

# Timothy, I #4 Ch. 5-6

by Chuck Missler

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and applying the principles of 1 Timothy 5, particularly in regards to the church as a family, discipline, and caring for widows.*

**Duration:** 1:08:13

**Scripture:** Joshua 1:8, Ephesians 6:10-18, 1 Timothy 5:21-22, 1 Timothy 6:3, 1 Timothy 6:13-14

**Topics:** "Timothy"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the dangers of pursuing wealth and material possessions. He emphasizes that those who strive to be rich often fall into temptation and harmful behaviors that lead to destruction. The preacher also highlights the importance of contentment and the Quaker philosophy of living without unnecessary things. He references biblical verses, such as Joshua 1:8, which encourages meditation on the word of God, and Luke 16, which suggests setting up treasures in heaven. The sermon concludes with a warning against false science and the importance of staying true to one's faith.

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## Transcript

How many of you are in the full-time ministry? Good for you, good for you, you're paying attention. I was at a very large church this past weekend down in Southern California, and I asked that question and about 5% of the hands went up. And I paused, and gradually you could tell the light went on.

Little by little, all the hands went up. And I mention that, of course, because we're in the final two chapters of Paul's first letter to Timothy. And the pastoral epistles, as they're called, 1 Timothy and Titus, then also 2 Timothy, those three epistles put in a chronological order, or 1 Timothy and Titus, in any case, they're three letters that Paul wrote to pastors.

They're called the pastoral epistles. And they're filled with advice, primarily aimed, of course, at the leadership of the early church. And many of us, especially if you just, you know, well, call, you know, average Christians, sort of figure, well, that's for pastors.

And you read them out of your diligence, or you go through your weekly reading schedule, or whatever, I hope, and you go through them, but there's a tendency for us to turn off, well, that's for pastors, worry about elders and bishops and whatever, because we misunderstand it. No, they're letters for all of us. And I'll prove to you that by the plurality of the closing pronoun, but we'll get to there before it's all over.

But I think it's pretty obvious as we've gone through the first four chapters of 1 Timothy. But it's important for us to realize that that's for all of us, because we're all in the full-time ministry. We're all in spiritual warfare.

Anyway, enough of that. Good news is I'm not going to try to review chapters 1, 2, and 3, and 4, because we just went through all that, so. But, you know, it's interesting, if you followed our briefing packages on cosmic codes, you know, of course, that that's not dealing with Bible codes, the equidistant letter sequence that's all the commentaries, all the controversies.

I think people realize that. But there are other codes in the Scripture that are far more meaningful than the controversial equidistant letter sequence thing that's caused all the fuss lately. There are microcodes, there are macrocodes, and we, of course, deal with that in the set, the little four-tape set that we did.

But it's interesting how critics, liberal critics of the Scripture, love to make fun of us as fundamentalists because we adhere to, you know, we, you take the Bible literally. I don't say that anymore. I say I take it seriously.

I love that, because it makes them so mad, you know. I was on a talk show once, and a question and answer call-in show, and the nature of the question was really, in effect, attacking the fact that we take the Bible very fundamentally, very seriously. And I knew if I said that we take the Bible literally, that would immediately cause them to quibble over figures of speech.

The usual rebuttal is, well, from Psalm 91, you think God has feathers. Under your feathers, I will trust. It's obviously a metaphor.

And so they quibble about that sort of thing, see. So I knew if I said literally, and I was fatigued or stumbling or, let's say, the Holy Spirit. I said, we take the Bible seriously.

And I remember the reaction on the end of the phone. Utter frustration. And I knew I had hit paydirt, you see, because he expected me to say we take the Bible literally, because he's already, he had stacked up his, you know, little metaphors to quarrel over.

God has, you know, feathers and, you know. So I said, we take the Bible seriously. Well, it was really, he got all upset, because obviously he didn't want to admit that he didn't take the Bible seriously, on the one hand.

But he also couldn't argue with us that we were taking it more seriously than he does. You see, we believe God means what he says and says what he means. What are you going to do with that, you know? Now, in Cosmic Codes, the book, there is an appendix of figures of speech used in the Bible.

Now, you know some figures of speech, metaphors, similes. You can list it. Do you know how many are catalogued there as examples with Scripture references? Over 200.

Over 200. But the one that we're most commonly familiar with are metaphors. And it's interesting to see how many different metaphors are used of the church.

Peter, in his first letter, speaks of the church as a holy nation. He uses that phrase, in effect. Which, of course, emphasizes the believer's common citizenship in heaven.

He uses that phrase of what? We say the body of Christ is our idiom. We usually use that term especially to distinguish it from any denomination or church, or earthly church organization. The body of Christ, the mystical body of Christ.

Anyway, the holy nation is one of them. In Revelation, Chapter 5, we have it alluded to as a kingdom. Which, of course, emphasizes the believer's submission to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We think of the church as a kingdom, clearly. Peter also emphasizes it as a priesthood. Emphasizing the privilege that we all have in direct access to God.

You see, he said kings and priests, and so forth. And there's a whole more, there's more to it than that. Each of these things are not just metaphors, they're insights into very special aspects that go far beyond any specific label or entitlement might try to express.

