

## Flee Evil and Pursue Righteousness

1 Timothy 6:9-11 ESV

Lord's Day - October 23, 2022

### Hear the Word of God from 1 Timothy 6:9-11 - ESV

<sup>9</sup> *'But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.*

<sup>10</sup> *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

<sup>11</sup> *But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. '*

We have been journeying through the series – ‘**How one ought to conduct in the household of God**’ in our study of The Living God’s Word, through the letters of Paul to Timothy.

[Theme] The Gospel of Jesus Christ draws a sinner to believe in him unto salvation and eternal life. This conversion will result in a **practical and visible change in the lives of those who believe it**.

That **the true gospel**, in contrast to false teaching, **will always lead to godliness that results in orderliness in all those who adhere to it**.

One of the key evidences in the lives of those, effected (effectual calling) by the gospel is **sincere faith**, that enables to live a practical living in their homes, in the Living Gods church and is seen in the communities. Namely

#### 1) Visible demonstrable devotion (2) Visible practical living (3) Visible practical conduct

Recap from last week, as we heard from Bro. Raj

- False teachers, *because they are of depraved minds and deprived of the truth, imagine godliness is a means of gain*
- Paul clarifies, that’s not true; but **godliness with contentment is great gain**
- And gives us the definition of what it means to be content, saying v7, 8 – “*For we bought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing with these, we will be content*”

Paul is **not** defining contentment with maximum necessary, but the minimum.

How can you develop contentment? A few practical disciplines to be content:

1. **Reliance on God’s sufficiency:** By recognizing and relying on God’s presence with us, always and during every circumstance and situation and challenge and infirmity and loss
  - a. *Philippians 4:11-13 – I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content*
  - b. *2 Corinthians 12:6-10 – Though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me (This is contentment too). So to keep me from being conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*
  - c. *Hebrews 13:5 – Your conduct must be free from the love of money, and you must be content with what you have, for he said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you”*

Are you relying on God or your wealth, career, or even some other person? Relying on anything or anyone other than God will result in discontentment because they cannot satisfy.

2. **Trust in God's Sovereignty** – God works out all things according to his will, for his own glory and for our good
  - a. *Ephesians 1:11 – God works all things according to the counsel of his will*
  - b. *Romans 8:28 – God works all things for our good, for those who are called according to his purpose*
  - c. *Job trusted in God's sovereignty 1:21 – “Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked will I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD”*

In whatever situation or challenge you are facing or going through – Are you trusting in God's Sovereignty? If not, you will be discontent. Believe God is in control of all things and working it all for your good.

3. **Learn to give thanks** – Be grateful to God at all times. *1 Thessalonians 5:18 – “Give thanks in all circumstances”*. When you are going through struggles or challenges, do you often grumble/complain/curse/exhibit anger? If so, your discontentment grows. However, you must cultivate *to give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus*.

By disciplining to rely on God, trusting in his Sovereignty, and giving him thanks, we will be content.

Note: How do one distinguish between sound teaching and false teaching?

- Sound doctrine is important because what we believe affects what we do. Bobby Jamieson in his book ‘Sound Doctrine: How a church grows in the Love and Holiness of God’, defines “Teaching that is consistent through the scriptures”
- Sound doctrine is always in accords with Jesus words/teaching, apostolic teaching (Paul and other apostles have been teaching) and leads to holiness / godliness.
- Sound Doctrine is not some new secret teaching that no one has ever heard of before. It's the same story that Jesus preached. It's the same truth that the apostles preached and were martyred. It's in accord with the faithful teaching of the word that the Christian church had been nourished on from the very beginning.
- False teaching does lead to speculation, to divisive arguments, it puffs up with conceit, craves controversy, produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth
- Sound teaching produces transformation by the renewal of your mind and not to conform to this world, to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual worship

Now Paul contrasts with those who are \*not\* content from v9

<sup>9</sup>*But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.*

<sup>10</sup>*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

Money in and of itself is neither good nor bad. We use the term adiaphorous which means, morally neutral. Money can be used for much good and it can be used for evil. If you are not careful it can destroy you and your family.

