

CHAPTER 6

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- II. Of false teachers (v. 3-5).
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- VI. A charge for the rich (v. 17-19). And lastly, a charge to Timothy (v. 20, 21).

~~546~~ 1 TIMOTHY 6:1-5

THE DUTY OF SERVANTS

I. Here is the duty of servants. The apostle had spoken before of church-relations, here of our family-relations. Servants are here said to be *under the yoke*, which denotes both subjection and labour; they are yoked to work, not to be idle. If Christianity finds servants under the yoke, it continues them under it; for the gospel does not cancel the obligations any lie under either by the law of nature or by mutual consent. They must respect their masters, *count them worthy of all honour* (because they are their masters), of all the respect, observance, compliance, and obedience, that are justly expected from servants to their masters. Not that they were to think that of them which they were not; but as their masters they must count them worthy of all that honour which was fit for them to receive, *that the name of God be not blasphemed*. If servants that embraced the Christian religion should grow insolent and disobedient to their masters, the doctrine of Christ would be reflected on for their sakes, as if it had made men worse livers than they had been before they received the gospel. Observe, If the professors of religion misbehave themselves, *the name of God and his doctrine* are in danger of being blasphemed by those who seek occasion *to speak evil of that worthy name by which we are called*. And this is a good reason why we should all conduct ourselves well, that we may prevent the occasion which many seek, and will be very apt to lay

hold of, to speak ill of religion for our sakes. Or suppose the master were a Christian, and a believer, and the servant a believer too, would not this excuse him, because *in Christ there is neither bond nor free*? No, by no means, for Jesus Christ did not come to dissolve the bond of civil relation, but to strengthen it: *Those that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren*; for this brotherhood relates only to spiritual privileges, not to any outward dignity or advantage (those misunderstood and abuse their religion who make it a pretence for denying the duties that they owe to their relations); nay, *rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved*. They must think themselves the more obliged to serve them because the faith and love that bespeak men Christians oblige them to do good; and that is all wherein their service consists. Observe, It is a great encouragement to us in doing our duty to our relations if we have reason to think they are faithful and beloved, *and partakers of the benefit*, that is, of the benefit of Christianity. Again, Believing masters and servants are brethren, and partakers of the benefit; for in Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free, for you are all one in Christ Jesus, ~~REB~~ Galatians 3:28. Timothy is appointed to *teach and exhort these things*. Ministers must preach not only the general duties of all, but the duties of particular relations.

II. Paul here warns Timothy to withdraw from those who corrupted the doctrine of Christ, and made it the subject of strife, debate, and controversy: *If any man teach otherwise* (v. 3-5), do not preach practically, do not teach and exhort that which is for the promoting of serious godliness — if he will not consent to wholesome words, words that have a direct tendency to heal the soul — if he will *not consent* to these, even the *words of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Observe, We are not required to consent to any words as wholesome words except the words of our Lord Jesus Christ; but to those we must give our unfeigned assent and consent, and *to the doctrine which is according to godliness*. Observe, The doctrine of our Lord Jesus is a doctrine according to godliness; it has a direct tendency to make people godly. But he that does not consent to the words of Christ *is proud* (v. 4) and contentious, ignorant, and does a great deal of mischief to the church, knowing nothing. Observe, Commonly those are most proud who know least; for with all their knowledge they do not know themselves. — *But doting about questions*. Those who fall off from the plain practical doctrines of Christianity fall in with controversies, which eat out the life and power of religion; they dote about questions *and strifes*

of words, which do a great deal of mischief in the church, are the occasion of *envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings*. When men are not content with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, but will frame notions of their own and impose them, and that too in their own words, which man's wisdom teaches, and not in the words which the Holy Ghost teaches (~~403~~ 1 Corinthians 2:13), they sow the seeds of all mischief in the church. Hence come *perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds* (v. 5), disputes that are all subtlety, and no solidity.

Observe, Men of corrupt minds are *destitute of the truth*. The reason why men's minds are corrupt is because they do not stick to *the truth as it is in Jesus: supposing that gain is godliness*, making religion truckle to their secular interest. From such as these Timothy is warned to withdraw himself. We observe,

1. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ are wholesome words, they are the fittest to prevent or heal the church's wounds, as well as to heal a wounded conscience; for Christ has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to him that is weary, ~~2804~~ Isaiah 50:4. The words of Christ are the best to prevent ruptures in the church; for none who profess faith in him will dispute the aptness or authority of his words who is their Lord and teacher, and it has never gone well with the church since the words of men have claimed a regard equal to his words, and in some cases a much greater.

