

Charges To The Young Minister

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Introduction

Paul's letter to Timothy was meant to encourage him in his life and walk in Christ. Paul also warns about false teaching and teachers. Paul also gives several charges; be a warrior (1:18-20); be a good minister (4:6-16); be impartial (5:21-25) and now be a man of God (6:11-16). Timothy was charged to flee evil and follow what is good (v.11); fight the good fight of faith (v. 12) and remain faithful to the Lord Jesus in ministry (vv.13-14; and later v.20).

Paul has a problem bringing his message to a conclusion (don't say it—just like you!). Paul gives Timothy three "F's"—to set him on guard. Flee these things (vv.4-11); Follow after (vv. 6;11) and Fight the good fight of faith or the the faith. Let's add one more. Remain faithful (vv. 13-16).

Flee The Lust For Wealth (v.11a)

1 Timothy 6:11(a)(NKJV) But you, O man of God, flee these things. . .

Paul calls Timothy "man of God"! What an amazing title! Moses was called "the man of God" (Deut. 33:1). Eli was called a man of God (1 Sam.2:27). Samuel was called a man of God (1 Sam.9:6). In short—who is the man of God? The man of God runs away from evil and pursues good. The man of God runs away from evil things.

What things? Flee swelling pride, the folly of ignorance. Flee wicked workers who deny the faith, who cause confusion, who are conceited and argumentative (vv.3-4); and unchecked greed that leads to ruin and destruction (vv.9-10). Run for your life.

The Christian should be deeply suspicious of all who have an unbiblical and unhealthy preoccupation with getting rich and get rich schemes. 1 John 1:15; "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."

What is Paul's point? The man of God cannot trust both wealth and God. You must choose one or the other. If you trust the Lord you will experience peace, service to others, satisfaction, humility, certainty and contentment. If you trust in riches—in the end you will experience anxiety, self-centeredness, dissatisfaction, arrogance, uncertainty and a creeping contagious greed.

Why is it so difficult to run away from the false promises of wicked people and the false promises of wealth? We live in a world committed to promoting the false message that a man is the measure of the things he possesses. We are constantly exposed to the spiritual disease of affluenza. We are invited to have—and we don't even have to pay now. . .we can pay later.

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We flirt instead of flee.

Henry Ward Beecher famously said, “In this world it is not what we take up, but what we give up that makes us rich.”

Follow After The Things Of God (v.11b)

and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

Paul offers us something else. Instead of pursuing self or wealth we are offered selflessness and riches in righteousness.

The word ‘pursue’ (*dioke*) means to run after—to follow hard—it carries the idea of ‘hot pursuit’. This is the kind of pursuit that is eager and anticipates a great reward.

Paul offers Timothy six things that both men and women of God pursue:

1. Righteousness
2. Godliness
3. Faith
4. Love
5. Patience
6. Gentleness

We could quite easily devote hours to each one. Let me at least offer brief definitions and descriptions.

Righteousness

The servant—the minister—the man of God or the woman of God pursues righteousness (*dikiaosune*). The simple meaning is being right with God. We might think of this as having a right heart toward God but also having right actions—because we have a right heart with the Lord. Being right with God should always lead to doing right toward others and God. We can only approach God on God’s terms and according to God’s standards. We cannot be right with God apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus remakes our heart and molds our heart. Peter writes that Jesus has given us ‘His divine power’, “life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us

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exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (see 2 Peter 1:3-4).

The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6).

Godliness

We are to pursue godliness (*eusebeian*). The expression means we live in light of God’s holiness and power and majesty and glory—in a perpetual state of awe! We are to be conscious of His presence, aware of His presence and then to live our lives in conscious awareness of His presence as we go about our business. **It means to seek His character and pursue the behavior that best reflects His character. In a single sentence godliness means to be Christ-like.**

Paul plainly says this in Ephesians 4:24; “And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”. In 2 Corinthians 3:18; “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” We are metamorphoo—transformed—translated transfigured in Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2.

