

Studies in 1 Timothy-06 1 Timothy-6

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of a Christian's attitude towards slavery, the proper balance between godliness and wealth, and the need to prioritize righteousness, godliness, faith, love, and patience.

Duration: 36:40

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:17

Topics: "Wealth Management", "Faith And Works"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher starts off by telling a story about someone who tried to acquire as much land as possible but ended up going too far and had to rush back. The preacher then transitions to the topic of wealth and warns against being consumed by the desire to accumulate material possessions. He quotes from the Bible, specifically from the book of Timothy, urging those who are rich to not be arrogant or put their trust in uncertain riches, but rather to trust in God who provides all things abundantly. The preacher emphasizes the importance of doing good works and laying up a foundation for eternal life.

Transcript

1 Timothy chapter 6, beginning with verse 1. But as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. 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 benefits. These things teach and exhort.

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, he is proud, knowing nothing but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth. Supposing that gain is godliness, from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be there with contentment. For 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.

For the love of money is really a root of all evil, which, while some covet it after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith.

Lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his time he shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, 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, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoid profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace thee with thee.

Amen. We mentioned this morning that the first two verses properly belong with the previous chapter. In the previous chapter, the Apostle Paul has been giving some instructions to Timothy concerning his relationship to members of the family of God that we've been singing about then.

And we talked about older people and younger people, about male and female, about the care of widows in the assembly, about the elders in the assembly, and now he comes to the subject of slaves. The expression, servants under the yoke, really means slaves. In the days, in these Roman times, slavery actually existed.

Some people have a problem when they come to the New Testament and find instructions to slaves. They say, does God condone slavery? Well, God certainly doesn't condone the terrible abuses of slavery. On the other hand, it was never God's will to overthrow wrong social problems by forcible revolution.

Never God's will. Never God's will for Christians to march in with tanks and guns and just cause a revolution and change the existing order. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

And what really takes place is that through the preaching of the gospel, through the dissemination of the word of God, these changes do take place. The fact of the matter is that wherever the gospel has gone, slavery has gone too. Gone in a different way.

David Livingstone, of course, was used of God in the continent of Africa toward the abolition of slavery. And it happened in our own country, too, as the gospel is preached. In the meantime, a slave who is under the yoke, a servant who is under the yoke, is to count his master worthy of all honor or respect.

It's the same as an employer-employee relationship. The fact of the matter is that slaves in the early days of the Christian church always commanded a higher price on the public auction than Christian slaves did. Always commanded a higher price on the public auction.

Because of the ethical teachings of the New Testament, a Christian slave was really worth more to his master. And do you know that should be true of employees today? Employees in industry and in business? If a person is a Christian, it should make a difference. A Christian shouldn't be a clock-watcher.

A Christian shouldn't be a man-pleaser. A Christian should be doing everything as unto Christ, with the desire to please him. And this is in accordance with what we have here.

That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. In other words, every one of us is a Bible, and people are reading us day by day. Perhaps I should qualify that and say, every one of us is a Bible or a libel.

Which am I? And they that have believing masters, there may have been a tendency for slaves who had masters who were believers to take advantage of that situation, and maybe even to despise those believing masters. But it says here, 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. Just because an employer is a Christian employer, doesn't mean that a Christian employee should take advantage of him.

After all, it isn't just that he's working for a man, it's that he is working for the Lord. On the other hand, a Christian employer should really establish principles. He should be more interested in his men than he is in the last line of the prophet Law Statement, because people are more important than things, people are more important than dollars, and praise God for employers today who have that vision, and who are really concerned about the welfare of those who serve under them.

Now, in verses three through five, the Apostle Paul exposes false teachers. He exposes them, and he speaks very strongly against them. People who do not teach according to the doctrines of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If any man teach otherwise and consents not to wholesome words, that word wholesome means health-giving words. Health-giving words, and that's what good doctrine is, it's spiritually health-giving. Even the words of our Lord Jesus unto the doctrine which is according to Godliness.

Even in the Apostle Paul's day there were false teachers. In fact, all the false teachings arose in the early days of the church, and are dealt with in the pages of the New Testament. There's nothing new since then.