Jesus used the expression, the vine. I am the vine, ye are the branches. Which emphasizes the believer's common connection to the life of God to bear fruit.

See how the metaphor works. It doesn't mean we're a vine with leaves or chlorophyll or something, obviously. You follow me? And that's the way the liberals would like to paint us in that kind of a corner.

No, I am the vine, ye are the branches. It makes a very, very eloquent idiom. Our connection to the source of life, for what purpose? To bear fruit.

Think about that. It's also interesting that this idiom wasn't invented in John chapter 15. It was invented way, way back and emblazoned in the Menorah.

The seven-branched lampstand. I am the vine, you are the branches. The one plus six, six is the number of men, is the seven.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, right, okay. Gospel of John is organized around seven I am statements. And so forth.

But anyway, then we have the temple. Paul's letter to Ephesians emphasizes we are the temple. It emphasizes that we're built on the solid foundation of apostolic doctrine with Jesus Christ as what, the chief what? Cornerstone.

Good for you. All right. Okay, you read ahead.

That's good. Okay. Of course, we use the term a body.

Now, we use it in the mystical sense, the body of Christ. But also, Paul emphasizes the believer's common life and dependence on what? The head. Namely, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We're spoken of as an assembly, which emphasizes our common calling to be gathered in the presence of the eternal God. We're also called a flock. We use that term a lot, don't we? To really emphasize our common need to be led and fed by our what? Chief shepherd.

First Peter uses that phrase. The assembly of Hebrews uses that phrase. Well, now, here in Timothy, we have the expression in more than just a word, in a whole unfolding of ourselves as a family, as a family.

And that emphasizes, of course, intimacy, care, openness, and love. You say, whoa, I haven't found any care. Certainly haven't found any openness.

I found just a lot of gossip and so forth. Well, that's exactly what Timothy was encountering in Ephesus, and that's why Paul wrote the letter, okay? Because what we're supposed to be seeing is intimacy, care, openness, and what was that other word? Love, right. Jesus said what? A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you, and that ye also love one another.

And by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if that you quarrel over doctrine on the public platform. No, no, no. If you are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

And one of the things I think is the most disheartening things is that people become Christians, and they get all excited about what the word of God teaches them, and then they start encountering organized, those are quotation marks in my gestures, organized Christianity. And I always am reminded what Mahatma Gandhi said to an inquirer who was asked, what is the biggest obstacle to Christianity in India? And Gandhi said very tersely, Christians. You know? And I think those of you who have been around a bit know what I'm talking about.

How tragic it is. Now, the spiritual family in Ephesus had all kinds of problems. We discovered in chapter 1 and 2 that many of the sinning members had abandoned truth and godliness.

We saw that. Some had shipwrecked their faith in verse 9 of chapter 1. Some women had abandoned their proper role and were trying to usurp the function of men in chapter 2. Some men were aspiring to leadership that didn't have adequate qualifications in chapter 3 and also we'll see more of that in chapter 5. Impure lives were evident among some of the widows. We'll encounter that in this chapter.

And of course, and also among some of the younger. So it's pretty clear as you begin to realize the problems Paul's addressing to help Timothy, that Timothy was in a tough place. Young guy, Paul's protege.

We infer he might have been just a little timid in terms of his youth because many of the people he was ministering to were older than he was. And Paul was writing this letter. It's obvious that Ephesus was not an easy place to minister.

And whenever I see that in the commentary, I'm always smiling. Have you ever seen an easy place to minister? And many of us that move around the country in various ways, you know there's certain regions that are sort of dry spiritually. There aren't as many good teaching fellowships available in some communities.

There's other communities where there's lots of them. Great teachers of all kinds on every street corner. And you contrast some of these regions and you say, gee, wouldn't it be neat to live in location X rather than location Y? Until you take a good look at either one of them.

Because even the ones where there's good prevalent teaching and all that, there's still a thing called the flesh. There's still sin. There's still challenges.

I haven't seen an easy place to minister. But that's the Lord's problem. Our job is strictly to be obedient to His call and let Him deliver the victory.

Now, what Paul's going to deal with in his first letter to Timothy is discipline. I'm going to spare you going through a whole Old Testament study of discipline. You go to 2 Samuel 7 or Job 5 or Ezekiel 2 and find all kinds of passages that indicate that discipline was necessary for order and growth and to be things

accomplished.

In the book of Proverbs, you can do a study of what purposes discipline serves. It leads to understanding according to Proverbs 15.32. It leads to knowledge. Discipline leads to knowledge in 19.25. Discipline leads to wisdom, which you can define as the application of knowledge in 15.31 and also 29.15. Discipline leads to honor and also a happy life in the book of Proverbs 13.18 and 6.23. In the New Testament, we find discipline essential.

We find all kinds of passage. There is a chapter you should be sensitive to where Jesus Himself deals with discipline in the church. In Matthew 18.15, Jesus Himself says, Moreover, if thy brother, and He's obviously speaking of a believing brother here, shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.

What a neat first step. What a neat first step. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

How neat that is. How simple. How direct.

I won't ask for a show of hands of how many of you have witnessed this taking place. Because the first thing you usually do is spread it around. Now, you know what a secret is? A secret is something you tell one person at a time.

