

Marks Of The Man Of God

1 Timothy 6:11-21

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Let's read 1 Timothy 6:11-12, and then I'll come back and introduce our topic. Paul says, "But thou, O man of God," there's our theme, "flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold," or take hold, "on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

Paul, earlier in this same chapter, had warned Timothy about those false teachers who had as their theme that godliness was a way to get rich. We spent quite a bit of time on that last week (we actually covered the first ten verses), and Paul was warning them that they were teaching a materialistic kind of a philosophy that, you know, "If you're really godly, if you're really spiritual, that's the way you can become rich." Paul now is actually going to warn Timothy to flee those things—those false teachers, that false doctrine, and that materialistic center of life. In doing that, Paul is going to give us the marks of a godly man. We're actually going to have four marks of the man of God, and they also apply to a woman of God. In context he's speaking to pastor Timothy, but they do apply to any Christian, whether a man or a woman.

I want to outline our study tonight. In verses 11-12, we first have the admonishment or the admonitions, and they do come in the form of actually imperatives or commands. There are four of them. Then, we're going to see in verses 13-16 the final charge that Paul gave to Timothy. In verses 17-19, we'll see the admonition to those that are rich, the believers that had riches in this world. In closing, verses 20-21, is Paul's urgent plea, his last closing command to Timothy.

First of all Paul admonishes Timothy, "But thou, O man of God," I want you to notice that in verse 11. The phrase, "But thou," is intended to get Timothy's attention. There's a contrast intended there. The word "but" is a word of contrast, so you have the false teachers, their false doctrine, and the materialistic kind of philosophy of ministry; but he says, "You are to avoid that. You're to flee from that." He's trying to get Timothy's attention, so he says, "But thou, O man of God." He uses the title for Timothy, "man of God," and we should take note of that. It's interesting because it's a more common term to be used in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament the term was used most often of the prophets of God. This is not an exhaustive list by any means, but Moses was called a man of God. Samuel the prophet was called a man of God. Elijah and Elisha were called a man of God. David, the Psalmist of Israel, was called a man of God. What does it mean a "man of God?" Well, a "man of God" is a man who knows, loves, and walks with God. It's a man who has God as the center of his life. Joseph was a man of God. Every time Joseph spoke in the pages of Scripture, he makes a reference to God. So, a man or a woman of God is a man that was called by God, a man who knows God personally, a man who loves God's precepts and Word, and seeks to obey them and glorify Him. Basically, I think the most concise statement is that a "man of God" has God at

the center of his life, or a woman of God has God at the center of her life. They love God with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their strength, and they manifest God in the way that they live. Timothy is a “man of God” in contrast to the false teachers, which one of my commentaries today I thought was interesting said were men of gold. The false teachers were men of gold, but this was a man of God. It’s kind of a play on words. They were all about money. “Timothy, you’re to be all about God.” A true minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about God—you don’t do it for wages; you don’t do it for money. Peter wrote to the pastors and said you’re not to become pastors for filthy lucre sake. You’re not to do it for hire. You’re to know that it’s a call of God whether you get paid or not.

What are the marks of a man or a woman of God? Write them down. The first is what he runs from—he flees those things. Notice it says, “...flee these things.” The question is what things are you fleeing? The answer in context is the false doctrine, false preaching, and false teaching of those who say that godliness is a way to get rich; so you flee those things. As a general principle, and this is the negative, a man or a woman of God must run from sin. Amen? We must hate what God hates. If we’re going to be people of God or men or women of God, then we have to flee the things that are ungodly, wicked, evil, sinful, or unrighteous.

The phrase “flee” there in the Greek literally means keep on fleeing. It’s in the present tense and it means continually, ongoingly, habitually, purposely, and intentionally be running away from sinful things. It speaks of a daily obedience of avoiding sin and evil. The Bible tells us to flee fornication in 1 Corinthians 6:18. Good advice! That word “fornication” is the Greek word *pornea*. It’s the general term for sexual immorality. If there’s anything that you ought to run from as a man or a woman of God, you ought to run—and run with all your might—from sexual immorality that wars against your soul. It will ruin your relationship to God, so whether you’re married or single, it doesn’t matter, the child of God is to abstain from sexual immorality. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:14 that we’re to run or to flee from idolatry, so we run from fornication and we run from idolatry. Idolatry is anything that might take the place of God in our lives, so we’re to avoid anything that would captivate our love for God.