2. Whoever teaches otherwise, and does not consent to these wholesome words, he is proud, knowing nothing; for pride and ignorance commonly go together.

3. Paul sets a brand only on those who consent not to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness; they are proud, knowing nothing: other words more wholesome he knew not.

4. We learn the sad effects of doting about questions and strifes of words; of such doting about questions comes envy, strife, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings; when men leave the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, they will never agree in other words, either of their own or other men's invention, but will perpetually wrangle and quarrel about them; and this will produce envy, when they see the words of others preferred to those they have adopted for their own; and this will be attended with jealousies and suspicions of one another, called here *evil surmisings*; then they will proceed to perverse disputings.

5. Such persons as are given to perverse disputings appear to be men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth; especially such as act in this manner for the sake of gain, which is all their godliness, supposing gain to be godliness, contrary to the apostle's judgment, who reckoned godliness great gain.

6. Good ministers and Christians will withdraw themselves from such. "Come out from among them, my people, and be ye separate," says the Lord: *from such withdraw thyself.*

~~5066~~ 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-12

EVIL OF COVETOUSNESS

From the mention of the abuse which some put upon religion, making it to serve their secular advantages, the apostle,

I. Takes occasion to show the excellency of contentment and the evil of covetousness.

1. The excellency of contentment, v. 6-8. Some account Christianity an advantageous profession for this world. In the sense they mean this is false; yet it is undoubtedly true that, though Christianity is the worst trade, it is the best calling in the world. Those that make a trade of it, merely to serve their turn for this world, will be disappointed, and find it a sorry trade; but those that mind it as their calling, and make a business of it, will find it a gainful calling, for it has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.

(1.) The truth he lays down is that *godliness with contentment is great gain*. Some read it, *godliness with a competency*; that is, if a man have but a little in this world, yet, if he have but enough to carry him through it, he needs desire no more, his godliness with that will be his great gain. *For a little which a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked,* ~~4376~~ Psalm 37:16. We read it, *godliness with contentment*; godliness is itself great gain, it is profitable to all things; and, wherever there is true godliness, there will be contentment; but those have arrived at the highest pitch of contentment with their godliness are certainly the easiest happiest people in this world. *Godliness with contentment*, that is, Christian

contentment (content must come from principles of godliness) is great gain; it is all the wealth in the world. He that is godly is sure to be happy in another world; and if withal he do by contentment accommodate himself to his condition in this world he has enough. Here we have,

[1.] A Christian's gain; it is godliness with contentment, this is the true way to gain, yea, it is gain itself.

[2.] A Christian's gain is great: it is not like the little gain of worldlings, who are so fond of a little worldly advantage.

[3.] Godliness is ever accompanied with contentment in a great or less degree; all truly godly people have learned with Paul, in whatever state they are, to be therewith content, ^{<3001>}Philippians 4:11. They are content with what God allots for them, well knowing that this is best for them. Let us all then endeavour after godliness with contentment.

(2.) The reason he gives for it is, *For we brought nothing with us into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*, v. 7. This is a reason why we should be content with a little.

[1.] Because we can challenge nothing as a debt that is due to us, for we came naked into the world. Whatever we have had since, we are obliged to the providence of God for it; but he that gave may take what and when he pleases. We had our beings, our bodies, our lives (which are more than meat, and which are more than raiment), when we came into the world, though we came naked, and brought nothing with us; may we not then be content while our beings and lives are continued to us, though we have not every thing we would have? We brought nothing with us into this world, and yet God provided for us, care was taken of us, we have been fed all our lives long unto this day; and therefore, when we are reduced to the greatest straits, we cannot be poorer than when we came into this world, and yet then we were provided for; therefore let us trust in God for the remaining part of our pilgrimage.

[2.] We shall carry nothing with us out of this world. A shroud, a coffin, and a grave, are all that the richest man in the world can have from his thousands. Therefore why should we covet much? Why should we not be content with a little, because, how much soever we have, we must leave it behind us? ^{<3085>}Ecclesiastes 5:15, 16.