But Jesus goes on in verse 16. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. See, beginning at that point, you're really accusing.

You want to give him the privilege of facing his accuser, but you want witnesses. That it's not an opinion or personality thing. You want to be sure of your facts.

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a tax collector. That was, yeah, that was considered very, very derogatory.

They were regarded in that community as the quizlings, the turncoats. They were on an incentive. Just like certain agencies of the U.S. government.

Well, we could go on with this kind of thing all through the New Testament. 2 Thessalonians 3, 6-16. We will see it in 2 Timothy 2, Romans 16, 2 John, Galatians 6. They'll all be in the notes, a whole list of places you can just track down the development of this one.

But the main point, I guess, we need to face squarely is that sin needs to be dealt with. Why? For lots of reasons, but in the family sense, because it disrupts intimacy in the family. Sin has to be dealt with for lots of other reasons, theologically and before the throne of God, indeed.

But part of what we're dealing with is the pragmatics of a Christian fellowship. 1 Corinthians 5. If you read that, just put that in your notes. 1 Corinthians 5 has half a dozen verses all through that chapter that deal with the need, that sin needs to be developed to preserve intimacy.

Let's jump into the chapter and see if we can wrap up 2 Timothy this evening. Chapter 5, verse 1. Paul's advising Timothy, rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren. The inference we seem to draw here is that Timothy was a little younger, and because he was younger, he

may not have been dealing as the shepherd of the elder, the older people.

The elder here is used here, it could mean an elder in the organizational sense, but probably not. Paul probably had in mind just those that were older than he was. So you deal with them as you would a father, with respect, but you still exhort or whatever.

And the younger men, treat them as brothers. See, that's why I think he's dealing with individuals, not necessarily ranks here, anything like that. And we will find later in the chapter, he's also supposed to not deal with partiality.

And chances are, he was favoring those that were his own age, or maybe younger as opposed to the older, and that may be the flavor of verse 1. But it goes on, the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters with all purity. That again, it sounds like he's really dealing, just counseling Timothy to not let age be a barrier to his position as a leader of that fellowship. Now the next, from verses 3 to 10, he's going to deal with older widows.

He's going to deal with younger widows separately, we'll see shortly. But the dealing of widows shows up first in Acts 6, where non-Israeli Jews, called Greeks there, but they may have been Jewish, but of non-Israeli type, felt that their widows weren't being taken care of like the others within the fellowship. There's a little tension there in Acts 6, that's when they set up a few separated to take care of them.

The word there is servant or deacon, and from that episode has emerged the concept of having a role of deacons as such in the fellowship. The Old Testament had specific legislation in the Torah for the dealing with widows. Deuteronomy 10.18, 24.17, Isaiah 1.17, that's pretty straightforward, we don't have to track them down now.

There's also a number of passages that deal with special care for widows in Deuteronomy 14.39, Psalm 94.6, and Malachi 3.5. And that's pretty straightforward. Let's go to verse 3. Honor widows that are widows indeed. Now what do you mean widows indeed? That means widows without other family.

Now I've always wondered what that meant, those that are widows indeed. You mean that the guy is really dead? I used to read that, you know, and I'll be honest with you, I read that a lot, and it bothered me. I didn't have the impetus to go dig, what on earth does that mean? So getting ready for tonight, I thought, hey, I can't stumble over this one, I better dig it.

And I gather what that implies, with the liturgical language translated, what it really implies, is those, you'll see why as the passage develops. Widows are supposed to be taken care of by their own family. And where there are widows indeed, what it meant was widows without other family to provide for them.

That makes sense, and it fits the context, and that is my understanding of it. See, honor thy father and thy mother is still there in the Ten Commandments, I checked, it's still there. Exodus 20 verse 12, and also in Ephesians chapter 6, first three verses of chapter 6 focus on that.

But if, verse 4, but if any widow have children or nephews, that's an unfortunate translation, it's only translated that way here. And it derives because there's no word for grandchildren. You know, in the Old Testament, you always see father, son, you don't know if it's grandson.

In other words, sometimes, see, it's a forebear or a descendant, it's not necessarily, your son is not necessarily, we have a different concept, our son is our immediate issue. His son is our grandson, or

great-grand, you know, we have a chain concept in our language. They didn't, so it happens that this word here, that in your King James Bible is translated nephews, really means grandchildren, as we would properly translate it today.

But anyway, those that have children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents, for that is good and acceptable before God. In other words, if they're God-fearing children, they should be providing for their grandmother, if she's widowed and so forth. Verse 5, Now she that is widowed indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplication and prayers night and day.

This is alluding here to helping someone that, at least, you could take this and break down a whole bunch of requirements, but there's two obvious ones. One is they're without other support from their own family, and secondly, they are within the fellowship. They're not just unbelievers, they are in the fellowship, but they're without it.

Now, the church, the early church, they didn't have pension plans or social security, all these other things that are part of our culture. This was the concept, is that the church was to take them in and find a way to provide for their needs. But verse 6, But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

In other words, he's presuming that the person that's under focus here is one that is in the fellowship, in walking with God, and not living for pleasure. Because if you live for pleasure, she's dead even while she liveth, he's saying. And these things give in charge that they may be blameless.

