

1 Timothy Chapter 6

Verses 1-2: The Ephesian believers may have been struggling to maintain a biblical work ethic in the world of slavery, so these verses form Paul's instruction on that subject. Essentially, first century slaves resembled the indentured servants of the American colonial period.

In many cases, slaves were better off than day-laborers, since much of their food, clothing, and shelter were provided. The system of slavery served as the economic structure in the Roman world, and the master-slave relationship closely parallels the twentieth-century employer-employee relationship.

1 Timothy 6:1 "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and [his] doctrine be not blasphemed."

“Under the yoke”: A colloquial expression describing submissive service under another's authority, not necessarily describing an abusive relationship (Matt. 11:28-30).

“Servants”: They are in submission to another. It carries no negative connotation and is often positive when used in connection with the Lord serving the Father (Phil. 2:7), and believers serving God (1 Pet. 2:16), the Lord (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:24; James 1:1), non-Christians (1 Cor. 9:19), and other believers (Gal. 5:13).

“Masters”: The Greek word for “master,” while giving us the English words “despot,” does not carry a negative connotation. Instead, it refers to one with absolute and unrestricted authority.

“All honor”: This translates into diligent and faithful labor for one's employer (see notes on Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-25).

“Doctrine”: The revelation of God summed up in the gospel. How believers act while under the authority of another affects how people view the message of salvation Christians proclaim (see notes on Titus 2:5-14). Displaying a proper attitude of submission and respect, and performing quality work, help make the gospel message believable (Matt. 5:48).

“Let as many servants as are under the yoke” (or, “let all those who are under the yoke as slaves”): This gives instructions to slaves of unbelieving masters, while (verse 2), instructs slaves under Christian masters. “The name of God” refers to His reputation.

"Servants", in the verse above, could have been translated slaves, as well as servants. It is the same suggestions either way. Many persons who had been slaves came to the knowledge of Christ in the early days of Christianity. Christianity has always been evident among working people and slaves.

I believe this Scripture is expressing the fact that just because a person comes to Christ, it does not free them from their other obligations. In fact, a person who has received Christ as his Savior

should do an even better job at the things he is obligated to do, because they are doing it as unto Christ. True Christianity teaches loyalty and honor.

Paul is saying that they might even win their master to Christ, if they show him it makes a difference for the better being saved. Christianity is not a crutch to be used to get a person relieved from their duties. It should make a person more productive, because of the peace and happiness it brings to the individual.

1 Timothy 6:2 "And they that have believing masters, let them not despise [them], because they are brethren; but rather do [them] service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort."

“Believing masters”: The tendency might be to assume one’s equality in Christ with a Christian master, and disdain the authority related to work roles. On the contrary, working for a Christian should produce more loyal and diligent service out of love for the brethren.

“Exhort”: Literally “to call to one’s side.” The particular emphasis here is on a strong urging, directing, and insisting on following the principles for correct behavior in the workplace.

Christianity creates equality of standing before God. Because some believing slaves felt there should also be social equality, they despised their Christian masters. Christian slaves are “not” to despise” their believing masters; “rather do them service” [but serve them all the better].

“Because they are faithful,” and so on, may be translated, “Because those who partake of this good service [the slaves’ fine work], are believers and dear to God.” The phrase “these things” refers to the contents of this epistle. Timothy is to “teach” (explain the letter’s truths to the church), and “exhort” (urge the people to comply with Paul’s instructions).

Paul is explaining that even though you are a brother in Christ with your believing master, you should still give him the respect he is due because of his position. We said before, Christianity should not be used to get you special rights and privileges. God is the one who put us in the position we are in on the earth.

Whatever place we find ourselves in, we must do the best job we can. Paul is explaining little problems that might occur. Since these things had not been mentioned earlier, he was covering as many as he could. You are not to change your station in life, because you are saved. You are to serve God where He called you.

1 Timothy 6:3 "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, [even] the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;"

Paul identifies 3 characteristics of false teachers:

(1) They “advocate a different doctrine”, a different teaching that contradicts God’s revelation in Scripture (see notes on Gal. 1:6-9);

(2) They do “not agree with sound words”, they do not accept sound, healthy teaching, specifically the teaching contained in Scripture (2 Pet. 3:16); and

(3) They reject “doctrine conforming to godliness”, teaching not based on Scripture will always result in an unholy life. Instead of godliness, false teachers will be marked by sin (see notes on 2 Peter. 10:22; Jude 4:8-16).