Paul is highlighting the ‘desire’ again (but not in the same sense as he uses this word ‘desire’ in *1 Timothy 3:1* - *to aspire to the office of the overseer which is a noble task*), but Paul is implying here

- The desire ‘to be rich’ is not a godly desire (implying it’s not a noble task)
- The desire ‘to be rich’ is not a by-product of pursuing holiness / godliness
- The desire ‘to be rich’ reveals themselves (and others) to be unbelievers
- The desire to be rich is so contrary to the one who professes to be a believer

DESIRE – wish, want, fancy about, inclination, aspiration, preference, yearning, longing, craving, thirst for, itch, burning, eagerness, enthusiasm, determination, proclivity, bent on, predisposition

Paul is warning Timothy about the dangers that comes with the desire to be rich – love of money, which translates to “affection for silver”. Understanding the hidden dangers of this desire/love (craving, wantonness, lust, passion, drive, appetite) for money, will help keep Timothy and us, away from (flee) following the path of false teachers who pursue godliness as a means of gain.

Three observations from verses 9 and 10. 3-D’s

### **Observation1 – The Desire**

- Wealth has captivated their affections ( “*want to get rich*” and “*love of money*”).

<sup>9</sup>“*But those who desire to be rich...*”. They want to get rich apart from Christ. They fail to see Him as the source of true riches. Jesus said, in *Matthew 6:21* – “*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*”.

The example of rich young ruler in *Mark 10:17-22* - “... *a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*”

Here we see this young ruler had made all right advances towards Christ,

- He came running
- He came openly (not privately like Nicodemus)
- He knelt before Jesus (sign of reverence and respect)
- He sought eternal life (seeking life).

but we know he went away without receiving what he was seeking, because his wealth was his treasure. Reading further down, *Mark 10:21-22* – *And Jesus, looking at him, and loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me.” Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

The ‘desire to be rich’ has arrested their consciences. At this point their consciences are seared as with hot iron, having lost their sensitivity. They start envisioning and imagining everything through the lens of this ‘desire to be rich’.

The ‘desire to be rich’, entraps and entices them, they become captive to their own desire – to be rich. It controls and steers their lives, constantly seeking new ways to make money.

The word ‘fall’ literally means ‘to be entrapped’ and figuratively ‘to be overwhelmed’, meaning the one who falls cannot rescue himself. The desire to be rich (to gain more wealth) causes people to continually fall into temptations, into snare that entrap them and into many senseless harmful desires.

### **Observation2 – The Deception**

- The love of money will lead a man away from God (“*wandered away*”)

<sup>10</sup>*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

The love of money is the root of those who desire to be rich. It is to say it lies beneath the surface and fosters/nourishes any number of other ungodly tasks. Since the 'love of money' is at the root level, that is beneath the surface, the desire to be rich must be a deliberate, conscious decision that is thought through. Your heart and mind were involved in making the decision to pursue the ungodly task.

The best example would be how Eve in the garden of Eden thought through during the process of being tempted. Genesis 3:6 – *“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.”*

For the love and desire to be wealthy, may be due to a lack of contentment, due to not understanding the purpose of pursuing holiness, or not having the eternity in view. It might be due to *“the lust of flesh, lust of eyes, and the boastful pride of life”* – 1 John 2:16.

Remember, the 'desire to be rich' and 'the love of money' is not a godly desire and so it has to be of the flesh, earthly and worldly. If so, it is sinful, and it is sin. And because this sin is at the root level, it bears fruit, sinful fruit. And that is what we read further in verse 10 – *“For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”* The sin of the love of money has the potential to lead a man away from God and away from the faith, and into the world.

“Demas, loves the things of this life, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica” - 2 Timothy 4:10 (NLT). Jesus said in Luke 9:23 – *“If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me”*.

When you come to faith to the cross of Christ, you begin a lifelong process of dying to self, die to self- love. Do you realize this?

You allow the spirit of God in the light of his word to constantly purge the sin within you, to be cleansed and to be renewed by dying to self, dying to pride, and dying to the filth of this life, daily and live in submission to Jesus, as the Lord of your life.

And when you sin against God, you confess it and surrender to God, and when you sin against another person, you seek their forgiveness and learn to love them as God commands.

Has this been your discipline (dying to self, dying to the ungodly desires) and routine in your life after conversion?