In other words, Paul is giving Timothy instruction, but pointing out that they should be blameless, that is not spending their time on idle gossip or being disruptive and so forth. Then we get to verse 8. The immediate context of verse 8, obviously, is Paul's instruction to families taking care of their widows and so forth. But I want you to notice very clearly, verse 8, in my mind, is one of the most important verses in the book.

So I don't know what your habits are. I usually try to, if there's a very key verse, I try to mark it. Those of you that are given Scripture memory, I encourage you to do that.

I have felt very, very committed to Scripture memory all my life. I have shifted my gears as I speak from a platform, because I'm always fearful if I do it from memory, I'll fumble it. So that's why I tend to try to read it so that I don't mess it up.

So I mention that because this is one very worth committing to memory. But if any provide not for his own, his own family, right, and specially of those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. Whoa, wait a minute.

This is not casual conversation. This is the Apostle Paul, a thoroughbred, if I can use that expression, Pharisee, trained in the best schools of the Greek tradition and the best schools of the Hebrew tradition. He was taught under Gamaliel himself.

He was precise in his use of words. And he didn't mess around. He wasn't casual in his selection of idioms.

What is Paul saying? If any provide not for his own, especially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, his actions, and is worse than an infidel. Does that mean he loses his salvation? I don't think that's

what he's saying. He's just making a point.

And boy, has he got it underlined. He's saying that if we're going to be obedient to God, one of our commitments of stewardship are our families, especially those under our roof. And if any of you guys that are heads of households aren't uncomfortable right now, you weren't listening carefully.

Okay? And it's a very, very sobering injunction. I think it is so straightforward, I don't have to amplify it. I don't have to ... Actually, what I often will do, I'll point out, do you know what that says in the Greek? That if any provide not for his own, especially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

That's what it means. It means what it says, says what it means. This isn't an interpretive problem.

This isn't a problem of Greek grammar or something. No, it's right between the eyes, guys, for all of us. Anyway, going on to verse 9. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man.

And it goes on. Now notice, there's a clue here. Taken in that number.

That means to be enrolled or put on the list. This is a term used for the enrollment of soldiers. A mustering list.

What this tells us is that pattern of the early church, that the church actually officially put on the roll those widows that they were committing to take care of. It wasn't sort of a casual thing. Gee, well, you know, we'll take Aunt Bessie a carton of canned goods this afternoon.

No, it was one of taking on some responsibilities for them. And he's saying, let not a widow be taken into that number under threescore. In other words, she had to be at least 60 years old.

And having been the wife of one man. And going on, well reported of good works. If she had brought up children.

If she had lodged strangers. If she had washed the saints' feet. If she had relieved the afflicted.

If she had diligently followed every good work. This sort of echoes Dorcas. Remember in Acts 9, Dorcas and her widow friends.

They were widows, but they were helpful. They were busy doing things constructively. He's going to talk more about that before we're through.

There is, Paul suggests, a definite connection between idleness and sinfulness. And we have lots of little proverbs that, you know, idle heads are the devils, whatever. You know, this is embodied in several idioms.

It's interesting. If she had brought up children, okay. If she had lodged strangers.

That was important ministry in those days. They didn't have an in-keeping tradition like we're beneficiaries of. Travel was dangerous.

Having a place to stay was a challenge. And so hospitality carried a premium. And if she washed the saints' feet, that was sort of a standard menial task for visitors.

In terms of, you know, you're familiar with that, I'm sure. And if she relieved the afflicted. If she diligently followed every good work.

He's going on here. But now he shifts it to the younger. But the younger widows refuse.

I mean, it doesn't mean you freeze them from a fellowship. Don't put them on the list. Why? For they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, and they will marry, having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

And with all, they learn to be idle, wandering from house to house. And not only idle, but tattlers also in busy bodies, speaking things which they ought not. In those days, they had to go house to house, because they didn't have telephones.

Paul's basic thrust is that, bear in mind that much of this is, of course, culturally dependent, but the younger ones, in fact, he's going to go on here, he's going to amplify. He would, that if they're younger, to start a new family, to do it. They're widows, they can marry again, and have a family, and do that which glorifies the Lord.

Verse 14. I will, therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. Remember the adversary, Satan.

His name means the accuser. Satan goes about looking for those he can accuse. Now, it's interesting, and much of this is so direct, and so obvious, it doesn't require a lot of amplification or exposition, it's pretty straightforward.

But it's interesting, there are people, always, that would argue, they would forego having children, because, quote, of the awfulness of the times. And there are people that feel that way today. They look at our country, and they look at the public school, the government school system, and they find all kinds of reasons, gee, do we want to bring up kids in that? They really have this attitude.

Well, I can understand how they feel, but when you start thinking that way, compare today with Paul's day. Paul's day was worse than today, in the sense it was tyranny, they were under Rome, immorality was not less than it is today, our immorality is incredibly gross in America, when contrasted to several decades ago, maybe a century ago, whatever. But we used to compare to the period that Paul wrote in that first century.

