

6 Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. ² And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

Error and Greed

³ If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, ⁴ he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, ⁵ useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

⁶ Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6: 1-10, NKJV).

The Good Confession

There is a lot of good advice in these verses. Much of what we've been covering isn't cornerstone theological doctrine, but this book contains some of the most practical advice and direction for not only running a church, but for living out the Christian life. It also gives us wonderful instruction in how to work together as a church. There are always issues that crop up in a church and they are things we need to deal with. Paul is instructing Timothy on how to handle things at the most practical level. As most of you all know, I love the application side of scripture, and this chapter gives us some wonderful advice.

Vv.1-2 Paul is talking here again about being "bond servants." Some of your Bible translations might use the word "slave", but we shouldn't think of it as the kind of slavery that existed in the USA and other countries before it was abolished. Many do not know that it was the efforts of an evangelical Christian named William Wilberforce, in

England, who waged a campaign to abolish slavery in England culminating in the Slave Trade Act of 1807.

Being a bond-servant was mostly people paying off their debts by working for someone. This was often what the master-servant relationship was all about. It's not like "slavery" as it was known to us here in the United States and in other countries. This is used by some to criticize the Bible, but it is not a fair criticism. That wasn't Paul's calling. He was not a social reformer. This is not promoting slavery. Paul didn't condemn slavery because it wasn't what he was called to do. The point of the gospel is to teach you how to be saved and it is not a treatise on social injustice. I just mention all of this so we can remind ourselves that although we should be mindful as we interact with the world in which we live, that is not our primary directive. Our primary directive is seeing others come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Paul focused on just telling people how to behave if they were Christians. So here, he is essentially saying, "if you're a believer and you're working for an unbeliever, treat your master honorably and with respect **so the name of God and His word aren't tarnished.**" This reminds us that how you and I behave in the workplace is important. You may be the only reflection of Jesus into someone's life. What they see and hear in you is what they'll conclude about God and His word. You are a picture of a Christian for them. You have more of an impact on others than you might think. This means doing the job you're hired to do. Paul reminds Timothy to be faithful in teaching these things.

He then adds that if you're a Christian and your boss is a Christian, don't take advantage of that. Don't treat him with disrespect or lack of attention to the work that he has contracted for you to do. In the workplace, your employer is worthy of honor. Treat them with honor and dignity. In other words, don't treat them with a familiarity that is disrespectful. An example of this would be when Matthew or Aaron works for me, they shouldn't think they can get away with doing less from me because I'm a brother in Christ. When we go into town or somewhere they are respectful of me and the position I hold when they refer to me as Pastor Faber instead of just saying something like, "go talk to Faber." How we interact with our superiors, Christian or not, in the workplace reflects our spiritual condition.

V.3 He then adds that if anyone teaches a "different teaching" (in the Gk **ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖ** "heterodidaskalei), that person is filled up with pride. Paul then describes these kind of people.

V.4 Paul says those kind of people are proud people. They think they have a corner on the truth and interestingly they are argumentative about words in scripture. I think this

refers to the kind of people who pick apart the scriptures and make a big deal out of some nuance of the language that they perhaps may understand. I grew up in a church where the pastor threw out a Greek or a Hebrew word continually. The sermons were often more like a Greek grammar or Hebrew grammar lesson than they were about figuring out how to live one's life by what the Bible taught. Please don't misunderstand me. I do think it is essential to understand what the text is saying, but we must remember that God inspired this text and He inspired it such a way that for the most part, the simple can understand it. Here, let me show you a couple of verses about what I'm talking about.

1. Psalm 19

*⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;
⁸ The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;
⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned,
And in keeping them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11 NKJV).*

Jesus makes sure to remind us that we are able to receive great spiritual truth when we come to Him as a child. And how is that?

2. Matthew 11:25

At that time Jesus said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.' [God often speaks through the most simple-minded of people. You don't have to be a Greek or Hebrew scholar to figure out what He desires of us.] (Matthew 11:25, NIV).

Have you ever noticed the difference in attitudes between adults and children? Jesus says that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like children. For most of us, childhood has some really great memories. Unless something is terribly broken and dysfunctional, a child has a deep, innate trust in his or her parents. They rely on their parents for hugs, a place to sleep, and a safe person to run to with their pains and hurts. A believer who trusts Jesus in such a way is experiencing the Kingdom of God. Likewise, children don't overcomplicate things. They see the macaroni and the hot dog on the plate, and they're not overly concerned as to its nutritional value. They know it is tasty and they

want to eat it. Kids are straightforward. A childlike attitude toward Jesus doesn't try to overthink things. It doesn't try to outthink God.