Thirdly, we are to flee youthful lusts, and we’re going to see this in 2 Timothy 2:22, “Flee also youthful lusts,” Paul says, but here in context he’s telling us to flee false teachers, to avoid them. In Romans 13:14 Paul says, “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” We’re not to make provision for the flesh but put Jesus on. I think also of the living example (I mentioned it Sunday) of Joseph. Remember when Joseph was hired by Potiphar in Egypt? Potiphar evidently was neglecting his wife or he was just a busy businessman, but Joseph was steward over his things and so was there.

Mrs. Potiphar thought Joseph was very good looking and very handsome. She had eyes for Joseph and started making passes at him. She wanted to get involved with Joseph when finally she just grabbed ahold of him and said, “Joseph, lie with me.” What does the Bible say Joseph did? He ran! I talked about the smart thing to do is just to get outta there. He didn’t say (high squeaky voice), “Do you think we can talk about this for a little bit? I’m not sure this would be the right thing to do. Let’s go have coffee or lunch or let’s discuss the matter,” you know. He just

said, “BYE!” WHOOSH! and he took off. Someone might say, “Well, you know, that might hurt her feelings.” “Well, hurt her feelings.” “That might be offensive or that might not make her feel good.” “Make her not feel good.” Sometimes people will get drawn into flirtatious kinds of relationships and temptation because they’re just kind of trying to be sociable and nice and it’s the thing to do. You need to be careful. If you’re a married person, you need to be really careful and keep your distance of people that are of the opposite sex. Treat them with respect and be nice but don’t socialize with them, hang out alone with them, go to lunch or dinner with them, and you don’t ride in the car with them. You need to be careful. Joseph is a great example.

The opposite is the bad example of David (which is interesting, I just said he’s a man of God) who fell into adultery. He was on the rooftop and saw Bathsheba in the next courtyard. When David should’ve gotten off of the roof—he should’ve gotten down off of the roof and taken a cold shower, probably—instead, he saw and he looked and he lusted and he inquired. Even when he inquired, they said, “That’s Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah,” emphasis, “She’s married, Dude!” He called for her and went unto her and committed one of his life’s great sins. David, I believe, was affected for so many years because he writes in the Psalms, “...my moisture,” my spiritual life, “is turned into the drought of summer.” He cried out in Psalm 51, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,” and “...that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.” See what sin will do in your life, so a man or a woman of God runs from those things. We must flee the sin. It is so important.

By the way, the phrase in the Greek indicates a very subtle but important point—we are accountable and responsible to do the fleeing. We can’t be pursuing sin asking God to deliver us from temptation. If you have a problem with alcohol, you can’t go walking in the bar while praying, “Lead me not into temptation. Lead me not into temptation.” Slap that dude! If you don’t want to be led into temptation, then don’t go that way, okay? Turn around and go the opposite direction. It would actually indicate that we must flee.

Here’s the second mark of a man or a woman of God, that is, they follow (verse 11). The first is to flee these things and the second is to follow after. He tells us what to follow after—righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. I do believe that it’s right to take them as couplets here. We have the negative, to flee; we have the positive, to follow. By the way, we must do both. We must run from evil and follow righteousness. You can’t just follow righteousness if you don’t flee from evil, and you can’t just flee from evil if you don’t follow righteousness. A lot of times people say, “Pastor Miller, Pastor Miller! I’m struggling with sin. I’m just having such a difficult time.” It could be because you’re not following righteousness. You’re trying to fight sin, but you’re not focusing on God. The Bible says that if we resist the devil, he’ll flee; but it also says, we draw near to God and He will draw near to us. We have to do both—negative, flee; and the positive, we have to follow.