Man, that should encourage us, because even in that day, Paul says, I will therefore that the young will marry and have their children, because where's the hope in the future if we don't have Christian children? Think about it. Now, he talks about guiding the house, and there is a role here, guiding the house, and this is one of those places I will indulge in a departure, turn to Proverbs 31, let's start about verse 10. I want you to remember this, guys, because if you're looking, instead of going down on Valentine's Day or an anniversary to the Hallmark store, take a piece of paper, copy Proverbs 31, verses 10 to the end, on a nice piece of paper, fold it neatly, put a flower or something on it, and you will score more than the \$6.95 big thing out of, anyway, okay.

Yeah. Proverbs 31, verse 10, And who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchant ships.

She bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth food to her household and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field and buys it, and with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good. Her lamp goeth not out by night.

She layeth her hands to the spindle, her hands ahold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor. Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry. Her clothing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, where he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen and selleth it, and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who feareth the Lord shall be praised. Just give her the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.

And I know all about this because I married one. Well, moving back on. See, each marriage partner has a sphere of activity.

Now, admittedly, this is cast in the idiom of the agrarian society of that day. But she was productive, she was faithful, she was committed to the household, the family. And not in a passive sense, she was active.

He was out there at the gates, he was an elderman. That was like city hall. She managed the household.

And she guided the house, to use the phrase that Paul uses towards Timothy. Now, he says, verse 14, Give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. It's interesting, the word occasion in the Greek actually is a military term meaning a base of operations.

It's interesting, you see, this idea of spiritual warfare isn't just an idiom of Ephesians chapter 6. It's embedded throughout all the language, all through here. And it's going to continue in chapter 6, the use of military terms for what Paul's trying to get across. Verse 15, For some are already turned aside after Satan.

See, Satan's always alert to an opportunity to invade and destroy a Christian home. Satan has to attack the home. God ordained the marriage and the home for far more than just a convenient module with which to put together society.

He uses the marriage all through the scripture to communicate his most intimate truths. That's true of Adam and Eve. That's true of Ruth and Boaz.

Ephesians 5 is the great study on that. And I won't derail us here. I want to keep us moving.

But Satan has to attack the home. When you see a movement that attacks the family or the church, you know its source. I'm not impugning well-intentioned people that are just happening misguided in some of these movements.

That's not my point to call them names. No misunderstanding. But the movement is out of the pit of hell.

Satan has to destroy the family and the home to accomplish his objectives. Verse 16, If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged, that it may relieve them that are widows indeed. In other words, he's addressing this, instructing Timothy, in the church where there are families that can care for their widows, let them do that to leave the resources for those that aren't in that position.

That's what he was saying. And again, widows indeed or widows without family. Verse 17, Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.

See, there are two kinds of elders, those that rule and those that teach. Some did both, but there's also two distinct roles here. Those that rule, those that administer, those that organize things, and those that teach the word and the doctrine.

And he says double honor. Now, by the way, the elders were chosen and ordained and set aside for the work. I'm going to go through a whole study of that.

Acts 14, 23, 20, 17, 28. And Titus chapter 1 will deal with that. The word honor here, you may miss the point here.

When a speaker goes to a church to speak, he's usually given some expenses, travel and lodging, and he's usually given what they call an honorarium, a fee, modest for modest churches, sometimes handsome for larger churches, but that's what we call an honorarium. It's done in academic circles also. That's the word here.

It speaks of an honor, a double, give those that do well, those who are counted worthy, a double honor. In other words, he's saying that it should reflect the ones that are doing well. Verse 18, For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.

He's quoting Deuteronomy 25, 4. And the laborer is worthy of his reward. Who said that? Jesus did in Luke 10, verse 7. Now, many ministries are struggling along, and so they typically have a hard time even compensating anything, let alone, you know, normal wages. But other ministries that grow larger should, in fact, treat their people appropriately from these verses.

I have seen organizations make mistakes in both directions. There are some ministries that are so penurious that they injure young families that are committed to serving the Lord by not providing for them properly. Arguing that, gee, we want people that are really committed to the Lord's work.

Yes, but that coin has two sides. Loyalty goes in both directions. The flip side is also, I've seen ministries that overpay their people and have political problems.

Oh, you can't believe the problems that introduces because people are there for the wrong reasons or at least lose sight of what they're really there. So balance is very difficult at best. It's not just budget.

It's one of philosophy and so forth. And I'm sure we're not perfect, but our team tries to work very hard to try to repair that where we can. Verse 19.

Against an elder, receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. This is a little similar, but a little different kind of thing that we're talking about Matthew 18. He's really saying caution number one.

Be sure of the facts. Don't indulge in gossip. If there's going to be an accusation, let it be before two or three witnesses.

Let's make this... Them that sin, rebuke before all that others also may fear. Now, that is a step one. Don't confuse this with Matthew 18, which lays down a very, very careful procedure.

But Paul's just saying to do things openly. It's really his argument here. I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing but partiality.

In other words, don't let the fact that he's a big donor or something cloud the judgment. Verse 22, lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of any other man's sin, keep thyself pure. It may not be obvious what he's talking about.

The laying on of hands was a procedural way of acknowledging a partnership in the ministry. When we first started the ministry down in California, some friends of ours had a meeting at their home and they had, I think, I've forgotten now, maybe 20 or 30 people there. And we prayed, they all laid hands and blessed man lies, we went into a full-time mode in our ministry.

