

1 Timothy 6:1-10 • The teaching that accords with godliness

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We're in 1 Timothy chapter 6, 1 Timothy chapter 6. And we're going to take the first 10 verses this morning and then probably finish up 1 Timothy the week after that. I'm going to read through the first 10 verses. I'm reading through the ESV, so follow along with me as I do. It says,

“¹Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. ²Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these things. ³If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, ⁴he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. ⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹But 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. ¹⁰For 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.”

Stop there, let's pray. Father, thank You for giving us this opportunity today, to get into Your Word. And Lord, as we go through these verses, we just are asking that You would speak to our hearts as You do so beautifully. We thank You, God, that Your Holy Spirit knows each one of us personally, intimately, and You know, Lord, best how to speak to each person according to their area of greatest need. So, we ask You to do that Father, to minister Your Word to us. In the name of Jesus, our Savior, amen. Amen.

As we get into this last chapter, 1st Timothy chapter 6, you'll notice that Paul is kind of giving Timothy, young Timothy, just a list of instructions that he is, of course, to pass along to the church. And you might notice as we read through

this chapter that not everything sounds tremendously spiritual. There's a lot of just really, practical stuff that Paul is kind of laying out here, dealing with life and a growing fellowship. There are always issues, you know, and things that you have to address in the life of a church. But you know, I find that the Bible is very practical. It addresses life on a very practical level, and we need to do that. And that's not to say that I don't enjoy some of the other, well, shall we say, less practical aspects of the Bible.

You know, I think about a large part of like, the book of Revelation. I like that book, I've taught through it several times, and I've enjoyed teaching through Revelation. The first few chapters are extremely practical. And then you get into a lot of prophetic stuff that talks about, you know, the specifics of the coming of the Lord. We go through the tribulation period, the pouring out of wrath, and some of those things.

And those are good things to know, and we ought to know what they say, but it's not going to help a husband be a better husband necessarily, you know, it's not going to help a wife be a better wife, or whatever your need may be. And so, I appreciate the fact that much of what the Bible has to say is very practical.

And the first thing that the apostle Paul mentions here, as we get into chapter 6, has to do with those who labor. And it has to do with whether they are laboring under the... see, we don't have... we don't call bosses masters today, and I'll talk about why they did, but it's talking about whether you work for a believer or an unbeliever. If you work for a believer, that's wonderful, if you work for an unbeliever, it can be very challenging. But either way Paul says, "¹*Let all (first of all) who are under a yoke as bondservants ...*" That's what it says in verse 1. By the way, if you have an NIV that you're reading, your Bible says, "*All who are under the yoke of slavery...*" Now, "bondservants" is the more accurate rendering of that, as far as the Scripture goes.

And, you know, I want you to be careful that when you think about slavery, when you hear the word "masters" and "slaves," I want you to be careful here, because we've made the point several times that that kind of relationship, of master and slave, was very common in that day in the Middle East. And honestly, it was used mostly for the paying back of debt or working off a debt.

If you got into debt rather than the bank coming after you and some debt, you know, sort of a person harassing you on the phone, the person to whom you owed the debt had the right to sell you in order to pay back the debt. And then you'd work off that debt with the person who purchased you. And so, that was often what the master-slave relationship was all about. Not always, but often.

So, what that means is that, when you see the word “slave” or “master” in the Bible, you can’t necessarily compare it with slavery as it was characterized here, in the United States of America, which, you know, was a very negative time in our history, and of course, carries a very negative connotation with pretty much everyone.

It’s interesting though, you know, when people see the word “slave” or “master” in the Bible, that doesn’t stop them from getting all lathered up about it. And often people who have kind of a trigger in the area of that issue of master-slave will tend to do a couple of things. First of all, they will accuse God’s Word of promoting slavery. It does not. Secondly, they will criticize men like the apostle Paul for not speaking out harshly against slavery and condemning it in the strongest possible terms. And, you know what? Paul doesn’t condemn slavery. Not because he didn’t think it was a bad thing or a good thing or whatever he thought, he didn’t do it because it wasn’t his calling.

And that’s hard for some people to understand, especially people who are passionate about certain causes. And I get it, if you’re passionate about that, you know, I get it. But a lot of people will get very passionate about things and then they’ll say, why doesn’t the Bible address this? That’s because it wasn’t the focal point of what they were trying to accomplish. It’s kind of like asking why your cookbook doesn’t give you instructions on how to change the oil in your pickup. That’s not the point of the cookbook, you see.

