deposit Of The Christian Faith. 6:20-21a.

The sacred deposit which was committed to his care was the Christian faith. In guarding this deposit he was instructed to turn away from profane empty talkings and falsely-named knowledge. Since it is God's redemptive truth that has been entrusted to Timothy by the Holy Spirit, he would be required to render an account of what he did with it.

Conclution. 6:21b.

Paul never wrote a shorter benediction. Even though it is brief, it is rich in meaning, for grace is the greatest blessing of all. It is God's favor in Christ toward the undeserving, transforming their hearts and lives and leading them to glory. The Apostle's closing prayer is that God's grace might be richly bestowed upon all believers who would read his words. What more could he have asked? If the grace of God abounds, life is indeed rich and abundant.