But Paul is saying here, lay hands suddenly on no man. In other words, don't lay hands on someone quickly until you know their mettle and that you're sure of what you're doing. Neither be a partaker of other man's sin, keep thyself pure.

And so he's just saying to be cautious in this sort of thing. Verse 23, drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. Now, it's clear, if you study the scripture, I believe that abstinence is not required of a believer.

But, at the same time, I think we talked about this before, but there are many appropriate opportunities to withhold partaking in wine with dinner for fear you might cause somebody else to stumble. And Paul deals with that. At the same time, you know, it's funny, if you're in Britain, you quickly discover the place to get a nice light meal or a lunch or something is at a pub.

They know how to do that. That's one of their cultural traditions. You don't have to go there and drink beer.

Although, if you feel like it, that's fine, if it's in moderation, in my opinion. I'll just leave it that way. I'm sure I'll get letters on that one.

I don't happen to, because I didn't develop a taste for it in college. I was so turned off by the excess that I went the other way myself. It happens, it's just a matter of taste.

But if you're in Britain, if you want a good meal, you go to a pub. And if you're here in Post Falls and haven't discovered cases across the street, you're in for a pleasant surprise. Because the best food in Post Falls.

They also happen to be a microbrewery, so if you like beer, they offer all that too, sure. But one of our little secrets is we'll pop over there before the Tuesday night study together because it's the best meal in Post Falls, bluntly. And many people miss that because, well, that looks like a tavern.

Well, yeah, but they also have wonderful, wonderful meals. The point is, what I'm getting at here, moderation in all things. And I want to confess to you, I want to confess to you my lack of moderation with chocolate.

Nan, I suspect, deep down in her heart, is grateful for that. You know, between alcohol, drugs, or womanizing, she'd rather have me addicted to chocolate, okay? And so the Bible clearly encourages to show moderation in all things. And not to have immoderation in anything.

Verse 24, Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men may follow after. Likewise, also the good works of some are manifest beforehand, and they that are otherwise cannot be hid. Some people reap what they sow in this life.

Those that don't, it'll catch up with them. So that's really the gist of that, in my opinion. But Chapter 6 continues.

The military tone of the language continues. We're going to talk a little bit here about the relationship between capital and labor. And that may surprise you, because Verse 1 is one of those verses most of us don't really understand because we don't pay attention.

There are several verses. The other example of this is the early chapters, the first half of Ephesians Chapter 6. Because it talks about masters and slaves. And we're not in that kind of an economy here.

But most of us think, gee, we're against slavery, and that has to do with them back then. No, that was the economy. The equivalent today are employers and employees.

Until you understand that, you'll miss some important truths as we go by. Verse 1 says, By the way, the word servants here, in the Greek, is the same word as slaves, the doulos. It applies, in effect, to employment.

Now, in that particular word, it was indentured servitude. It wasn't hourly pay. But I think most of you that live paycheck to paycheck do understand it's servitude, right? Okay.

Now, it's estimated by some scholars that approximately 50% of the population of the Roman Empire were slaves. Fifty percent. And many of these, by the way, were educated, highly cultured, did not enjoy legal status as persons, but did have, when they had time off, and they did from time to time, they would fellowship.

And it was obviously Christianity took its root hole among that group, because they could understand what liberty meant in Christ. Now, one of the things that Paul was trying to deal with is these doulos that were Christians were not to use their liberty in Christ as an excuse to disobey or rebel or defy authority and so forth. Verse 2, 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 benefit.

These things teach and exhort. That's pretty obvious. In other words, it's very strange that if you had a master that was a believer, you had all the more reason not to impose on that.

Either despise him or resent the fact that he's your master. You follow me? The problem's almost the other way around. You follow me? In their mind, that Paul's dealing with.

Now, it's interesting that at that time, Paul did not, nor did the scripture that I'm aware of, did they speak out against the institution of slavery. Doesn't mean they endorsed it. But I think part of the lesson is you pick your battles.

If they had fought the institution, they would have been crushed by the powers that be in that situation. That was the way the economy worked. And it looks strange to us because we were quite distanced from that kind of a cultural thing.

And actually to have spoken out against slavery there probably would have hindered the gospel by that distraction of that battle. So one must be careful, I suspect, in picking one's battles. And anyway, verse 3. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud knowing nothing but noting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, and on it goes.

What Paul is instructing Timothy to do is monitor continuously what is being taught. He's the elder of the church. Pay attention to what's being taught.

And there are these people that will go around proud, but donning on questions and strifes of words, and out of which comes what? Envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, and it goes on, perverse disputings of men's corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, and from such withdraw thyself. It's interesting that one of the badges of a false teacher is pride. It's interesting when you watch that.

It's funny how you can discern arrogance and pride before you necessarily have the background to discern doctrinal differences. Be very sensitive to that. A big heart is much more significant than a big head.

Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds. I have my notes here. I always put little square brackets of reminders here.

The Jesus Seminar comes to mind. You know, it's amazing how in the academic world there are people with just concatenated degrees. Their PhDs and H2SO4s and all that behind their names.

Having elections to decide what Jesus said. What a hermeneutical technique that is. Let's take a vote and decide what he really said.