(3.) Hence he infers, *having food and raiment, let us be therewith content*, v. 8. Food and a *covering*, including habitation as well as raiment. Observe, If God give us the necessary supports of life, we ought to be content therewith, though we have not the ornaments and delights of it. If nature should be content with a little, grace should be content with less; though we have not dainty food, though we have not costly raiment, if we have but food and raiment convenient for us we ought to be content. This was Agur's prayer: *Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me,* ^{<PROB>}Proverbs 30:8. Here we see,

[1.] The folly of placing our happiness in these things, when we did not bring any thing into this world with us, and we can carry nothing out. What will worldlings do when death shall strip them of their happiness and portion, and they must take an everlasting farewell of all these things, on which they have so much doted? They may say with poor Micah, *You have taken away my gods; and what have I more?* ^{<JUDG>}Judges 18:24.

[2.] The necessaries of life are the hounds of a true Christian's desire, and with these he will endeavour to be content; his desires are not insatiable; no, a little, a few comforts of this life, will serve him, and these may hope to enjoy: *Having food and raiment.*

2. The evil of covetousness. *Those that will be rich* (that set their hearts upon the wealth of this world, and are resolved right or wrong, they will have it), *fall into temptation and a snare*, v. 9. It is not said, those that are rich, but those that will be rich, that is, that place their happiness in worldly wealth, that covet it inordinately, and are eager and violent in the pursuit of it. Those that are such *fall into temptation and a snare*, unavoidably; for, when the devil sees which way their lusts carry them, he will soon bait his hook accordingly. He knew how fond Achan would be of a wedge of gold, and therefore laid that before him. They fall into *many foolish and hurtful lusts*. Observe,

(1.) The apostle supposes that,

[1.] Some will be rich; that is, they are resolved upon it, nothing short of a great abundance will satisfy.

[2.] Such will not be safe nor innocent, for they will be in danger of ruining themselves for ever; they fall into temptation, and a snare, etc.

[3.] Worldly lusts are foolish and hurtful, for they drown men in destruction and perdition.

[4.] It is good for us to consider the mischievousness of worldly fleshly lusts. They are foolish, and therefore we should be ashamed of them, hurtful, and therefore we should be afraid of them, especially considering to what degree they are hurtful, for they *drown men in destruction and perdition*.

(2.) The apostle affirms that *the love of money is the root of all evil*, v. 10. What sins will not men be drawn to by the love of money? Particularly this was at the bottom of the apostasy of many from the faith of Christ; while they coveted money, they *erred from the faith*, they quitted their Christianity, and *pierced themselves through with many sorrows*. Observe,

[1.] What is the root of all evil; the love of money: people may have money, and yet not love it; but, if they love it inordinately, it will push them on to all evil.

[2.] Covetous persons will quit the faith, if that be the way to get money: *Which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith. Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,* ⁵⁴⁴⁰2 Timothy 4:10. For the world was dearer to him than Christianity. Observe, Those that err from the faith pierce themselves with many sorrows; those that depart from God do but treasure up sorrows for themselves.

II. Hence he takes occasion to caution Timothy, and to counsel him to keep in the way of God and his duty, and particularly to fulfil the trust reposed in him as a minister. He addresses himself to him as *a man of God*. Ministers are men of God, and ought to conduct themselves accordingly in every thing; they are men employed for God, devoted to his honour more immediately. The prophets under the Old Testament were called men of God.

1. He charges Timothy to take heed of the love of money, which had been so pernicious to many: *Flee these things*. It ill becomes any men, but especially men of God, to set their hearts upon the things of this world; men of God should be taken up with the things of God.

2. To arm him against the love of the world, he directs him to follow that which is good. *Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness*: righteousness in his conversation towards men, godliness

towards God, faith and love as living principles, to support him and carry him on in the practice both of righteousness and godliness. Those that follow after righteousness and godliness, from a principle of faith and love, have need to put on patience and meekness — patience to bear both the rebukes of Providence and the reproaches of men, and meekness wherewith to instruct gainsayers and pass by the affronts and injuries that are done us. Observe, It is not enough that men of God flee these things, but they must follow after what is directly contrary thereto. Further, What excellent persons men of God are who follow after righteousness! They are the excellent of the earth, and, being acceptable to God, they should be approved of men.