Paul had a very specific purpose. He was the apostle to the Gentiles. He was to share Jesus Christ, he was to build up the kingdom of God, start churches, and then move on down the road. And he focused himself on his ministry like a laser beam. And God did not call the Apostle Paul to deal with political corruption and social injustice. It doesn’t mean he didn’t care about it. I assume he probably did. He dealt with the people who were being affected by those things, but that wasn’t his calling! Okay?

This is something that people really need to get through their hearts and minds because there’s a huge criticism that is often levied against the Bible. Why doesn’t it talk about..., why doesn’t it talk about..., why doesn’t it condemn? And it’s not the point, it’s not the point! The point is to show you the way to be saved, right? Not to speak about and condemn social injustice.

Anyway, so there you go. When Paul did talk about people who were involved in slavery, whether they were masters or slaves, his desire was to encourage them to walk with Jesus. Whatever you are, whatever you do, whatever position in life you have, I want you to walk with the Lord. That was Paul’s focus, okay?

Let me show you how he said it to the Corinthians. He wrote to the Corinthians in chapter 7, 1 Corinthians. And said,

1 Corinthians 7:20-23 (ESV)

Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men.

“Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. (And then he begins to ask the question,) ²¹ Were you a bondservant when (you were) called? (And that word can be translated “slave”. He says,) Do not be concerned about it. (Now, he says parenthetically, “Hey, listen”) (But if you can gain your freedom, (“by all means do it, I mean”) avail yourself of the opportunity.) ²² For (look at this) he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant (in other words, if you were a slave when you became a Christian, you’re actually a freedman of the Lord) is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called (into a relationship with Jesus Christ) is a bondservant of Christ. ²³ You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men.”

You were bought with a price, “...do not become bondservants of men” because you now, you know, you belong to the Lord. So, that’s the whole point. The whole point is; whatever you are, whatever you’re doing, whatever station of life the Lord has you in, walk with Jesus. Right?

So, once again, the message of verse 1 is, “Let all who are under a yoke (of slavery or as a bondservant, let him) regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, (and the reason he says this, he explains in the end of that verse,) so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.”

Do you get what he’s saying? Let’s put this in the picture today of you having a boss. He’s saying, hey listen, let all those who are in submission under a boss at work, particularly those who are unbelievers, you ought to regard your boss with the proper honor and respect. Here’s why, so that the Word of God might not be reviled, or I’ll put it in more modern kind of crude terms, dragged through the mud.

And this is a reminder to you and me that how you behave as a Christian in the workplace directly connects your Christianity with your behavior. And we forget this sometimes. You may be the only insight into what it is to be a

Christian that somebody ever sees. And how they see you, what they hear you doing, how they see you responding to challenges, back talk, all the other junk that can go on in the workplace, and I don't have to elaborate on those things.

How they see you respond is critical. And it's going to either cast Christianity in a favorable or a negative light, frankly. So many times we forget that people's views are shaped by us, we who claim to belong to the Lord, you know.

So, Paul says in verse 2, "*Those who have believing masters* (and for our purpose, we are going to say believing bosses) *must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers;*" In other words, yes, you are equal in Christ with your boss, but in the workplace, they're still worthy of respect, they're still worthy of honor. In fact, Paul goes on to say there, in verse 2, you really ought to serve them with all your heart because the one, the person who is benefiting is a beloved brother or sister in Christ, whoever your boss may be. So, he says, give that person respect and bless them.

And now, as we get into verse 3, Paul begins to do what is very common in his letters, he warns young Timothy about those who are propagating false doctrines. And he says, "*If anyone teaches a different doctrine* (those two words "different doctrine" in the Greek are one word, and it literally means "strange teaching." In other words, things that are not part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He says "If anyone does that, and they don't agree with the sound ministry,") *and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness,* (at the end of verse 3, he goes on to say, in verse 4, that person is just) *⁴he is puffed up with conceit* (is another way of saying they're just filled with pride. And really he says,) *and understands nothing.* (And then Paul begins to describe the character of the kind of people he has seen do this sort of a thing. He says,) *He has an unhealthy* (interest or) *craving* (rather) *for controversy*"

Have you ever met somebody that's kind of like that? That gravitates towards controversy? And everything that they talk about is just drama-filled. Did you hear about this...and I heard..., and you just kind of want to say, give it a rest, you exhaust me, you know, all this talk about controversy. Well, there can be such a thing as an unhealthy craving for controversy.

