

## 1 Timothy Pastor Lou DeVizia

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Introduction. The second half of Chapter 6 starts with Paul contrasting what he expects of Timothy with what people often slip into: the headlong, self-destructive pursuit of an earthly love, that love being the love of money. Whereas men frequently drown themselves in destructive behavior by chasing earthly prosperity (rather than simply working hard and with honesty and trusting God for His continued blessing), Timothy was expected to run from such behavior and from such men. Why? He was a "man of God" (v.11). And men of God pursue God, not money or earthly wealth. This is not to say that godly men do not work and earn money and provide for themselves and their families, and it is not to say that being rich is arbitrarily evil. But the soul that is *discontent* and falls into lusting and coveting, into bitterness and jealousy... that man has started down a path which leads to own destruction (v.9). Thus Paul instructs Timothy to flee such conduct and instead pursue the characteristics of a life which is pleasing to God.

Paul does tell Timothy what to say to the "rich in this present age" (v.17). They are not to be condescending towards others, not to trust their wealth but rather keep their faith totally in God, and they are to do good with their riches. God can and does bless some with earthly wealth; it is a tool to use in serving God.

The letter then concludes with an abrupt and stark reminder that there were (and still are) many false teachings and teachers all around. These people caused others to stray from the faith. The good pastor's work is to avoid false teaching at all costs (though there are times it must be exposed for the purpose of keeping true teaching pure).

### 1. Verses 11-16 - Fighting the good fight.

- v.11 - **But you...** Timothy is contrasted with the men of the previous section, those who forsake God and pursue earthly riches. **O man of God...** Men of God are different in their conduct from the men of this world. **righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness...** These are the characteristics of a true man of God, not earthly wealth or perceived success in this life. The pursuit of a godly character is the great work of a Christian.

- v.12 - **the good fight of faith...** Serving God is a battle with many earthly influences and forces. There is our own flesh, temptations, the influence of the devil, just the wickedness of this world itself... but Timothy is called to walk by faith in the midst of it all and not falter. **lay hold on eternal life...** The ultimate end of the fight here is that we will be with the Lord forever; this life should be seen as a proving ground, a preparation time; grasp the promise of eternal life now, don't look back or let go. **the good confession...** Timothy professed faith in Christ publicly. He was called, he confessed in front of witnesses. So it is with every believer: we are called by God, and our response when we believe is to publicly confess Jesus as Lord (see Romans 10:9-13).

- vv.13-16 - Paul uses all the authority of **God** and **Christ Jesus** (who is God in the flesh) to urge Timothy to not let up in fighting the good fight. He was to serve right up to Christ's return if necessary. All of this great description of the Lord Jesus is used to remind Timothy whom he serves. Remember: we will one day be before Him! Serve Him without fail like you really know that!

### 2. Verses 17-19 - Those who are rich in this present age.

- v.17 - **not... haughty** those who are **rich** now (we are all rich eternally in Christ!) are not to view themselves as above others. If God grants riches, it is God sovereignly doing so, and He is to be

glorified with it. Praise God for those who are rich on earth and have godly humility to go with it. Also, it can be naturally a pitfall to stumble into resting upon earthly wealth and failing to trust God (see the Laodicean church of Revelation 3). So Timothy is told to **command** the presently rich to be on guard against that as well. **gives us richly all things...** All should remember that every good thing we have is God's blessing. The working of all principles of labor, sowing and reaping, etc., was ordained by God. Things in this life can certainly be enjoyed (so says this verse), but the God who gives them must never be forgotten!

- v.18 - **do good... good works... give... share...** Clearly God's blessing of riches in this world is two-fold: 1) enjoy with thanksgiving (v.17) and share with others. Both honor the Lord who gives.

- v.19 - This is a way for the rich of this world (obviously those who are in Christ that is) to prepare for eternity, to "lay up treasures in heaven," as Jesus said. This is their way to **lay hold on eternal life** (compare with v.12).

3. Verses 20-21 - Avoiding false knowledge.

- v.20 - **O Timothy!** Paul urges Timothy here with great personal affection. **Guard what was committed to your trust...** namely, the gospel, the ministry, the church, etc. **avoid... falsely called knowledge...** Much false teaching will always cause people to stray from true **faith**. Timothy must serve as a guardian of what is true. So must we. People's faith and fruitfulness depends upon it!