In the Greek, the word is sometimes translated, interestingly enough, persecute. It’s used that way in Matthew 5:10. The word “follow” means to have a determination. It means to have a persistence. It means to exert energy. It means to have purpose, so it conveys the idea of effort, energy, purpose, and focus. With all that we have, we’re to focus on following after these

things. Let's look at what we're to follow after. It's very clear and very practical. The first couplet is righteousness and godliness. Now, righteousness perhaps conveys the idea of my right living before men—that when men look at me they see that I'm living a righteous life.

There are three kinds of righteousness in the Bible. God, first of all, alone is perfectly righteous. The only One that's perfectly righteous is God. Then, there's positional righteousness. The moment you are born again and forgiven of your sins, you actually, before God in your standing, are declared to be righteous. It's so important. We talked a lot about that in Romans 8 on Sunday morning. Thirdly, there is practical righteousness. That's how you live out in your daily life. The third righteousness is what Paul has in mind for Timothy to follow after. Follow after living a righteous life. It's not enough just to say, "I've been forgiven," and "I have the righteousness of Christ imputed to me," now I want to practice it. I want to live it out in my daily life. It's so very important.

Godliness, the second half of that couplet, is how I relate toward God. It means I worship God, I pray to God, I love God, I sing to God. The last couple of days I've been trying to sing a little bit more lately just as I go about certain times of the day and things to just, you know, "Okay, I'm just going to spend some time singing and worshiping God." You know, you don't just have to wait to come to church to sing. You can sing in the car. You can sing in the shower (it sounds really good in the shower, too, by the way. The nozzle becomes your microphone and you can rock out). You can sing as you work—whistle while you work. God puts a song in our hearts, so if you're godly, you're going to be God-centered. You're going to be singing to Him and worshiping Him, talking to Him and rejoicing in Him. You're living righteously, and you are worshiping a God that's worthy to be worshiped.

Notice the second thing that we're to pursue, faith and love. Faith is actually the concept of faithfulness, that we're to live faithfully and obediently to God and His Word. We're to be learning the Word—faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word—and it also conveys the idea that we live by trusting God. The true man or woman of God is one who trusts God in all your ways. You lean not on your own understanding, and in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. And then, love is that fruit of the Spirit which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We love God, the brethren, and a love for the lost; so we have righteousness, godliness, faith and love.

The third couplet is patience and meekness (verse 11). Patience, I've mentioned before, is the concept of endurance. The word literally means to remain under, so when you're under weight and pressure, you continue, you keep going, you persevere; and you do it (verse 14, we're going to see in just a moment) until Jesus comes and takes us home. We want to keep going. We want to keep persevering. We also follow meekness. Now, meekness is not weakness. The best definition I've ever run across for meekness is power under control. You know, a horse that is obedient to its rider is called a meek horse. Horses are big, powerful, and strong. They can throw the rider off at any moment if they really wanted to, but a horse that cooperates is meek. It doesn't mean you're weak, it means you have power under control. A godly person is one who has surrendered everything to God—their attitudes, motives, heart, and actions are

all under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is actually referred to as meek. He said, "...for I am meek and lowly in heart." We're going to look at the Beatitudes a week from Sunday, and we'll be coming to, "Blessed are the meek." Meekness is one of the ways to be a happy person, so it's a Spirit-controlled life.

We are to flee, we are to follow, and then here's the third mark of a man or a woman of God. They are to fight. Notice it in verse 12. "Fight the good fight of faith," stop right there. The word "fight" we get our word agonize. It's the Greek word agonizo, and it means a good agony. Literally translated it would be agonize the good agony. Its imagery is one of two things, that of the athletic contest or that of the military conflict. I don't know how to be sure which of the two but both are apropos or apply. If you're an athlete, it's difficult, you agonize. If you're in war, you fight with agony. You're laboring very difficultly. Paul did quite often use the Greek athletic games to picture the Christian life: the running of the race, the looking for the prize, and stretching for the gold. It's very possible that he has this word agonizo in mind. He's thinking of the athletic arena, and maybe he's thinking of the runners. They ran in the Greek Olympics of the first century. They would run. They were runners, and when you run it's very agonizing. You put everything you've got into it. In 2 Timothy 4 (we'll get it in several weeks), Paul in speaking of his ministry said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." We're all running in a race, and we need to run with all that we've got. We need to fight. We need to agonize. Now, notice it's the "good fight" of faith, so we're fighting for the faith, once and for all, delivered to the saints. Victory comes through faith, and faith comes by hearing the Word of God. There are things that we need to fight for, stand for, work hard for, that is, the gospel. It's going to be brought out several times in this passage.