The first is **the desire** to be rich. If we don't kill the desire every time it arises, it leads to **the deception** of the riches. The deception leads to

### **Observation3 – The Destruction**

- The love of money will cause them much grief (*“fall”, “plunge”, “ruin and destruction”*), *“pierced with many pangs”*)

<sup>9</sup>*But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.*

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The word ‘plunge’ is used in *Luke 5:7b* – “*And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink*”. A boat can stay afloat in calm seas, but when it starts sinking, no one can do anything to stop the sinking, it only stops sinking when it reaches the bottom of the sea or ocean floor.

A person pursuing riches can go along looking fine, but he isn’t prepared for a crisis. He hasn’t been living each day relying and depending on God, by trusting in him and obeying him, so when he is visited by a calamity, he has nowhere to turn. He goes down and he takes his family down as well. The fall will be so bad than where he was when he first started on this ungodly path/desire to be rich/love of the money. This plunge results in ruin and destruction and causes them much grief. Paul says, pierced themselves with many pangs.

Jesus in his teaching of the parable of Sower, talked about the seed that fell on thorny ground. The thorns grew up with the seed, and eventually choked it out. Jesus explains “*they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.*” – *Luke 8:14*. And we understand from the parable, the only seed that represents saving faith is that “*those who, hearing the Word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience/perseverance*” – *Luke 8:15*. The seed that fell on the rocky ground and that on the thorny ground made a profession of faith, but time proved it to be a superficial claim, because they could not withstand “*in the time of testing and fall away*” – *Luke 8:13*.

In other words, whose faith is genuine they will persevere. Those whose faith is an empty profession will claim to believe in Jesus, but their lives prove differently. As Paul describes them in *Titus 1:16* – “*They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.*”

When Satan sets his trap of pursuing riches, a person born of God will resist and flee, seeing it for what it is. That leads us to Verse 11

<sup>11</sup>*But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.*

A Man (and women) of God, will flee worldliness and will pursue godliness. The word ‘Flee’ means keep away, escape, runaway from danger to safety. It’s like, turn around and run away to safety, don’t look back, don’t think just runaway.

The man of God is identified here by what he flees. The man of God must not pursue the things he must flee from. One might think that Paul does says to ‘Stand firm’ or ‘fight’.

Scripture tells us to “*stand firm against the attacks of the devil*” – *Ephesians 6:11* and to “*resist the devil*” – *James 4:7*, but Paul here says to ‘flee’. This should tell us that there are things that a man of God must wisely flee.

In the context here it has to do with the evil kinds associated with “*the love of the money is the root of all kinds of evils*” – *1 Timothy 6:10*. However, the need to flee sin is taught throughout the Scriptures. Believers are called to flee from

- “Sexual immorality” – *1 Corinthians 6:18*
- “Idolatry” – *1 Corinthians 10:14*, and
- “Youthful lusts” – *2 Timothy 2:22*. Like Joseph fleeing Potiphar’s wife, the man of God should run when it comes to sin. It has the ability to cause to desire, to deceive, and lead to destruction.

The word ‘flee’ comes from Greek word ‘**Pheugo**’, from which we get the English word ‘fugitive’. A fugitive is always on the run from his captor. It’s this idea behind a man of God fleeing from ungodly tasks, fleeing from sin, because he knows sin has the ability to trap, to deceive and to destroy.

A man and women of God must flee from everything and anything that is ungodly. It could be ungodly language, ungodly entertainment, ungodly relationships and friendships, ungodly celebrations, ungodly unions, etc. Paul in *Ephesians chapter 2:3* – “among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind” and again in *chapter 5:3* - “Sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness, nor foolish talk, nor crude joking”.

O man of God and O women of God, are you fleeing from those which are ungodly and unholy?

As we flee from ungodly and unholy worldly things, we must, as Paul writes, “pursue righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, steadfastness (endurance), and gentleness.”

The man of God is known not only by what he flees from, but also by what he pursues. Paul lists out six godly character traits in this context, that the man of God must pursue. The Greek word for pursue is ‘**Dioko**’ and its often translated as ‘persecute’, ‘to suffer’, ‘to press on’ even when it’s tough and challenging. It’s the idea of the saying ‘when the going gets tough, the tough gets going’. Continue, press on, hold on, endure, suffer for the cause, stay through the course, etc. Paul is saying the character doesn’t happen overnight, but one must continually work at it, daily and for the rest of your life.

