

Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open book is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with small, dense text, likely a Bible. The book is set against a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is centered over the book's pages.

Orders From Headquarters

Scripture text: 1 Timothy 6

Orders From Headquarters:

This chapter continues Paul's advice to Timothy on **ministering to the various kinds of believers in the church**. The atmosphere is military, for Paul used words that belong to the army: **"Fight the good fight of faith"** (1 Tim. 6:12). **"I give thee charge"** (1 Tim. 6:13, which is the same military term used in 1:3). **"Charge them that are rich"** (1 Tim. 6:17). **"O Timothy, keep [guard] that which is committed to thy trust"** (1 Tim. 6:20). In other words, you might say Paul was the general, **giving Timothy orders from the Lord, the Commander in Chief**.

D.L. Moody did not want his soloist, Ira Sankey, to use “Onward, Christian Soldiers” in their evangelistic campaigns. Moody felt that the church he saw was very un like an army. If the average military man on our side in World War II had **behaved toward his superiors and their orders the way the average Christian behaves toward the Lord, we probably would have lost the war! Instead of “Onward, Christian Soldiers,” someone has suggested that perhaps we ought to sing “Backward, Christian Soldiers.”**

Paul instructed Timothy how to minister to four more groups in the church, and also how to keep his own life in the will of God.

Christian Slaves (1 Tim. 6:1–2)

Some historians have estimated that half of the population of the Roman Empire was composed of slaves. Many of these people were educated and cultured, but legally they were not considered persons at all. The Gospel message of salvation and freedom in Christ appealed to the slaves, and many of them became believers.

(The word translated “servant” in the kjv New Testament usually means “**slave.**”)

When slaves were able to get away from their household duties, they would fellowship in local assemblies where being a slave was not a handicap (Gal. 3:28).

But there was a problem: Some slaves used their newfound freedom in Christ as an excuse to disobey, if not defy, their masters. They needed to learn that their spiritual freedom in Christ did not alter their social position, even though they were accepted graciously into the fellowship of the church.

Galatians 3:23-29 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, **the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.** But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, **for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, **there is neither slave nor free,** there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.**

Slaves with unbelieving masters (v. 1).

No Christian master would consider his slaves “under the yoke,” but would treat them with love and respect (Col. 4:1; Phile. 16). **For a slave to rebel against an unsaved master would bring disgrace on the Gospel.** “The name of God” and His doctrine would be blasphemed (Rom. 2:24). This is one reason Paul and the early missionaries did not go around preaching against the sinful institution of slavery. Such a practice would have branded the church as a militant group trying to undermine the social order, and the progress of the Gospel would have been greatly hindered.

Colossians 4:1 Masters, **treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.**

Philemon 1:15-16 For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, **no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother--especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.**

Romans 2:24 For, as it is written, "**The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.**"

Slaves with believing masters (v. 2). The danger here is that a **Christian slave might take advantage of his master because both are saved.** “My master is my brother!” a slave might argue. **“Since we are equal, he has no right to tell me what to do!”** This attitude would create serious problems both in the homes and in the churches.

Paul gave three reasons why Christian slaves should **show respect for their believing masters and not take advantage of them.** The most obvious reason is: Their masters are Christians (“faithful”=believing). **How can one believer take advantage of another believer?** Second, their masters are beloved.

Love does not rebel or look for opportunities to escape responsibility.

Finally, **both master and servant benefit from obedience** (“partakers of the benefit” can apply to both of them). There is a mutual blessing when Christians serve each other in the will of God.

I recall counseling a young lady who resigned from a secular job to go to work in a Christian organization. She had been there about a month and was completely disillusioned.

“I thought it was going to be heaven on earth,” she complained. “Instead, there are nothing but problems.”

“Are you working just as hard for your Christian boss as you did for your other boss?” I asked.

The look on her face gave me the answer. “Try working harder,” I advised, “and show him real respect. Just because all of you in the office are saved doesn’t mean you can do less than your best.” She took my advice and her problems cleared up.

False Teachers (1 Tim. 6:3–10)

Paul had opened this letter **with warnings about false teachers** (1 Tim. 1:3ff), and had even refuted some of their dangerous teachings (1 Tim. 4:1ff).

The spiritual leaders in the local church **must constantly oversee what is being taught because it is easy for false doctrines to slip in** (Acts 20:28–32). A pastor I know discovered a Sunday School teacher who was sharing his “visions” instead of teaching God’s Word!

Act 20:28-32 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. **I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;** and from among your own selves will arise **men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.** Therefore **be alert,** remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

The marks of these false teachers (vv. 3–5a).

The first mark is that **they refused to adhere to “the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching”** (1 Tim. 6:3). This teaching is godly and it promotes godliness.

Isaiah’s first test of any teacher was, “To the Law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). **It is important that a church “hold fast the form of sound [healthy] words”** (2 Tim. 1:13).

Isaiah 8:19-20 And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? **Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? To the teaching and to the testimony!** If they will not speak according to this word, **it is because they have no dawn.**

Isaiah 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: **if they speak not according to this word, *it is because there is no light in them.* (KJV)**

A second mark is the teacher's own attitude.

Instead of being humble, a false teacher is proud; yet he has nothing to be proud about because he does not know anything (1 Tim. 6:4; also 1 Tim. 1:7).

A believer who understands the Word will have a burning heart, not a big head (Luke 24:32; and see Dan. 9:1–20).

This “conceited attitude” causes a teacher to argue about minor matters concerning “words” (1 Tim. 6:3).

Luke 24:28-32 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them. And **their eyes were opened, and they knew him;** and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, **Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?**

Daniel 9:4-6 I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

Instead of feeding on the “wholesome words of ... Christ,” you might say he gets sick about questions. The word doting (1 Tim. 6:4) means “**filled with a morbid desire, sick.**” The result of such unspiritual teaching is “envy, quarreling, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and **constant friction**” (1 Tim. 6:4b–5a).