There's actually a fourth that we need to see as a mark of a godly man or woman, that is, to fasten onto or lay hold of. If you want to alliterate all four, it would be flee, follow, fight, and then fasten. That's seen in verse 12, "lay hold," hold on to, "eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." He's now using the idea of physically grasping or holding on to, so I made the point of fastening onto, grabbing ahold of. When Jesus was walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee to the disciples in the boat, and you remember Peter came out of the boat and started walking toward Jesus but then looked at the waves and saw that they were going to crash over him and was fearful and started to sink, the same Greek word is used there when it says that Jesus grabbed ahold of Peter. He reached out and took hold of Peter, so this is what we're to reach out and grab ahold of in verse 12, "... eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

That statement could confuse people, so I hope I can kind of shed some light on what Paul means by this statement because you're thinking, Well, isn't Timothy already saved, for heaven's sake? Isn't he a believer? Doesn't he have eternal life? The answer is yes. When you are born again, guess what you get? Eternal life. Not only are your sins forgiven, but you have, present possession, eternal life. Eternal life has two aspects. It has the aspect of quantity—you'll live forever—but it more has the idea of quality. We tend to think of eternal life as just when we die and go to heaven. "I have eternal life. When I die, I'm going to go to heaven." No.

The Christian has eternal life right here, right now. What it is, it's a quality of life. It's life in a new dimension. It's life in a new realm. It's spiritual life. Jesus said it like this in John 17. He said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." It's knowing God through Jesus Christ that brings you into this new dimension. You can testify to that. When you got born again, you had a new joy, you had a new peace, you had a new purpose, you had a new life! It was like, "Wow! I'm finally really living and enjoying life! I know God."

When Paul tells Timothy to, "...lay hold on eternal life," he's talking about the quality of life, and what he's telling actually Timothy here, "With all that you've got, with all of your gusto, with all your energy, with all of your strength, try to live the Christian life to the fullest. Enjoy the Christian life." Jesus said it like this, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." You would think when you look at some Christians that Jesus said, "I have come that you might have bummer, and bummer more abundantly." It looks like you've been baptized in lemon juice. "Yeah, it's really a bummer. I'm a Christian. No more fun. I can't go to parties anymore. I get to go to heaven, but until then I'm living in hell," and you look like hell. Jesus said, "I've come not only to give life, but life more abundantly!" He's actually saying to make the passion of your Christian life to enjoy your Christianity! That's why I've been singing the last few days a little bit. I'm just trying to sing some more. I want to be a happy Christian. I want to joy in the Lord, rejoice in my salvation, and to be thankful for what God has given to me, but it has to be something that you hold onto, that you grab ahold of. Paul said it like this in Philippians 2:12. He said, "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." To work out means to live it out! It's the same kind of idea of to grab ahold of, to go for the gusto, and to live your life to the fullest. Live out your Christianity. How important that is.

Notice also in verse 12 that you, "...lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called," that's the call of God to salvation, and then the public professing, "...a good profession before many witnesses." So, "Remember, Timothy, when you were saved and God called you? Remember when you professed your faith and you were baptized publicly? Now, follow after that. Pursue that and live for God." Those are the marks of a man or a woman of God—they flee, follow, fight, and fasten onto the life that is eternal.

Paul moves in the next section (verses 13-16) to charge Timothy, this man of God. This is the last official charge in the epistle. He says, "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things," then he begins to describe this God, "and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession," he just mentions Timothy's profession or confession at the end of verse 12, now he mentions Jesus' good profession or confession before Pontius Pilate. He was a perfect witness. Then, notice verse 14. "That thou keep this commandment," keep this charge, "without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times," and Paul didn't know when the Lord would come. He was anticipating His coming, but he had no idea—no man knows the day or the hour. "Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen," and interestingly, he says, "nor can see: to whom be honour and power

everlasting. Amen.”