All the cults that we have today are variations of things that existed at that particular time. For instance, one of the great cults at that time, one of the great false teachings was Gnosticism, and I could name at least three prominent cults today. All they are modified forms of Gnosticism, teaching exactly the same thing that they taught in that day.

For instance, they taught that Jesus was not the Christ, but the Christ was a divine emanation that came out from heaven and came on Jesus at his baptism and left in the Garden of Gethsemane, and they said Christ didn't die on the cross, Jesus died on the cross. They made a distinction. Well, that's exactly what John is talking about in his first epistle, and we have that today.

Many Christian science teaches that, says Christ didn't die, it was Jesus who died. The scripture says Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and so we can be very glad that God allowed all of those false heresies and cults to arise very there in the early days of the church, and they're dealt with in the Word of God, and if we're familiar with the Word of God, we know how to handle them. We don't have to be swept off our feet.

What it boils down to is, if it's new, it isn't true, and if it's true, it isn't new. Okay, now, it speaks about these men as proud, knowing nothing, doting. They professed great knowledge, but they knew nothing.

Doting about questions and strifes of words were of cometh envy, strife, railings, evils from mine. But the main thing that Paul is going to lead up to is here. They thought that godliness was a way of gain, that gain is godliness.

Verse 5, the end of the verse, and what it really means is that they were in it for the money. That in their teaching these false doctrines, they were out after the denarius, after the dollar, as we would say. They thought that gain is godliness, and the more they made, the more godly they were.

And Paul says, from such withdraw thyself. Then he speaks those momentous words in verses 6 through 8, the proper balance between godliness and wealth. The proper balance between godliness and wealth.

He said, Godliness with contentment is great gain. That means if a man has a strong Christian character, and if he's content, there's nothing more that he could really want for. I'm not going to ask you to raise your hands, but it would be interesting to know how many contented people there are in our meetings now.

How many people who can say, Lord, I am just so happy with what you've given me in life, with your providence toward me, with my present social level. I wouldn't want it any other way. Well, there aren't many people in the world like that.

People are always grasping, always grasping. Say, how much do you want? Just a little more. Wealth is, somebody said, wealth is like seawater.

The more you take of it, the thirstier you get. That's true. It's true of money, too.

It's true of money. But, Paul said, Godliness with contentment is great gain. Jim Elliot, before he died, said, Lord, deliver us from the tension of the grasping hand.

The baby comes into the world like that, doesn't it? The man goes out of the world like that. In Alexander the Great, before he died, he left specific instructions that when his body was laid out in the cat pits, that his empty hand would be shown. A man who wept, because he didn't have more worlds to conquer, asked that in death his hand be revealed like that, absolutely empty.

Well, that's what Paul says here. He says, we've brought nothing into the world, and it's certain that we can carry nothing out. You never see any armored cars in a funeral procession.

In fact, you never see people who want a dollar sign on their gravestone. They spend all their lives trying to accumulate money. That isn't what they want to be known for after they die.

They want to be known for deeds of charity and all the rest, so that the dollar sign is conspicuously missing from their gravestone. They want a cross on it, or something like that. We've brought nothing into the world, and it's certain we can carry nothing out.

And then that revolutionary verse, which you won't like, and few will obey, but it says, Having food and raiment let us be there with content. Now, that word raiment really means covering, and it doesn't just mean clothing. It means the roof over our heads, too.

Same word. It's a very versatile word in the original language of the New Testament. If you read it covering, you've got the exact idea.

Yes? And what the verse is saying is, you have food to eat, do you? Yes. You have clothes to wear, do you? Yes. You have a roof over your head, yes.

Be content. Again, I ask, how many Christians today are content with food, clothing, and a roof over your head? Not many. You know, some of these verses might just as well not be in the Bible for all the attention that's paid to them.

Isn't that true? We profess so stoutly to believe in the inspiration of the Bible, a verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. Its absolute inerrancy, its infallibility, and yet we come to a verse like this, and we have 60 theological reasons why it doesn't mean what it says. Isn't that true? We are masters at rationalizing away the plain meanings of the word of God.