V.5 Paul warns Timothy that arguments over words will create envy. Those who engage in it will revile others. That means they'll criticize or speak about someone in a contemptible or disdainful way. I guess I feel strongly about this because I grew up in a church where the pastor so complicated the text with grammar and such that you needed a dictionary to understand what he was saying. I am not kidding, eventually someone created a dictionary of the terms that he had made up. I have a friend who is a theologian and he told me that he had actually seen one of those dictionaries. Beware of those that view "godliness as a means of gain." Be careful of those who are trying to feed their ego by their study and looking godly. It's an insidious form of pride.

V.6 He goes on to contrast that kind of "fake godliness" with true godliness. True godliness is the person and/or the pastor that is himself hungry for the things of God. He seeks to know and learn how God can continue to do a work in his life. It's the pastor that never quite feels adequate but rather realizes that he is completely dependent on the grace of God for his next feeding as well as for what he will feed the flock. One thing I love about the men who preach in the pulpit at Union Grove is the humility I see in their lives. Let me explain. We have a district judge, a veteran pastor of 50 years, and a seminary professor. All are secure in their theological understanding of the text they will be preaching on, but they aren't so secure in their own abilities. I AM NOT EITHER! Praise God that we are served by such men.



V.7 Paul gives a simple truthful statement about life. My dad used to say, "I've never seen a hearse pulling a uhaul trailer." You know, no matter how much we try, you just can't take it with you. Yet many of us are attempting to store more up, accumulate more, and make more. You came naked into the world and you will leave this world naked.

V.8 It's kind of interesting that he just mentions food and clothing. There is no mention of real estate, a home etc. Growing up we had a man in our lives named Ian Kemp. He was from Scotland and he and his wife, Ursula, would take family vacations with our family. He used to always tell me, "Young Faber, a man can only sleep in one bed at a time. He can only eat three meals a day. He can only

wear one pair of trousers at the time. If he has those things, he is rich.” Uncle Ian understood what was important, and he understood God’s perspective on worldly wealth.

Vv.9-10 For many years I was heavily involved in business. Sandy and I started several businesses together and they were all successful. But I never found a way to run a business successfully without being **ALL IN**. I often worked twelve hours a day. I traveled sometimes 90 days a year. When this church called me as pastor I sold all of my cows and much of my ranching equipment. I closed my law practice. In addition, I curtailed plans to turn what is now known as the “rec center” into a country store. Why? Because of this very warning that Paul gives Timothy.

⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. (1 Timothy 6:9, NKJV).

I think it is very important for all of us, but especially pastors, to redefine success and redefine “enough.” Note that the scripture doesn’t say that money is the root of all evil. It says that “the love of money is A root of many kinds of evil.” Paul goes on to tell Timothy, *“for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (1 Timothy 6:10b, NKJV).*

When a man chooses to pastor a congregation, his attention must turn to those he serves. He can’t be chasing more profit, more business, more property, more gain, more this or more that. He must be singularly focused on evangelizing and pastoring others. This is what Paul is impressing on Timothy. It’s a good way to live for each of us.

With this teaching we come to the end of Paul’s first letter to Timothy. It is chock full of great Christian advice not only for Timothy, but for the Church. Each chapter can be summarized as follows:

Chapter 1 We should always be on our guard to stay focused on the Gospel message. It is too easy to become distracted, and we will be tempted again and again to add things to the Gospel message.

Chapter 2 We should have a fervent prayer life for ourselves, others, and our political leaders. This is a great practice because it will help us to live quiet and peaceable lives in all goodness and reverence. And, this is all done directly between ourselves and God as there is One Mediator between God and man, and that is Jesus.

Chapter 3 The Bible gives us very specific details concerning qualifications for any man who senses the calling of God to serve as a pastor/elder/overseer. Not all that think they are called are in fact called. Those who are indeed called must meet certain criteria or they simply are not biblically qualified. Elder is who this person is, and they function as overseers of the local church and as pastors/shepherds to God's sheep that are within a local church body.

Deacons are servants to the church body and to the elders. They are godly men who are called and chosen based on a set of criteria that includes: financial wisdom, godly conduct, stable marriages, gracious wives, and a servant's heart. They must be solid in their theology as this affects their interaction with the people of God.

Chapter 4 Pastors should be leaders who focus on good doctrine and sound teaching. They don't need to get wrapped up in every minor theological detail and arguments with others. This will detract from their ability to minister to the church body.

Chapter 5 Pastors should foster unity and service among the members of the church. There are specific guidelines of responsibility covering every age group and category of people within the church. The church body is to give aid to certain classes of women (widows) who do not have family members who have the first responsibility of caring for their mothers and grandmothers, aunts, et cetera.

Chapter 6 Christians are to be model employers and employees. The church should be on guard against pastors who are "in it" for the power, prestige, and money. Those pastors must have a spiritual mindset that surpasses their temporal mindset. It's not "all about the money boys"; it's ALL ABOUT JESUS!

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.