3. He exhorts him to do the part of a soldier: *Fight the good fight of faith.* Note, Those who will get to heaven must fight their way thither. There must be a conflict with corruption and temptations, and the opposition of the powers of darkness. Observe, It is a good fight, it is a good cause, and it will have a good issue. It is the fight of faith; we do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, ^{⁴⁰⁸2 Corinthians 10:3, 4. He exhorts him to *lay hold on eternal life.* Observe,}

(1.) Eternal life is the crown proposed to us, for our encouragement to war, and to fight the good fight of faith, the good warfare.

(2.) This we must lay hold on, as those that are afraid of coming short of it and losing it. Lay hold, and take heed of losing your hold. *Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown,* ^{⁴⁰⁹Revelation 3:11.}

(3.) We are called to the fight, and to lay hold on eternal life.

(4.) The profession Timothy and all faithful ministers make before many witnesses is a good profession; for they profess and engage to fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life; their calling and their own profession oblige them to this.

^{⁴¹⁰1 TIMOTHY 6:13-21}

THE APOSTLE'S SOLEMN CHARGE

The apostle here charges Timothy *to keep this commandment* (that is, the whole work of his ministry, all the trust reposed in him, all the service

expected from him) *without spot, unrebukable*; he must conduct himself so in his ministry that he might not lay himself open to any blame nor incur any blemish. What are the motives to move him to this?

I. He gives him a solemn charge: *I give thee charge in the sight of God that thou do this*. He charges him as he will answer it at the great day to that God whose eyes are upon us all, who sees what we are and what we do: — *God, who quickens all things*, who has life in himself and is the fountain of life. This should quicken us to the service of God that we serve a God who quickens all things. He charges him before Christ Jesus, to whom in a peculiar manner he stood related as a minister of his gospel: *Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession*. Observe, Christ died not only as a sacrifice, but as a martyr; and he witnessed a good confession when he was arraigned before Pilate, saying (~~1836~~ John 18:36, 37), *My kingdom is not of this world: I am come to bear witness unto the truth*. That good confession of his before Pilate, *My kingdom is not of this world*, should be effectual to draw off all his followers, both ministers and people, from the love of this world.

II. He reminds him of the confession that he himself had made: *Thou hast professed a good profession before many witnesses* (v. 12), namely, when he was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. The obligation of that was still upon him, and he must live up to that, and be quickened by that, to do the work of his ministry.

III. He reminds him of Christ's second coming: “*Keep this commandment — until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*; keep it as long as thou live, till Christ come at death to give thee a discharge. Keep it with an eye to his second coming, when we must all give an account of the talents we have been entrusted with,” ~~1840~~ Luke 16:2. Observe, The Lord Jesus Christ will appear, and it will be a glorious appearing, not like his first appearing in the days of his humiliation. Ministers should have an eye to this appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ in all their ministrations, and, till his appearing, they are to keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable. Mentioning the appearing of Christ, as one that loved it, Paul loves to speak of it, and loves to speak of him who shall then appear. The appearing of Christ is certain (*he shall show it*), but it is not for us to know the time and season of it, which the Father has kept in his own power: let this suffice us, that in time he will show it, in the time that he thinks fit for it. Observe,

1. Concerning Christ and God the Father the apostle here speaks great things.

(1.) That God is the only Potentate; the powers of earthly princes are all derived from him, and depend upon him. The powers that exist are ordained of God, ~~(491)~~ Romans 13:1. He is the only Potentate that is absolute and sovereign, and perfectly independent.

(2.) He is the blessed and the only Potentate, infinitely happy, and nothing can in the least impair his happiness.

(3.) He is King of kings, and Lord of lords. All the kings of the earth derive their power from him; he gave them their crowns, they hold them under him, and he has a sovereign dominion over them. This is Christ's title (~~(496)~~ Revelation 19:16), *upon his vesture and his thigh*; for he has a name higher than the kings of the earth.

(4.) He only has immortality. He only is immortal in himself, and has immortality as he is the fountain of it, for the immortality of angels and spirits derived from him.

(5.) He dwells in inaccessible light, *light which no man can approach unto*: no man can get to heaven but those whom he is pleased to bring thither, and admit into his kingdom.

(6.) He is invisible: *Whom no man hath seen, nor can see*. It is impossible that mortal eyes should bear the brightness of the divine glory. No man can see God and live.