Faith

Here faith (*pistin*) means to believe and to be faithful (trust, rely, cling). The man of God seeks faith—looking for opportunities to trust more—to exercise a life and then a life-style of trusting God. The man or woman of God wants to trust God, and in humility learn to depend on the Lord more and more and more. This is the kind of faithfulness that generates loyalty and obedience and submission. The word that comes to mind is attachment—dependence. The person wants to please God.

Love

This is the inexhaustible word agape. This is the love that finds its origin in God and expression in Christ. It’s main characteristics seem to be selflessness and sacrifice. This is the kind of love that is absent merit—or deserving love—we might go so far as to say—this is the kind of love—that goes out of its way to find the undeserving. **This is God’s love—for the ungodly.**

The Holy Spirit devotes all of 1 Corinthians 13 to this subject. In Romans 5:6 Paul says, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly”. Love for the loveless. Love for unworthy sinners. Love for undeserving enemies. Romans 5:10; “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

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This is the kind of love that seeks not simply those who love back, but the apathetic, the indifferent, the mildly annoyed, the supremely hostile.

Patience

That kind of love requires patience (*hupomonen*). This is the patience that endures. This is persistence. **This is the opposite of giving up.** Let's connect Paul's thoughts; righteousness are acts that are morally upright and virtuous; faith and love are fundamental to Christ, Christianity and Paul's teachings; all will generate opposition and contention—persecution and trouble—which will require—patience. Timothy will need patience—in dealing with the brothers and sisters in Ephesus—and all the by products that come from living in a broken and fallen world. **People who pray for patience are really praying for trouble—for suffering—for persecution.** Be patient with everyone. Include yourself. Evelyn Underhill writes; “Patience with ourselves is duty for Christians and the only humility. For it means patience with a growing creature who God has taken in hand and whose completion he will effect in his own time and way.”

I like that. God is at work.

Gentleness

The word is sometimes translated meekness (*praupathian*). The word incorporates—tenderness, gentleness, humility, consideration, self-control and discipline. Someone has called this strength informed by discipline. Gentleness is an attitude or state of mind, In our culture it has wrongly been interpreted as weak, or cowardly. The gentle person is willing to be hurt in order to avoid hurting others. The gentle person loves people and peace. The gentle person weds mercy and peace. If someone is suffering the gentle person intervenes with mercy and strength. If evil is being done meekness or gentleness intervenes and attempts to stop it or correct it or reduce it. *Gentleness relies on self-control.* The meek person controls both spirit and mind. The meek person voluntarily dies to self and asks what is God's will in this situation. We might think of the gentleness as a person who is humble, tender, but with a strong strength of mind. This person denies himself and considers others. This is the characteristic that Jesus uses to describe Himself. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek (read gentle) and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt.11:29 KJV).

I suspect Timothy was timid—and gentle. The minister must confront false teachers and false teaching—with power and strength and gentleness. The false teacher and false teaching have no power against a righteous gentle leader **who speaks the truth and lives the truth.**

Learn from Jesus. He was holy in His nature (Luke 1:35; harmless in his actions (Acts 10:38). Undeified in His life (1 John 3:5); separate in His service (John 17:19); meek in spirit (Matt. 11:29); humble in heart (Phil. 2:5) and devout in purpose (Heb. 5:7-9).

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The list compares with the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and the qualifications for church elders (see Chapter 3:1-3).

Albert Barnes wrote; “The most deeply felt obligation on earth is that which the Christian feels to imitate the Redeemer.”

Fight The Good Fight Of Faith (v.12)

12Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Paul uses the metaphor of an athlete. Here the word fight (*agonizou*) means struggle, agonize, battle, contend, engage in order to win a prize. **The idea is a desperate struggle—or effort.** What does it mean to be in a desperate struggle for eternal life? I thought we are saved by grace through faith—and that not of ourselves lest we boast? What is Paul taking about?

Matthew Henry: “Those who will get to heaven must fight their way there. There must be a conflict with corruption and temptations and . . . the power of darkness. Observe. It is a good fight, it is a good cause, and it will have a good (end and purpose). . .”