As if if they cast enough votes maybe he'd resign. I don't know. It's just disgusting to see that which masquerades as scholarship in the Christian community.

Christian in quotes. I won't start on that one. Let's go on.

Verse 6. But godliness with contentment is great gain. What do you mean by contentment? We use that word loosely. How about an inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of outward circumstances? You know, it's interesting to observe that it's the wealthy people, not the poor, who go to psychiatrists and who are more apt to attempt suicide.

That's interesting. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. Job's always quoted, right? Naked came in and so forth.

It's interesting, you know, at a funeral thing. Some attorney in Los Angeles said, How much did so-and-so leave? The answer? All of it. Everything.

He took nothing with him. Verse 8. And having food and raiment, let us therewith be content. I love this Quaker invitation.

The context is, he's watching his next-door neighbor unload. He's moving in his house. He's there, moving vans, unloading all these things and stuff.

And the Quaker goes over and says, If ever thou dost need anything, come to see me, and I will tell thee how to get along without it. Gives you a feeling it helps, not all it's cracked up to be, but all right. You can't talk about this area without quoting Henry David Thoreau, Walden Pond and all of that.

He reminded us that a man is wealthy in proportion to the number of things he can afford to do without. Man, does that change our approach to budgeting and our lives. Simplify.

We've advised for many years a thing we call the Vortex Strategy. From time to time, there's high risk in the economy, in the markets, whatever. High risk in our society.

One of the things you don't get in most portfolio management courses is a strategy which we, for lack of another name, call the Vortex Strategy. We bring it up to date every year. If you haven't seen it, get the current copy of it.

Whether it's Y2K or the inflated market or whatever. Independent of that, the strategy is pretty straightforward. Lower your cost of living.

Get out of debt. Guard your liquidity. And most of all, learn the supernatural basis of stewardship.

And we've added a couple of other things, but I'll leave that for you. You'll have to look it up to find out what those are. Some surprises at the end.

Anyway, verse 9. I always visualize this as a race. You've run this race. You've run it well.

The pack's behind you. You're winning. And as you cross that finish line, you discover you entered the wrong race.

That, to me, would be the greatest horror in life. Is to win at whatever you're doing and discover you were running the wrong race. What a terror that must be.

To put yourself committed into, like an athlete does, to win a race. And having done all, then to discover it really wasn't the race you should have been running. The difference between success and significance.

Very, very significant. Verse 10. Here's this famous verse.

For the love of money is the root of all evil, it says. For while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. By the way, this is probably one of the most misquoted verses in the Bible.

Money is not an evil in itself. It is amoral. Not immoral.

Amoral. It doesn't have morality. Any more than a car or a gun does.

Cars can transport people to the hospital. Cars can also hit people and kill them. Cars are not evil.

Drivers are. Or whatever. I'm not trying to blame the driver either, but you understand what I'm saying.

Guns are the same thing. Sheriff can have a gun. A criminal can have a gun.

The gun is amoral. It's an instrument. No better or worse than the people using it.

Money is no different with a couple of subtleties. It is an instrument with which one gets things done. But, like anything, it can become an idol.

It's probably the most prevalent addictive idol in the land. Probably the second most dangerous addiction in the land. Power is probably number one.

Money is a proxy for power, and that's probably where it gets most dangerous. It's not money that's the root of all evil. You hear that all the time.

It's a misquote. No. It's the love of money.

That is the root of all kinds of evil. The love of money. The obsession or pursuit of money.

That is a, not the, a root of all evils. It's not the only root of evil. Man has all kinds of evil.

But it's obviously very prevalent. Now, it's alright to have what money can buy if you don't lose what money cannot buy. That's really the point I think that's going to come through here.

Money is not the root of all evil. Greed is. The love of money is.

Jesus said, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. And Jesus commented on the difference between a hireling and a true shepherd in John chapter 10. In the interest of time, we'll keep moving.

How should a believer view money? Well, first of all, wealth is not a sin. We find that in 1 Samuel 2, 7, 1 Chronicles 29, 12. Abraham, Job, and Solomon had one thing, at least one thing in common.

They're all incredibly wealthy. Abraham might have been the most wealthy person on the planet Earth in his day. He had his own army.

And Job, when it all started, was at the top of the heap. He found himself a little later on top of a different heap, but yeah, that's the whole story. Money, Deuteronomy 8 points out that money is a gift from God.

If you have wealth, it's from God's hand. Believers should be willing to part with their money when God requires it. Matthew 19, 27, and Job also deals with that.

Money should be used for eternal purposes. Those are all ways a believer should view it. Now, what is the nature of the love of money? Well, first of all, if you're really in love with money, you'll ignore true gain, according to verse 6 of this chapter.

And also Philippians 4, be content with such as you have. Psalm 63, and on it goes. The love of money, the greed of money, focuses on the temporal rather than the eternal.

You tend to be focused on the near and now and tactical rather than eternal strategies. And there are lots of verses for that. I'll spare you right now.

And, of course, the real danger of money is that it obscures the simplicity of life. You get with it that its attendant responsibilities will distract you from life's real pleasures. Money, of course, the love of money will result in sinful entrapment, being fall prey to harmful desires and thus eternal judgment.