*Proverbs 24:16* – “For the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity”.

The man and women of God is in constant pursue of these things:

1. **Righteousness:** This does not refer to the imputed righteousness of Christ covered on us as robes, when we trusted in Christ as savior, but our outward living from the point of conversion. Believers are to pursue to live a life of righteousness, integrity, uprightness, to do good works as we were made to be in the first place. Paul in *Ephesians 2:10* – “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”. This also includes, not being slothful in zeal, being fervent in spirit, serve the Lord, rejoice in hope, patient in tribulation, seeking to show hospitality, contribute to the needs of the saints, serving and loving and forgiving one another, discipling fellow believers etc. Remember the wonderful words of Jesus Christ “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be satisfied.” – *Matthew 5:6*
2. **Godliness:** means Godlikeness. This is one such subject you will never exhaust preaching and teaching on it. Godliness, is reflecting God in everything, living a pious life, holy life, godly life, sanctified life. Godliness is having the fear of the Lord. **Godliness is loving God and living in**

**the reverential awe (fear) of God.** You fear God and so you only love him, you only think about God than about what other people think, when faced with choices. The world offers many pleasures, if we only cease to fear God, but the believers response must be like Joseph's.

- *Genesis 39:9 – “How can I commit this great wickedness and sin against God?”*
  - *Nehemiah 5:15 – “But I did not do so, because of the fear of God”.*
  - *Acts 9:31 – “and walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, the church multiplied”.*
  - *Acts 10:2 – about Cornelius “A devout man who feared God”*
3. **Faith:** Live a faithful life, trust in God at all times, be firmly planted in the Word. *Hebrews 3:5 – “Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant”.* *Luke 16:10 – “One who is faithful in very little ...”.* Serve God faithfully and as a humble servant. Let your dependance be on God, always and all your life. Remind yourselves, that you cannot do anything on your own strength, because we are prone to wander away. Rely on God who is your strength, and who sustains you and God who is the Shepherd who guides you with his skillful hand.
  4. **Love:** We have a wrong notion that love just flows effortlessly, it just happens, no need to work at it. But that's not true of biblical love – agape love. Jesus tells us not only to love your neighbors, but also love your enemies. This love takes work and sacrifice, calls us to die to self. Paul describes it better for us in *1 Corinthians 13:4-13 verses*
  5. **Steadfastness:** Persevere, endure, steadfast, meaning ‘bearing up under difficult circumstances’. The only way we can persevere/endure/strive during trails and challenges and loss is by trusting in God daily and hoping in the promise of His coming and the blessings we will enjoy throughout eternity. But when going through trials we tend to complain and cry out for help to get out of the situation prematurely, but we must rather commit to God and wait for his timing to bring us out. Believers are to keep on going, no matter what.
  6. **Gentleness:** Ability to handle a difficult situation gently. Our response in dealing with difficult people. Instead of responding in anger or impatiently, the man of God responds in a gentle manner. There is no one better at it than our Lord Jesus himself. We know how gentle, patient, enduring, loving, and steadfast he was in his life and more so when he was crucified. *Isaiah 53:7 - ‘He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth’.* Gentleness is an attribute of Jesus. *Matthew 11:29 – “For I am gentle and lowly in heart”*

Let us Pray.

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**Discipleship Questions**

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**SERMON TITLE:** Flee Evil and Pursue Righteousness – 1 Timothy 6:9-11 ESV

**HEAD:** These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. In the light of Sunday's sermon, who is Paul addressing when he says, "*those who desire to be rich*" and "*as for you, O man of God*"? 1 Timothy 6:9, 11. What does Paul mean by the "*desire to be rich*"? Proverbs 15:27, 28:20

**HEART:** These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. What are the dangers of pursuing the '*desire to be rich*' and '*love of money*'? 1 Timothy 6:9, 10, Mark 10:17-22, 2 Timothy 4:10, Matthew 26:15
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

**HANDS/HABITS:** These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. In light of the six-character traits that Paul lists for us to pursue in 1 Timothy 6:11, as a child of God and servant of Christ (whom we must follow), how would you plan to cultivate/discipline in your individual life, relational life and communal life?