“This we must lay hold on (eternal life), as those that are afraid of coming short of it and losing it. Lay hold, and take heed of losing your hold. . .”

Kenneth Wuest says; “Paul exhorts Timothy to lay hold of eternal life, he does not imply that he does not possess it. Timothy was saved, and possessed eternal life as a gift of God. What Paul was desirous of was that Timothy experience more of what this eternal life is in his life” (*The Pastoral Epistles. Wuest’s Word Studies Vol. 2 p.98*).

What does the man of God profess? There is eternal life. Eternal life is a reality. We must trust Christ and live forever. We believe in eternal life in the presence of many witnesses.

In what sense? All who come in contact with us—recognize we are Christ followers—we are Jesus people—we are sinners who have experienced the grace and mercy and salvation of Christ.

We are people who live up to our profession. We don’t simply say we know and love Jesus. We live our lives in such a way that it is obvious to everyone who meets us.

“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved” (see Matt. 10:22).

How do we fight the good fight of faith? We make a good profession (v.12). We keep (this commandment (v.14). We charge the rich to not be high minded (v.17). We are content to be

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rich in good works (v.18). We lay hold of eternal life (v.12;19). We keep the faith of the gospel (v.18).

Remain Faithful To The Charges (vv. 13-16)

13I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

The Lord God is the source of life (*zoogonountos*). *Jesus made His good confession before Pilate (see Matt. 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:2-3; John 18:36-37). **Jesus lived up to His confession.***

14that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing,

What commandment is Paul referencing? The commandment covered in verses 11-12. Flee greed. Follow goodness.

Paul gives five reasons to follow the commandments.

1. God is the source of life.
2. Jesus is the perfect example of a good profession.
3. Jesus is coming back.
4. Jesus alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light.
5. Jesus alone has seen and can see God's presence and glory.

15which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

16who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

What are we to make of this? Since God is the source and giver of life He alone imparts eternal life. Eternal life is found in the Father and the Son (John 17:3). Jesus made His confession before Pilate. Jesus is the King. We confess Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Jesus is coming soon. He will return to the earth and be exalted. Since Jesus alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light no person can live forever and approach God apart from Christ. **No one will see the light of God's presence or God's glory apart from Christ.**

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Paul's persuasive argument is that since God and Christ alone bring life both God and Christ deserve honor and everlasting power.

We could spend the rest of our lives considering Paul's portrait of God.

The blessed and only Potentate (read sovereign). What does it mean? God is sovereign and exercises complete control. He is the King of Kings. What does it mean? No king has more power or authority. It was a title reserved for the King's of Babylon and Persia and briefly to describe Alexander the Great. It can only accurately describe the Lord Jesus Christ (Daniel 4:34; Revelation 17:14; 19:16). He is Lord of Lords possessing absolute power, superior to all other powers human and divine. Immortal—inherent—self-existence—our immortality comes from God through Christ. Unapproachable light—God's glory is blinding—God can be known through Christ and His self-revelation (Exodus 24:15-17; Psalm 104:2). **Unseen (invisible)—God is so holy so pure—no one can truly see Him and live (see Ex.33:17-23; 1 Samuel 6:1-5; John 1:18). Worthy of Honor—God is to be honored for who he is and what he has done (see Psalm 96:6; John 5:23). The Lord God possesses eternal dominion—God's power continues from eternity to eternity—it had no beginning—it will have no end (see 1 Peter 4:11; Rev. 1:6).**

We can know God. But we can't ultimately see God because of His absolute holiness.

Conclusion

Thomas Watson (1620-1686) the Puritan writer said; "The wicked have a never —dying worm and the godly a never-fading crown".

Flee—sin.

Follow—Jesus.

Fight—the good fight of faith.

Remain faithful.

Charles R. Swindle

"To be like Christ. That is our goal, plain and simple. It sounds like a peaceful, relaxing easy objective. But stop and think. He learned obedience by the things he suffered. So must we. It is neither easy nor quick nor natural. It is impossible in the flesh, slow in coming, and supernatural in scope. Only Christ can accomplish it within us."