He says, "*and for quarrels about words,* (They talk about words, "Did you know what that word means? And this and that." But they quarrel about it in such a way that Paul says,) *which produce envy, dissension,* (and even turns to) *slander,* (along with) *evil suspicions,* *⁵and constant friction among people who* (he says) *are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining* (and this is

very interesting, this last characteristic, “*imagining*”) *that godliness is a means of (making money. And that’s what it means by) gain.*”

They think that godliness is a means of making money. And Paul’s going to focus here, on money and the trap that money can be. But first, he says in verse 6, and this is important. I’m sure you’ve heard this before, “*But godliness with contentment is great gain,*” So, godliness or the desire to be Christ-like and contentment, which is, I’m good. I’m good. I’m good. Got what I need. And that’s hard, isn’t it? We all struggle with contentment. I’m willing to say that. I know I do. He says, “*But godliness with contentment is great gain.* (And then he reminds us,) *’for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.* (Right?) ⁸ *But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.*”

Now, I think I probably should stop here, and ask the question. Will we? Will we be content? Because he’s kind of talking for all of us here, right? He says, “*...if we have food and clothing, ... we will be content.*” Are you content? Because sometimes I see some really pretty motorcycles going by, and I’m thinking, I want that, or something else. Yeah, it’s hard. Contentment is a challenge, you know?

So, we have to kind of ask ourselves the question, is this me? Now, even if it isn’t you when we read a statement like this, where Paul says, “*...godliness with contentment is great gain.*” And if we have food and clothing, that’s good, that’ll be enough. Even if that doesn’t necessarily represent you right now, through the virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit that a believer has, we read that kind of a passage and we say, well, it ought to be true. I mean, you know what I’m saying? Even if it’s not personally true to me, and I recognize that I strive after and want other things, I realize when I read this verse that that ought to be my understanding or my desire and that sort of thing.

And sometimes we’re convicted, aren’t we? That the influence of the world has kind of made its way into our lives, especially when you drive by the lottery sign and it says, oh boy, 342 million dollars. Ooh! What I could do with that! No, Lord, I just want to be content, right?

Now, what we find in the next two verses is just kind of one of the many warnings related to money in the Bible and the potential danger that the love of money can bring. Verse 9, he tells us that, “*But those who desire to be rich* (speaking of the lottery, tend to) *fall into temptation(s), (and) into a snare,* (and he describes this as) *into many senseless and harmful desires that* (ends up plunging) *plunge people into ruin and destruction.* (And then he makes this

statement that I'm sure you've heard before.) ¹⁰*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.*" And it can have some very devastating effects including people actually walking away from Jesus. Can you imagine? Can you imagine somebody walking away from the Lord because of the love of money? Good grief, it's crazy.

Now, you might have heard that verse, verse 10, "*For the love of money is the root of all evil.*" That's actually not what it says, is it? It says, "...*the love of money is a root.*" Let me show you. Despite what Google even may try to convince you of, this is a screenshot of my word processor.

9 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.

10 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.

Notice on the verse 10, on the bottom, it says, "for the love of money." That's what the ESV says is a root, but it kind of put a little squiggly line in there going, wait a minute, and then it says, don't you mean the root? It's like, Google, leave the Bible alone. The Bible knows what it's talking about, all right? Don't make suggestions. You can't improve on the Bible. No, it is not the root of all evil, we know that. There are many other roots. There are many other things that can draw us into evil, but it is a root.

Now, you know, what's interesting about that, and this is just a little Greek lesson, and I won't charge you for it, but the word "the," if you guys remember your grammar, is the definite article. The word "a" is the indefinite article. So, yeah, the word "the" does not appear in that passage. It doesn't say that money is the root of all evil. But neither does it say money is a root because the indefinite article doesn't exist in the Greek. So, the English translators put it in there because the definite article was missing and the only thing that's really left to make it make sense to an English-speaking audience is by putting the indefinite article in there. But they also know from experience that there are many other things that can draw us into evil, right, beyond money. I mean, sexual pleasure and well, you know, we could name all kinds of things, right?

That have nothing to do with money. So, we know that money is a root of all kinds of evil.