That’s not the end of the epistle, so don’t close your Bible yet. We have more to cover, but he charges Timothy. This is one of the many charges in this epistle that Paul gave to Timothy. I want you to know the witnesses as he calls them into the courtroom, and it’s a solemn oath or charge he puts him under. There are two witnesses there in verse 13. The first witness is God the Father. “I give thee charge in the sight of God,” this is a reference to God the Father, and He “quickeneth,” or makes alive, “all things.” That’s an amazing statement saying that God is the One that gives life to everything. Everything that has life gets that life from God, and He gives life to all things. Notice also, that he is charging him before God the Son in verse 13, “... and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.” So, “Timothy, I’m charging you. Remember, God is looking, and you’re standing before Christ.” Then, he gives him the charge in verses 14-16.

Let’s look at the actual charge. “That,” so he says, “I give thee charge,” in verse 13, but he doesn’t get to the actual charge until verse 14. He says, “That thou keep this commandment,” and I want you to keep it, “without spot,” I want you to keep it, “unrebukeable,” and I want you to keep it, “until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” What is this commandment that he’s supposed to keep? The commandment is Paul’s letter of 1 Timothy and the doctrines that Paul had given to Timothy. The commandment is the apostolic doctrines, the Word of God, the Scriptures. He had entrusted them to Timothy. As you close this chapter, this last chapter of the book, there’s a lot of imagery here of the fact that we as Christians and especially a pastor, is a steward over a sacred trust that God has committed to us—the idea of “deposited” with us, He’s given to us—so I’m charging you that you keep, that you hold onto, that you preserve, that you keep God’s Word, that you not depart from God’s Word, and you do it without spot. You don’t pervert it. You don’t twist it. You don’t dilute it, and you do it with a life that is unrebukeable. The same word was used for the qualification for a pastor in chapter 3 when we read that phrase, “above reproach.” You’re supposed to do this in a way that is above reproach, unrebukeable, as others would bring a charge against you. And, you do it—I love it—until the Lord comes back (verse 14). Here’s a reference to the coming again of Jesus. My guess is (and I don’t know if it’s true or not) that it’s perhaps a reference to the Second Coming. He uses the word “appearing.” The idea is the manifestation—the coming or the appearing—of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When I say the Second Coming, I say that to make it clear that this is not the rapture. It could be a reference to the rapture, and it’s very possible that he’s saying the Lord could rapture us, and Paul believed the Lord could come at any moment, but the Bible teaches that before the Second Coming the church, the bride of Christ, will be caught up. That’s what the word “rapture” means, and it’s laid out pretty clearly in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 where Paul says, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God and," two things are going to happen, "the dead in Christ shall rise first," that's the resurrection of those that have died in Christ. Their bodies will be resurrected, and they will be given a new body reunited with their soul in the presence of the Lord, "Then we which are alive and remain," we hope we will be in that group, that we won't die but we'll be alive.

The other day I was talking with somebody, "Wouldn't it be cool if we got raptured while we're having church here at Revival? We don't even have to go get in the car and go home, we just go straight to heaven! That would be awesome, right? We'd just get caught up to be with the Lord!" The word is harpazo which means raptured or caught up. Paul is telling us that we're to keep His Word until the Lord comes again, and we should be living in light of that. It should be a motive for holiness and godly living.

When Paul references Jesus Christ, he said, "Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords," what an awesome statement that is that He will come and manifest Himself, show that He is sovereign, the only Potentate, He's King of kings and Lord of lords and that He is also immortal, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light," that He's also holy or He has purity, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto," and Paul also says that He's to be praised. He closes with a doxology at the end of verse 16. He says, "...to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