“Consent not” means that one does not agree with or adhere to. “Wholesome words” are teachings that are sound (correct), and promote spiritual health. “Doctrine which is according to godliness”, is doctrine that is in accord with, and leads to, godliness.

This is not a complete sentence above, but we know what it is saying, do we not? Just proclaiming yourself a Christian does not make you a Christian. A Christian is Christ-like. Jesus said, serving others should not be thought of as an obligation, but a privilege. He spoke of how the servant would be the greatest.

Matthew 23:11 "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

We must remember that the Jews who had converted to Christianity were extremely class conscious. Jesus served mankind. If we are to be like Him, we will do likewise. Paul is warning Timothy, that the Judaizers will teach a false doctrine which is caught up in class.

Verses 4-5: These verses may be rendered, “He is conceited, understanding nothing, but has a morbid interest about controversies and disputes over words, from which come envy, strife, defamation, evil suspicions, constant irritations between men. Who are morally corrupt in thinking, bereft of the truth, and who suppose that godliness is a means of financial profit.”

1 Timothy 6:4 "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,"

Questions and strifes of words”: “Questions” refers to idle speculation; “disputes about words” literally means word battles.” Because proud, ignorant false teachers do not understand divine truth (2 Cor. 2:14), they obsess over terminology and attack the reliability and authority of Scripture. Every kind of strife is mentioned to indicate that false teachers produce nothing of benefit out of their fleshly, corrupt and empty minds (verse 5).

The humble servant accepted Christianity willingly with the doctrine of serving. The converted Jews were constantly questioning the doctrine of the Christians. The law, with its class separations, had caused many to reject Jesus and His teachings, because they did not conform to what they had been taught.

This Jewish element in the Christian movement, questioning at every turn, were causing strife among the brethren. They were arguing to keep all the customs of the law. This caused problems with the new Christian converts.

1 Timothy 6:5 "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

The word translated "perverse" here, means misemployment, or meddling. My own personal belief about the Scripture above is that Paul is warning Timothy to tell the people not to use God for personal gain.

The fact that they have corrupt minds, means that they had the truth and wandered away from it, teaching that if you were where you should be with God, you would also be financially better off. They were connecting their position with God with having earthly wealth.

“Destitute of the truth”: False teachers are in a state of apostasy; that is, although they once knew and seemed to embrace the truth, they turned to openly reject it.

The Greek word for “deprived” means “to steal” or “to rob.” And its form here indicates that someone or something was pulled away from contact with the truth. It does not mean they were ever saved (see note on 1:19; 2 Tim. 2:18; 3:7-8; Heb. 6:4-6; 2 Pet. 2: 4-9).

Although most always behind all the efforts of the hypocritical, lying (4:2), false teachers is the driving motivation of monetary gain (Acts 8:18-23; 2 Pet. 2:15).

Notice the stern warning; from such withdraw thyself. Sometimes people who are godly have money. It does not mean if you have money, it is a sin. It is saying to use God to get great wealth is sin.

1 Timothy 6:6 "But godliness with contentment is great gain."

“Contentment”: This Greek word means “self-sufficiency,” and was used by Stoic philosophers to describe a person who was unflappable and unmoved by external circumstances. Christians are to be satisfied and sufficient, and not to seek for more than what God has already given them. He is the source of true contentment (2 Cor. 3:5; 9:8; Phil. 4:11-13, 19).

I love what Paul said in another Scripture about this.

Philippians 4:11-12 "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content." "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

We will find that it is not how much we have, or how well thought of we are, that makes us happy. It is our attitude toward life. If I put my faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, I should be content knowing whatever is happening to me, is for my good.

In Proverbs, we read a lot about what makes a man happy. It is not wealth or fame, it is attitude. When we have food and a place to lay our head at night, it is enough, if we have Jesus.

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

1 Timothy 6:7 "For we brought nothing into [this] world, [and it is] certain we can carry nothing out."

“And it is certain we can carry nothing out” (or, “because we are unable to carry anything out”): Man enters the world at birth possessing nothing, in order to teach him that he will exit the world in the same manner, taking nothing with him. This is a divine means of showing man that since material wealth is relatively insignificant, he should pursue the important things mentioned (in verse 11).

The only true riches are the ones we lay up in heaven. This world and the people on it are temporary tenants. It all belongs to God. We are travelling through this land on the way to our Promised Land. The world is like Egypt was for the Israelites. It is a place of dwelling that we do not own.

We come into the world naked. It is for sure we cannot take our big cars and fine homes with us to heaven. They would pale by comparison to what God has in store for us, even if you could carry them. Jesus has gone ahead and prepared a place for us. We will not need anything from this earth. He has made provision for us.