Really. Just as easy as that. Then Paul goes on in verses 9 and 10 to speak about a certain class of people, they that will be rich.

Now, this is not rich people. In verses 9 and 10, it can refer to people who have nothing but who have the desire to be rich. This refers to people who have the lust to be rich.

It's a matter of the heart. It has nothing to do with a bank balance at all. They that will be rich shall fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

Tolstoy tells of a man who spent most of his life accumulating land, and it seems he couldn't get enough. And so he heard that there was cheap land among the Bashkirs, and so he traveled to their land, and he found out that the proposition was this, that he could buy at a very cheap rate as much land as he could go around in a day. As much land as he could encircle on foot in a day.

He could buy it for a song. And so he started off and went as far as he could, and then he turned to the right, and he'd see some very fertile land, and he'd make a little detour around that, and he traveled and he traveled, and he was trying to encompass as much land as he could. And then, as the day wore on, he realized that he had gone too far.

He had to be back by sunset. And so he started back, and he started to run and run and run, and breathlessly he reached the starting point at sunset, and dropped dead, and they buried him in a little hole, all the land he needed. That's a parable of the life of many people today.

They that will be rich, as they spend their lives trying to encircle as much wealth as they can, they die, and they're buried in a little hole, all the property they need. It says here, for the love of money is a root of all evil. Money is not the root of all evil, there are a lot of other evils and a lot of other roots, but what it means is that money is a root of all kinds of evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Ever think of some of the problems that come with the acquisition of wealth? Fear of theft leading to expensive security systems, burglar alarms, vaults at all the risk, fear of members of the family being kidnapped, fear of blackmail and extortion, the sense of insecurity leading to worry, headache, paranoia, ulcers, the harmful effect of riches on children. Do you know that very few children of wealthy Christians are going on for the Lord? It's a bomb, isn't it? But it's true. Very few children of wealthy Christians are going on for the Lord.

Most of the people that make history for God are those that have had to come up the hard way. The worry of stock market failures, bank closures, inflation. A rich person never really knows how many true friends he has.

He doesn't know whether they're just sick of family, that people are long for what they might get out of them. And money, at the end of the journey, is often left to unworthy relatives, and often causes serious conflicts in the family. So, no wonder Paul says here, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Then, in verses 11 through 16, Timothy, as a man of God, is told how he should behave himself in the midst of a society like this, where people are all grabbing for money, all trying to feather their own nest. And it really is a competitive society. All trying to get as much as they can.

He says that thou, O man of God, flee these things. Now, the Christian should really have his eyes set on better security than this world has to offer. Did you know that nothing in this world can give a person security? God is the only security that we as believers have risen.

You don't know what the dollar will be worth a year from today. Gold, pretty fluctuating. Inflation robs you of the value, the purchasing power of your money.

There is no security in the world. Banks could close, the insurance companies could go bust. We could have a depression of Brazilian proportions before you knew it.

Stock market could crack, done it before. If it happened once, it can happen twice. No security in this world.

Paul is telling Timothy, Timothy, the things that really count are the things that are eternal. That's true, too. Get your priorities straight.

The spiritual is more important than the physical. The eternal is more important than the temporal. People are more important than things.

If you go through life and you build your life on those simple little principles, you'll do all right. Shall I say them again? The spiritual is more important than the physical. The eternal is more important than the temporal.

People are more important than things. Thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience. These are the things that count in life.

What are you going to take with you to heaven? Christian character. What's going to count when you stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Diamonds? Furs? Cards? Hardly. There won't be any of those things in heaven.

The only thing that will count will be a life that's been lived for God and poured out for the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's what Paul is emphasizing to Timothy here. Fight the good fight of faith.

This isn't combat. This is the Olympic Games, if you will. That's the kind of a fight it is.

It's the contest, the athletic contest. Lay hold and eternalize. You say, oh, I thought we had eternal life the moment we're saved.

We do. Eternal life is presented in different ways in the scripture. It's presented, for instance, as a gift of God.

The moment you trust the Lord Jesus Christ, you have eternal life. But it's also presented as a reward at the end of the journey. Lay hold and life that is life indeed at the end of the journey.