I skipped over something I don't want to miss in verse 16 when it says, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see," it's just an interesting statement. Do you know God is Spirit, that you can't see God? You actually can't see God. Now, I can't be dogmatic about this and I don't like to speculate, but it's something that I've wrestled with all my Christian life, and that's when we get to heaven, when the Bible says we're going to see God, we're going to be looking at God, how can we see God if God is a Spirit? A possibility is...and I'm cool with it. Whatever it is, I'm going to be in heaven, so it's going to be cool, okay? I'm not going to go, "I don't think I want to go to heaven then." You know, am I going to see God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? It's very possible—I don't know about you, but this blesses my heart—that because of the incarnation, because the second Person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, became a man, took on flesh, was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead, that when Jesus came out of the grave, it was His body metamorphosized, transformed, just like your body's going to come out of the grave. If you have a hard time understanding or believing that your body will be resurrected, just look at the resurrection. He is the prototype. He's the forerunner. He's called the first fruits of those who sleep, so it's just possible that because of the incarnation—Jesus Christ ascending back to heaven—that when we see God, it's going to be the Son of God, and that's Who we're going to be looking at and seeing face to face. What a glorious thing that will be to be able to look upon His face, the One who saved us by His grace. Amen?

I've only had one real close, near-death experience. I was kidnapped at gunpoint and really believed that I was going to be killed. As I was in that situation, I had this great sense and consciousness that I'm going to see Jesus face to face, that I'm going to actually be looking at

the face of Jesus Christ. What a glorious hope that is!

So, God cannot be seen, and it says there in that verse, “nor can see,” but I believe that in Christ, we’re going to be able to see God as He sits there upon the throne and we throw our crowns at His feet and worship Him for all eternity.

We won’t tarry on this closing section, but in verses 17-19, it’s a postscript. It’s kind of a concluding thing that Paul wants to throw in here. It’s an admonition to those that are rich. Now, he’s warned about those false teachers that say that godliness is a way to get rich, but he wants to bring it all into balance and point out that there were some Christians in Ephesus that had money. Now, it’s possible to be a Christian and to be rich in this world. It’s not a sin to be rich, so he gives them some instruction if you fall into this category. Some of you are going, “Oh, this isn’t for me. It doesn’t fall into my category. I’m a Christian, but I’m not a rich Christian.” Well, nevertheless, it’s in the Bible. “Charge them that are rich in this world,” so this is a Christian who is well-off and has material goods, “that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy,” the word “enjoy” is in the Bible. “That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” Again, in other words, this is that they may have the life that is real. They may really enjoy the spiritual life by how they relate to their treasures and their riches.

Notice Paul doesn’t tell the rich Christians to sell everything they have and give it to the poor. When I was a young Christian, I was over in Hawaii for a few months. I was a baby Christian and ran into a cult group called The Children of God. Their leader was a man by the name of Moses David Berg. They were just a really wicked cult group, but I was a baby Christian and didn’t know that. I encountered them on the street, and they tried to entice me to follow and join their group and movement, you know, and follow them; but their thing was you had to sell everything that you have and give it to them. Now, all I had was a surfboard and a pair of trunks, but I wasn’t about to give it up! I came to Hawaii to surf. I didn’t come...well, it’s like, “What, you want me to give it?” It’s kind of like, “Give us everything you have. Give it to us and follow Jesus.” Well, isn’t that convenient for you. You say, “Well, what about the rich young ruler? Jesus said to sell everything you have, give it to the poor, come follow Me, and you’ll have riches in heaven?” That was a very unique and special situation. That rich young ruler was covetous, loved money, and was attached to his things. Jesus knew that it was needful for him to give them up, but there’s no blanket statement or teaching in the Bible that every Christian must take a vow of poverty. So, if God has blessed you, that’s just what it is—God has blessed you.

Here’s some very important instructions for those who are rich Christians. First, don’t be proud. A good translation of “highminded” would be arrogant. Isn’t it easy when you are well-off or you’re rich or have a lot of things to begin to be proud thinking you’re special, you’re somebody? Somehow rich people think, Because I’m rich, I’m better than other people, or It’s because of what I’ve done or what I’ve accomplished. Paul warns them, “...that they be not

highminded,” don’t be high-minded. Don’t be arrogant. Don’t be proud. Then he says, “nor trust in uncertain riches,” don’t trust in your money. Now, that’s a good admonition for rich or poor. Don’t trust your money. Money is fleeting, so you don’t put your confidence or your trust in money. They’re described as uncertain. What you do put your trust in, even if you have a lot of money, is in the living God; and it’s God, “who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” You can have a lot of money but no enjoyment. Only God can bring joy to the heart of a person. God wants to bless you so do trust in God.