The tragedy of all this is that the people are “**robbed [deprived] of the truth**” (1 Tim. 6:5) while they think they are discovering the truth! They think that the weekly arguments in their meetings, **during which they exchange their ignorance**, are a means of growing in grace; **meanwhile the result is a loss of character, not an improvement.**

The motive for their teaching (vv. 5b–10).

These false teachers supposed “that godliness is a way of financial gain” (literal translation). “Godliness” here (1 Tim. 6:5) means “the profession of Christian faith” and not true holy living in the power of the Spirit. They used their religious profession as a means to make money. What they did was not a true ministry; it was just a religious business.

Paul was always careful not to use his calling and ministry as a means of making money. In fact, he even refused support from the Corinthian church so that no one could accuse him of greed (1 Cor. 9:15–19).

1 Corinthians 9:15-19 But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting. For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. **For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!** For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted **with a stewardship**. What then is my reward? That in my preaching **I may present the gospel free of charge**, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

He never used his preaching as “a cloak of covetousness” (1 Thes. 2:5). What a tragedy it is today to see the religious racketeers who prey on gullible people, promising them help while taking away their money.

To warn Timothy—and us—about the dangers of covetousness, Paul shared four facts:

Wealth does not bring contentment (v. 6). The word contentment means **“an inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of outward circumstances.”** Paul used this same word later. “For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Phil. 4:11).

1 Thessalonians 2:3-5 For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but **to please God who tests our hearts**. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, **nor with a pretext for greed**--God is witness.

Philippians 4:11-12 Not that I am speaking of being in need, **for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content**. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

**True contentment comes from godliness in the heart,
not wealth in the hand.**

**A person who depends on material things for peace
and assurance will never be satisfied,** for material
things have a way of losing their appeal.

It is the wealthy people, not the poor people, who go
to psychiatrists and who are more apt to try to
commit suicide.

Wealth is not lasting (v. 7).

I like to translate this verse: **“We brought nothing into this world because we can carry nothing out”** (see Job 1:21).

When someone’s spirit leaves his body at death, it can take nothing with it because, when that person came into the world at birth, he brought nothing with him. Whatever wealth we amass goes to the government, our heirs, and perhaps charity and the church. We always know the answer to the question, “How much did he leave?” Everything!

Our basic needs are easily met (v. 8).

Food and “covering” (clothing and shelter) are basic needs; if we lose them, we lose the ability to secure other things. A miser without food would starve to death counting his money. I am reminded of the simple-living Quaker who was watching his new neighbor move in, with all of the furnishings and expensive “toys” that “successful people” collect. The Quaker finally went over to his new neighbor and said, “Neighbor, **if ever thou dost need anything, come to see me, and I will tell thee how to get along without it.**”

Henry David Thoreau, the naturalist of the 1800s, reminded us that a man is wealthy in proportion to the number of things he can afford to do without.

The economic and energy crises that the world faces will probably **be used by God to encourage people to simplify their lives.** Too many of us know the “price of everything and **the value of nothing.**” We are so gluttoned with luxuries that **we have forgotten how to enjoy our necessities.**

The desire for wealth leads to sin (vv. 9–10).

“They that will be rich,” is the accurate translation. It describes a person who has to have more and more material things in order to be happy and feel successful. **But riches are a trap; they lead to bondage, not freedom.** Instead of giving satisfaction, **riches create additional lusts** (desires); and these must be satisfied. Instead of providing help and health, an excess of material things hurts and wounds. The result Paul described very vividly: **“Harmful desires ... plunge men into ruin and destruction”** (1 Tim. 6:9). **It is the picture of a man drowning! He trusted his wealth and “sailed along,” but the storm came and he sank.**

It is a dangerous thing to use religion as a cover-up for acquiring wealth.

God's laborer is certainly worthy of his hire (1 Tim. 5:17–18), but **his motive for laboring must not be money.**

That would make him a “hireling,” and not a true shepherd (John 10:11–14).

We should not ask, “How much will I get?” but rather **“How much can I give?”**

John 10:10-15 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

The Pastor Himself (1 Tim. 6:11–16, 20–21)

While caring for the needs of his people, **Timothy needed to care for himself as well.** “Take heed unto thyself” (1 Tim. 4:16) was one of Paul’s admonitions. The phrase “But thou” (1 Tim. 6:11) indicates a **contrast between Timothy and the false teachers.**

They were men of the world, but he was a “man of God.” This special designation was also given to Moses (Deut. 33:1), Samuel (1 Sam. 9:6), Elijah (1 Kings 17:18), and David (Neh. 12:24); so **Timothy was in good company.**

Paul gave **four admonitions** to Timothy that, if obeyed, would assure him success in his ministry and a continued testimony as “a man of God.”

Flee (v. 11a). There are times when running away is a mark of cowardice. “Should such a man as I flee?” asked Nehemiah (Neh. 6:11). But **there are other times when fleeing is a mark of wisdom and a means of victory**. Joseph fled when he was tempted by his master’s wife (Gen. 39:12), and David fled when King Saul tried to kill him (1 Sam. 19:10). The word “flee” that Paul used here did not refer to literal running, but to Timothy’s **separating himself from the sins of the false teachers**.

This echoes the admonition in 1 Timothy 6:5: **“From such withdraw thyself.”** (KJV)

Not all unity is good, and not all division is bad.

There are times when a servant of God should take a stand against false doctrine and godless practices, and separate himself from them.

He must be sure, however, that he acts on the basis of biblical conviction and not because of a personal prejudice or a carnal party spirit.