So, what are we saying? Are we saying that money is evil? No, money isn't evil. It can be a root of all kinds of evil, but the evil is in us. Let's make no mistake about it. That's where the issue exists. And would you be surprised to learn that some people are not tempted by money? Not everybody, but there are some really strange people who are not tempted by money. You could drop a million dollars in twenties on the floor, right in front of them, and they could go, oh, so that's what a million bucks looks like, and walk away. Completely untempted by all that money.

Anyway, so it's not an issue for everyone, but it's an issue and it can be a problem. And the reason it becomes a major problem is that when you desire it, and that's what Paul's talking about, when you desire and want to get rich, it literally becomes your master. Speaking of masters and slaves, as we were earlier, it can become your master. And you know what? Jesus taught us, let me put it on the screen, Matthew 6, He said,

Matthew 6:24 (ESV)

"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

No one can serve two masters. It's just one of those simple rules. You're either going to hate one and love the other, or you're going to be devoted to the other, and you're going to despise the other one. You cannot serve two masters, both God and money. It's just not possible. So, you can't have a divided heart as it relates to money and God. And when we crave money, it opens up all kinds of just really rotten things, as Paul says, even to the point of people wandering from the faith. Oh, how terrible.

You know, there's a wonderful proverb, I love this proverb. Let me show you this, Proverbs chapter 30. This is a prayer, maybe you've seen this before.

Proverbs 30:8-9 (NIV)

...give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Ain't that great? That's just that prayer of contentment. Lord, I don't want too much, but I don't want too little. If I have too much, I'm going to forget You.

Who's God? I don't need God. If I have too little, I might be tempted to take what's not mine. And then I'm just going to dishonor who You are and I don't want to do that.

So, money's kind of a big deal, isn't it? Before we close this morning, though, I want to go back, and I want to call your attention to a phrase that the Apostle Paul used in one of the earlier verses. It was in verse 3, but I'm going to put it on the screen for you so we can all see it together, depending on the fact that you might have another translation. Paul said in chapter...I've highlighted obviously,

1 Timothy 6:3 (ESV)

If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness...

I have to tell you something. When I was preparing my notes to teach this, that phrase just jumped off the page at me. "*the teaching that accords with godliness.*" And it struck me because it's kind of a bold claim. It's a claim, essentially, that God's Word is not only consistent with a godly life, it actually produces a godly life. Did you hear me? God's Word, when you ingest it, and I mean really ingest it, not just toy with it, it'll change your life. It will change your life.

And I read that phrase, and it jumped out at me because a few weeks ago, a couple, probably a couple weeks ago, I got a note from a gal who does not attend our fellowship, at least not physically. She lives in another state here in the U.S. But she wrote me a note that I consider to be very, very encouraging. And I want to share it with you because what she does in this note is she shares the impact that God's Word has had on her life. And so, if I may, this is that note without any names.

Pastor Paul, I wanted to share my testimony of how Jesus Christ changed my life. First, let me say that 99% of who I am today in Christ has been from reading my Bible as I go through your online Bible teaching starting in Exodus, and I've made my way up to 1 Thessalonians. (That's quite a bit of a chunk of the Bible. She says) I'm hoping to catch up to your live sessions in Timothy soon. This is who I was before Christ, and may I say I have never shared this before, but I don't mind doing so now. Number one, I was a liar. I lied every day. And not because I had to, but because I wanted to. Number two, I was a gambler. Three to four times a week, as recently as early 2020 and then before. Three, I was a worshiper of money, cars, houses, clothes, shoes, all the material things that the world runs after. Four, I was an adulteress for 20 years. I was

bulimic for 20 plus years. I was a thief in the sense that I lied to get insurance money and bought stolen goods for cheap. In the end, (she says) it's all stealing. Number seven, I was a drunk. I drank heavily the past few years. Eight, because of vanity, I've got plastic surgery twice. Nine, I was often depressed with suicidal thoughts. My journey toward Christ began when I was 15 years old. At that time, through Catholicism. My brother, who was 36 at the time and had become a born again Christian, handed me a Bible and I remember reading it all the way to the book of Kings and about King Solomon.