In verse 18, “That they do good,” that’s the fourth thing you’re supposed to do if you’re rich. You’re to do good. Don’t be prideful. Don’t trust in money. Trust in God and do good. Then he breaks it down, “that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute,” share, “willing to communicate,” and if you do that you’re, “Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life,” so you’re storing your riches in heaven. This is what Jesus taught in Matthew 6, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” The less you have in this world, the more you look for the world to come. The less you have, the less it can take hold of your heart. It was John Wesley that said, “I give my treasures away before they get a hold of my heart and captivate my love.”

In closing, verses 20-21 is Paul’s urgent closing plea. “O Timothy,” now again, when he said, “O thou man of God,” “O Timothy,” this is the first time he’s used his name since chapter 1, early in the first chapter. He’s doing it for emphasis and for attention, “O Timothy,” it’s almost like in these last statements that Paul, as he pens these words, is really wanting to get Timothy’s attention. By the way, the name Timothy or Timotheos means one who honors God. He says, “keep,” guard, “that which is committed to thy trust,” the word keep means to guard. It’s a banking term. It speaks of a despot that is entrusted to us and we’re to take good care of. It’s interesting that in Luke 2, when the shepherds were watching their sheep by night and the angels appeared to announce the birth of the Babe in Bethlehem, that’s the same Greek word that means keep or to guard or to watch over, “that which is committed to thy trust,” the “trust” there is actually the banking term. It means that it’s been deposited to you, “avoiding profane,” or sinful, “and vain babbling,” just foolish talk that’s empty and babblings, “and oppositions of science falsely so called.”

This “oppositions” we actually get our word antithesis from, so it’s saying avoid people that try to teach the opposite of what I’m teaching, those who come and teach other things. If somebody comes to you and they’re teaching things contrary to the Bible, then you need to avoid that. You need to get away from that. You don’t get embroiled in vain and empty statements; and then I love it, he says, “oppositions of science.” The word “science” in my King James translation could throw people for a curve. It’s actually where we get our word ginosko, the word we get our word gnostic from, which is a false cult that emphasizes knowledge, but a better translation would be knowledge. It’s a knowledge that’s not knowledge. It’s falsely so-called. It’s not true knowledge. He’s not condemning science here, by the way. If you read that and go, “I gotta

drop outta my science class because the Bible says to avoid it." No, no, no, no. It's talking about a fake knowledge.

I weary myself sometimes when people come to me with their crazy ideas trying to push their wares. Because I'm a pastor, they always want to try to convince me of their silly ideas and their doctrines and, you know, Paul just says, "Look, don't give it the time of day. This false knowledge is just a bunch of babble. It's a bunch of hot air." I must admit, sometimes I've turned the television on and listened to preachers and said, "That man is saying nothing. It's all just a bunch of babble." He gets people all excited and all pumped up, and it sounds like he's really deep and has all this knowledge, but there's really nothing there. It's knowledge falsely so-called. Some translations have philosophical speculations. "Which some professing have erred concerning the faith," so those who get into these philosophical speculations, this empty knowledge, that faith that they profess, "have erred," that means they've missed the mark, "concerning the faith," this is the body of truth that we believe and hold to.

Paul actually closes with a benediction, "Grace be with thee. Amen." The word "thee" in closing, is plural, so it's not just grace with you, Timothy, but it's grace to you, all the believers there in the church of Ephesus. This is why I say that this epistle, even though it's a pastoral epistle, has application to all believers; and it's, "the faith," and the "Grace," of God that will, "be with thee," and keep thee. Grace comes through Jesus Christ. Pastors need grace and all of God's people need grace. Amen?

Now, just by way of reminding you, there are four marks of a man or woman of God: they flee wickedness, follow righteousness, fight the good fight of faith, keep the sacred trust. Paul said, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust," that means that in these last days God has entrusted us with His Word, with the truth of the gospel, with the doctrines of Scripture, and we're to preserve them; and then we are to fasten or take hold of eternal life. We're to enjoy the abundant life that God has for us in and through Jesus Christ. Amen?