1 Timothy 6:8 "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

“Having food and raiment ... be therewith content”: The basic necessities of life are what ought to make Christians content. Paul does not condemn having possessions, as long as God graciously provides them (verse 17). He does, however, condemn a self-indulgent desire for money, which results from discontentment (see note on Matt. 6:33).

This verse prevents the wrong understanding (of verse 7), that material possessions have no place in the Christians’ life. By figure of speech “food and raiment” stand for all of life’s basic necessities. These are all the believer needs, and having these he can be “content.”

These are basic things to live on. In the 6th chapter of Matthew (beginning with the 25th verse), you will find the teachings of Jesus on this very thing. There is just one verse there that says what we must keep our mind on.

Matthew 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Our heart and mind should not be stayed on material things of this world. God will take care of that, if we will just worship and serve Him.

1 Timothy 6:9 "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and [into] many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

“They that will be rich fall into temptation”: Greedy people are compulsive, they are continually trapped in sins by their consuming desire to acquire more.

“Destruction and perdition”: Such greed may lead these people to suffer the tragic end of destruction and hell. These terms refer to the eternal punishment of the wicked.

“They that will be rich” are those whose ambition is to be rich.

Notice the key words in this: will be. In other words, he is not already rich, he wants to be rich. This means that the person has his mind stayed upon being rich. Sometimes it is a temptation to take short-cuts to get to where you want to be financially. It is not riches that send a person to hell, but the lust of riches.

This type of lust causes a person to totally disregard others to acquire their own selfish desires. It is very important to know how to deal with riches, if you find yourself in that position in life.

1 Timothy 6:17-18 "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;" "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;"

It is not a sin to be rich. It is a sin to lust to be rich.

1 Timothy 6:10 "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

“Love of money”: Literally “affection for silver.” In the context, this sin applies to false teachers specifically, but the principle is true universally. Money itself is not evil since it is a gift from God (Deut. 8:18); Paul condemns only the love of it (Matt. 6:24), which is so characteristic of false teachers (see notes on 1 Pet. 5:2; 2 Pet. 1-3, 15).

“Erred from the faith”: From the body of Christian truth. Gold has replaced God for these apostates, who have turned away from pursuing the things of God in favor of money.

“The root of all evil” means a root or source of all kinds of evil. The love for money is not the only source from which evils come. “Coveted after”, means that some have “striven after” money as the goal of life.

When you covet, you want something that does not belong to you. Notice again, the money is not the root of all evil. It is the love of money. It is our attitude toward the riches that either condemns us, or saves us.

One of the best examples of this in all the Bible, is the rich young ruler that comes to Jesus and asks what he must do to be saved. Throughout the Bible we are told that we must believe in Jesus to be saved. In this particular instance Jesus told him to go and sell what he had and give it to the poor if he wanted to be perfect.

Why was Jesus' answer different to this young man? It is simple. The man's money was his god. He went away sorrowful. He chose to keep his money over turning to God.

Anything, whether money or something else, that comes ahead of God with us, is our god. Money should not come before God. God said: Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Those who do this are lost.

1 Timothy Chapter 6 Questions

1. How is a servant to treat his master?
2. Why is he to do this?
3. What is another word that "servants" could have been translated in verse 1?
4. Because a person comes to Christ, does not free them from their _____.
5. Why should the servant do a better job after he, or she, comes to Christ?
6. When the master and the servant both are Christians, what effect should that have on their positions?
7. Why is Paul getting into all these details?
8. Proclaiming yourself a Christian does not mean you are a _____.
9. The Jews that had come to Christ were extremely _____ conscious.
10. What were the converted Jews constantly questioning?
11. What caused much of the strife in the early church?
12. Those with corrupt minds supposed what was godliness.
13. We must not use God for _____.
14. What are the only true riches?
15. The people in this world are temporary _____.
16. If we could take our big cars and our fine homes to heaven with us, what would we discover?
17. Having _____ and _____ let us be therewith content.
18. What are the key words in verse 9?

19. What is his mind stayed upon?
20. It is not riches that send a person to hell, but what?
21. What does this type of lust cause a person to do?
22. How must we deal with riches, if we find ourselves in that position?
23. For the _____ of money is the root of all evil.
24. What are you doing, when you covet?
25. What really condemns us or saves us regarding money?
26. Why did Jesus require more of the rich young ruler?
27. Did he fulfill the requirements?
28. Anything that we put ahead of God, is our _____.