I thought if I asked God for wisdom like Solomon did, perhaps He would make me wealthy. I didn't understand at the time the wonderful riches of God's knowledge and Word, which have nothing to do with earthly things. I had remembered reading that we need to confess our sins. So, I walked to the Catholic church, nervous and fearful. I cried the day before because I was so sorry for everything I had done. So, there I was finally confessing to the priest. And all he said was to pray five rosaries and go home. I remember being very discouraged.

So, fast forward to a couple of years ago, I began to hear the Lord's voice to draw near to Him, and I would for a short time, but then I would go back into the world. That was my life in and out of the kingdom of God. I thought I was a Christian because I went to a Christian church, read my Bible once in a while, not that I understood any of it, or because I believed in Jesus. I didn't understand what Christianity was at all. All I knew is that I couldn't be a Catholic.

Where the change really began was in 2020 when COVID hit. That was when I began to seek and knock, and I found Jesus. He opened the door. My veil was removed, and I began to see and hear. As I began with your online teachings, I was understanding and comprehending. It was the most amazing feeling and experience there is, and it didn't stop there.

I changed. I tried to change myself for years and years, but nothing worked. But through Jesus, giving myself to Him, including all my ugliness, He changed me. I had never gone one full week walking with the Lord on my own. And today, I have walked with Jesus for one and a half years, all thanks to Him. All of the things that used to define me are gone.

I've heard you say countless times that we can't do anything on our own. It is only through Jesus. As repetitive as that was, I'm glad you said it over and over. Because it took me a while to get it, then to receive it, and then to embrace it.

So, this is what I am today in Christ. Number one, I have accepted Jesus as my only Savior, God in human flesh. Two, I am a new creation washed and made righteous before the Father through the blood of Jesus Christ, none of which is my doing. Three, I believe everything written in the Word of God, the Bible. Four, I no longer fear the death of the body. Five, I cheerfully await His return for His bride. Six, I no longer strive to attain to worldly things, but rather desire those things of the kingdom of God. Seven, I look at everything, including people, with different eyes, eyes of compassion and love. Eight, like David, I ask God to search my heart to change me. Nine, I want to please God in Him alone, not man, just God. I was bought with a price. And number ten, lastly, I can hear the voice of God. I hear the conviction of His Holy Spirit.

This last statement is for you, Pastor Paul. You know after watching, and I might say trying to gulp down God's Word, I have carefully listened to you. This is what I noticed in all my years of going to church or hearing pastors, priests, or whatever. The best I've seen out there is someone exalting God for doing miracles and wonders or how God speaks to them but, although they exalt God, there's something prideful that I detect that God is working through them. I used to look at them and say, wow, they must really love God since He talks to them, performs miracles through them, etc. But here's Pastor Paul from Calvary Chapel, Ontario, teaching verse by verse, chapter by chapter, and all he can talk about is his weakness.

At first, I thought to myself, how can he teach God's Word if he's weak just like me? I laugh at that thought now. But then I understood. I finally felt free to pray, free to reach out to God, free to call Him Father, free to ask Jesus for help, knowing He hears me, knowing that we all share in the same sinful nature, knowing that we will never be perfect this side of heaven, and knowing that living a life of holiness is a lifelong journey, those things have made the difference in whom I am today in Christ.

Thank you, Jesus, for allowing my heart to see these things through the teaching of your Word. Receive this as an encouragement concerning the fruit of your work and remember that each day you get up to teach the Word, there's a hungry heart waiting to hear the Truth. Grace and peace be with you and your family and Calvary Chapel, Ontario.

Let's stand together. And can I just clarify, the reason you hear me talking a lot about the fact that I am weak it's because I am weak. I need Jesus every single day, just like you, to walk with Him, to be faithful to Him, to love Him. And I need to be in the Word. People ask me sometimes, why do you think God called you to be a pastor? It's for me. It's for me. He did it because I would be

spinning off into the outer limits without Him, without His Word daily. I know it. We all need his Word, amen?

Father, thank You so much. Thank You for the reminders from the Scripture. Thank You, Lord God, for teaching us every single time we delve into the Word of God. And, Lord, thank You for the beautiful testimony that the sister sent in, just this reminder that when we consume the Word of God and we're passionate about growing and learning and knowing what Your Word has to say, Lord, you'll do the changing, you'll do the transforming. And we will be transformed into the image of your Son. We thank You, Father, for the rich blessing of knowing You and Your Truth. And we ask You to continue to fill us with Your Spirit. In Jesus name we pray, and all God's people said together, amen.

God bless.