2. Having mentioned these glorious attributes, he concludes with a doxology: *To him be honour and power everlasting. Amen*. God having all power and honour to himself, it is our duty to ascribe all power and honour to him.

(1.) What an evil is sin, when committed against such a God, the blessed and only Potentate! The evil of it rises in proportion to the dignity of him against whom it is committed.

(2.) Great is his condescension, to take notice of such mean and vile creatures as we are. What are we then, that the blessed God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, should seek after us?

(3.) Blessed are those who are admitted to dwell with this great and blessed Potentate. *Happy are thy men* (says the queen of Sheba to king Solomon), *happy are these thy servants, who stand continually before thee*, ^{<1118>}1 Kings 10:8. Much more happy are those who are allowed to stand before the King of kings.

(4.) Let us love, adore, and praise, the great God; for *who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy*, ^{<666>}Revelation 15:4.

IV. The apostle adds, by way of postscript, a lesson for rich people, v. 17-19.

1. Timothy must charge those that are rich to beware of the temptations, and improve the opportunities, of their prosperous estate.

(1.) He must caution them to take heed of pride. This is a sin that easily besets rich people, upon whom the world smiles. Charge them *that they be not high-minded*, or think of themselves above what is meet, or be puffed up with their wealth.

(2.) He must caution them against vain confidence in their wealth. Charge them that they *trust not in uncertain riches*. Nothing is more uncertain than the wealth of this world; many have had much of it one day and been stripped of all the next. Riches make themselves wings, and fly away as an eagle, etc., ^{<235>}Proverbs 23:5.

(3.) He must charge them to *trust in God, the living God*, to make him their hope, *who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*. Those who are rich must see God giving them their riches, and giving them to enjoy them richly; for many have riches, but enjoy them poorly, not having a heart to use them.

(4.) He must charge them to do good with what they have (for what is the best estate worth, any more than as it gives a man an opportunity of doing so much the more good?): *That they be rich in good works*. Those are truly rich who are rich in good works. That they be *ready to distribute, willing to communicate*: not only to do it, but to do it willingly, for *God loves a cheerful giver*.

(5.) He must charge them to think of another world, and prepare for that which is to come by works of charity: *Laying up in store a good*

foundation against the time to come, that they may take hold on eternal life.

2. Hence we may observe,

(1.) Ministers must not be afraid of the rich; be they ever so rich, they must speak to them, and charge them.

(2.) They must caution them against pride, and vain confidence in their riches: *That they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches*. Stir them up to works of piety and charity: *That they do good*, etc.

(3.) This is the way for the rich to lay up in store for themselves for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life; in the way of well-doing we are to seek for glory, honour, and immortality, *and eternal life will be the end of all*, ~~417~~ Romans 2:7.

(4.) Here is a lesson for ministers in the charge given to Timothy: *Keep that which is committed to thy trust*. Every minister is a trustee, and it is a treasure committed to his trust, which he has to keep. The truths of God, the ordinances of God, keep these, *avoiding profane and vain babblings*; not affecting human eloquence, which the apostle calls vain babbling, or human learning, which often opposes the truths of God, but keep close to the written word, for that is committed to our trust. Some who have been very proud of their learning, their *science, which is falsely so called*, have by that been debauched in their principles and been drawn away from the faith of Christ, which is a good reason why we should keep to the plain word of the gospel, and resolve to live and die by that. Observe,

[1.] Ministers cannot be too earnestly exhorted to keep what is committed to their trust, because it is a great trust lodged with them: *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust!* as if he had said, “I cannot conclude without charging thee again; whatever thou doest, be sure to keep this trust, for it is too great a trust to be betrayed.”

[2.] Ministers are to avoid babblings, if they would keep what is committed to them, because they are vain and profane.

[3.] That science that opposes the truth of the gospel is falsely so called; it is not true science, for if it were it would approve of the gospel and consent to it.

[4.] Those who are so fond of such science are in great danger of erring concerning the faith; those who are for advancing reason above faith are in danger of leaving faith.

V. Our apostle concludes with a solemn prayer and benediction: *Grace be with thee. Amen.* Observe, this is a short, yet comprehensive prayer for our friends, for grace comprehends in it all that is good, and grace is an earnest, yea, a beginning, of glory; for, wherever God gives grace, he will give glory, and will not withhold any good thing from him who walketh uprightly. Grace be with you all. Amen.