And it's presented as a quality of life right now. Life that is life indeed. And here I believe it has to do with that, the quality of life.

Lay hold on eternal life, not on a mercenary life. A life that counts for now and for eternity. For unto thou art also called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.

That may refer to his profession of faith at the time of baptism, or it may refer to the whole testimony of his Christian life. Timothy had gone on well for the Lord, and Paul commends it for him. He says, keep this charge.

Commandment here is the same as the charge. I'm giving you a charge, Timothy. I want you to go on for God.

I'm going to be passing off the theme. I'm going to throw the mantle over to you, and I want you to go and be valiant for God. The triumphant in his cause.

Keep the charge without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. All of Paul's service was carried on with the coming of Christ in view. Paul believed in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus, and he lived each day in the light of that soon coming.

How would I want to live if I knew that Christ was coming today? That's the way he lived. When he comes, which in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only potent faith, King of kings and Lord of lords. What a wonderful day of unveiling that will be.

He's the song of the drunkards in his first coming. He's the song of cursers today. The world is going to look on and gasp when they see him coming again, the only potent faith, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

It says who only has immortality. That means who only is the fountain of immortality. We, as to our spirits and souls, have immortality given to us, but he is the source, the fountain of it, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.

God, in his essence, is so glorious that man in his natural state could not approach him and die. It would be like an insect going near a blast furnace. He would be dissolved.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ, we have access to God the Father, and this does not happen to us. Whom no man has seen nor can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.

Up until now, Paul has described they that will be rich, verses 9 and 10, how a man of God should live in connection with riches, verses 11 through 16, and now he has a charge to those people who are already rich, verses 17 through 19. Pretty different class. 17 through 19, those that are rich.

What does he say about them? He says, charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. You

know, we go to great lengths today to defend riches in the Christian church, but the Lord Jesus had some very hard things to say about it, and I don't know why we go to such pains to defend it when he spoke so strongly against it. He said, how hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of God.

He says, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Why? Because it's hard to have riches without trusting in them. That's what Paul is saying in a different way here, that they trust not in uncertain riches.

Years ago, there was a very wealthy man. He lived in a palatial castle on the top of a hill, and he could look out over the whole valley and say it's mine, and he gloated over his tremendous possession. However, he never bowed the knee in thanksgiving to God, never attended the local church, never cracked the Bible from one end of the year to the other.

A self-made man, and he worshiped his creator. He had on that estate a superintendent who was a godly Christian man, Old John. And one night, Old John had a very disturbing dream, and in this dream it was revealed, he heard these words, the richest man in the valley will die at midnight tonight.

And he was very troubled. He got up in the morning and put on his clothes, and he went off to his employer's house. He rang the doorbell, and the man finally came.

The maids told him he came to the door. And John apologized. He said, I'm sorry to come and disturb you at this time, but I just felt I should.

He said, I had a dream last night, and I heard those words so distinctly, the richest man in the valley will die at midnight tonight. And the wealthy man, he just kind of laughed. He said, you know, he said, I never believed in dreams.

And he said, don't let it worry you at all. So, John went on his way, and the rich man said, poor old fool. He said, imagine having a dream like that.

About around 1030, he called his chauffeur and had him drive him down to the doctor for a physical examination. And so he went in, and he had the physical. And the doctor finally said to him, you're in splendid shape.

He said, I'll give you 20 more years. Well, he said, that's nice. He said, I really appreciate that.

He said, I didn't think there was anything the matter with me. But he said, would you be able to come up and have supper with me tonight? He said, I'd really like you to come up to the house and have supper with me tonight. And so the doctor agreed, and they made the supper date for 7 o'clock.

And they had this sumptuous supper. And then the doctor wanted to leave, but the rich man prevailed on him. Finally, at 11 o'clock, the doctor felt he must leave.

And the rich man said to him, oh, no. He said, don't leave. He said, just wait till midnight.

So they talked on and on about a bunch of sweet nothings. And at midnight, the clock struck, and the doctor took his leave. And this wealthy man started to prepare to go to bed.

And at 12.30, the doorbell rang, and they went to the door and called this wealthy man. And there was a younger woman there at the door with a babushka on her head. And she said, my mother just, she was in

tears, incidentally.

And she said, my mother asked me to come and tell you that my father, old John, died a half an hour ago. The richest man in the valley. Didn't have much of this world's good, but he had Christ.

He had faith in the Lord. That wealthy man said, what a fool I've been. It's not because he had money.

He was rich. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things. I want to tell you, you won't like this, but there are moral problems connected with being rich in a world where 7,000 people die daily of starvation, and over half the world has never heard of man's only hope.

I'll never get popular saying things like that, but it's true just to say there are moral problems. You say, nothing wrong with being rich. No, but there's something wrong with holding on to it, I want to tell you.

That's what this verse says, that they do good. It says, if I see my brother in need, and shut up my bowels of compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in me? Dear friends, I don't have to look very far today to see people in need. I've been in India.

If you want to see need, go to India. I've been in Turkey, 30 million people in Turkey, and nobody can name 30 born-again Turks, Muslim Turks. That is need in the world.

And if you've got money salted away as a false security, I say put it to work for the Lord, for the salvation of souls, and trust God for the future. That's what the Scripture teaches, really. When the Lord Jesus comes, all the money's going to go to the devil anyway.

I'd rather put it to work for him now. Do your giving while you're living, then you're knowing where it's going. Poor poetry, but good doctrine.

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. The wonderful thing, as a Christian, to have money, to be able to use it for the spread of the gospel, one of the greatest joys in life is to use the mammon of unrighteousness in such a way that souls will be saved, and you will have a welcoming committee when you get home to heaven. The poet said, When in the mansions above the saved all around me appear, I want to hear somebody saying, It was you who invited me here.

May the Lord deliver us from this terrible, mercenary, covetous spirit that's abroad in the United States today. And then you have the final appeal to Timothy in verses 20 and 21, and if you listen carefully, you can hear the heartbeat of the great apostle Paul, the heartbeat of a man of God for a younger fellow coming up through the ranks. He says, Oh, Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.

What is that? Well, I think it means the whole Christian ministry, the stewardship that's been committed to you, the wonderful privilege of serving the Lord Christ during this present day. Avoid profane and vain babbling. There's always that temptation to get off into bypass meadow.

Start worrying about how many angels can balance on the head of a pin with all this theological nonsense. Really, there's so much of it today, so much of it. Oppositions of science, falsely so-called.

Science here doesn't exactly mean what it means in school. It doesn't necessarily mean, of course, in chemistry or physics. It's a word for knowledge.

Knowledge, falsely so-called. These people, these Gnostics and heretics of the early days of the church, they were boasting about their supposed knowledge. They would think, Oh, well, what you Christians have, that's good.

But we have deeper knowledge, and we would like to initiate you into the inner circle of our knowledge, and you'll never be really happy until you know what we know. And Paul speaks of that as knowledge, falsely so-called, which some professing have heard concerning the faith. And then he closes this lovely epistle with his characteristic close, Grace be with you.

Amen. Grace is the first note on Paul's scale, and it's the last note as well. And what he's saying is that Christian life begins with grace, and it ends with grace, and it's grace all the way in between.

And it really is the sovereign grace of God to people who deserve nothing but hell. Shall we look to God in closing prayer? Father, we thank you for your precious word tonight. We realize it's a searching word.

It really is a sharp two-edged sword, and when we come to a chapter like this, we realize how easy it is to slip into the ways of thinking of the world, and just become occupied with the same ambitions and desires of the world, and spend our lives trying to accumulate things. We're reminded of the words of the Lord Jesus, What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul or life? We realize that tonight, Lord. We realize that our soul can be saved and our lives can be lost.

Deliver us, Lord, from the love of passing things. May we set our affections on things above where Christ is, at the right hand of God. Give us a true sense of values, we do pray.

We ask it in the Savior's name. We pray that you'll be with the young people as they meet in the after session, and we pray that the sanctuary of God might be filled with the fragrance of praises and worship as they ascend to you. We ask it in the Savior's name.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID12737.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/studies-in-1-timothy-06-1-timothy-6/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net