And we see examples of that. Remember the sin of Achan in Joshua chapter 7. It was that lust for that Babylon garment that caused Israel to get clobbered in the battle of Ai. Judas, it was his love of money that caused him to go down through history, eternity, as the betrayer.

And on it goes. Remember our study of James. James has much to say about that same thing.

Anyway, verse 11. But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, and patience, meekness. But thou, he's saying in contrast to the false teachers.

This whole passage has been in contrast to the false teachings. He says, but thou. He calls him a man of God.

Boy, what a title. And Paul uses that. That puts Timothy in good company.

Moses was called that in Deuteronomy 33. Samuel in 1 Samuel 9. Elijah in 1 Kings 17. David in Nehemiah 12.

And there are probably others I've missed. He says, flee these things. If you've had any training in hand-to-hand combat.

I remember this so vividly because I went to the Naval Academy and that's part of the program there. Your first lesson is to find mechanisms to get out of there first. They presume that if you're engaged in hand-to-hand combat, it's to the death.

And your first step is to avoid it. There are all kinds of techniques they teach you to try to avoid the engagement. Get out of there.

Live to fight another day, so to speak. Fleeing can be a mark of wisdom. And fleeing can be a means of victory.

Especially in the spiritual sense that we're talking about here. Remember Joseph when he was tempted by another man's wife? He fled. Gave him victory.

And by the way, Potiphar knew that she was lying. Remember she accused him? How did he know? If he believed her, he would have had him killed. In fact, he put him in prison.

It was his middle ground. God had purpose in it. Remember David? What did he do when Saul tried to kill him? He fled.

Fleeing is not dishonorable. Our job is to be obedient. The victory is the Lord's.

Which means that not all unity is good. Not all division is bad. I'll leave that and we'll move on.

We must cultivate these graces of the Spirit in our lives. Or we'll be only known for what we oppose rather than what we propose. There are many people whose ministries are built on attacking other people.

And you don't know what they stand for. All you know is what they're against. They're against so and so because of this.

They're against so and so because... Once you start down that path, you're going to dig a spiral right into the ground. In this here, we have righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness in verse 11. Righteousness.

What does that mean? I would call that personal integrity. Boy, how that's absent in the Christian community is no exception. Godliness.

What do you mean by godliness? Let's call it practical piety. The first one has to do with character. The second one has to do with conduct.

Personal integrity and practical piety. These righteousness, godliness, these terms tend to be platitudes, idioms. Let's look at what it really means.

Personal integrity, practical piety. Faith. It doesn't have to be faith.

Faithfulness. Dependability is what's in view here. Love.

And, of course, the word is agape. The love that sacrifices for others to give not to gain. Patience.

Endurance. Enduring to the end. When the going gets tough, the tough get going, they say.

Good, good advice. Meekness. What do you mean meekness? Power under control.

Continuing in verse 12. I think we'll make it. Continuing in verse 12.

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.

The word fight here in the Greek is an interesting word. It's agony. It's the word from the Greek from which we get the English word agony.

Struggling. Straining to win. Not just fight.

We're talking, you know, a real struggle. Fight the good fight of faith. When Paul was at the end of his life, we'll discover in his second letter to Timothy, chapter 4, he says, I have fought the good fight.

I have finished the course. I've kept the faith. By the way, the fight he's talking about here is not between believers.

I hate to tell you how much energy gets derailed over the last decade or so in the ministry by trying to figure out how to respond to adversaries that are within the body. Let's try to remember who the enemy really is. We should be like Nehemiah, though, a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other.

From here, if we had the time, we could digress into Ephesians, chapter 6, verse 10 through 18, which details the seven elements of your armor, and you should put it on every day, every piece. You need to know what they are, and you need to do it daily. I'll leave you with that as your homework assignment.

Ephesians 6, 10 through 18. Verse 13, I hear back in Timothy, I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, I give thee charge, he's giving him a commandment, an order, like a military, this is not a suggestion, this is a command. I give thee charge.

Verse 14, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. The appearing word here is epiphany. It's used of his first coming and his second coming.

He knows his schedule. Nobody else does. And our task is to be faithful every day and abide in him.

Verse 15. By the way, is Jesus coming back tomorrow? How many think he's going to come back tomorrow? That's great. See, if we're in such an hour where you think not, there's another man coming.

See? Okay. All right. I confused a few of you, didn't I? Yeah, right.

There's Chuck Missler, date setting again. I can hear it coming. Verse 15.

Which in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Quoted, of course, in Revelation 17 and 19. Verse 16.

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. Of course, he's emphasizing immortality.

We need not fear life because God is ruling everything. Nothing in life should cause you fear because God is in control. Once you really understand that, it takes away all fear.

Really understand the love of God. If you don't understand the love of God, you've got to get my wife's book, The Way of Agape. Understanding God's love.

And we need not fear death because he shares immortality with us. So if you don't fear life and don't fear death, you've got it covered, I think. Verse 17.

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. Wow. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded.

See, that's the danger of wealth is pride. That's the real fundamental danger of wealth is pride and arrogance. Nor trust in uncertain riches.

Being rich isn't the problem. Trusting it is. No, you rely on Jesus Christ.

But not without having done your homework. In a stewardship sense. Nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to what? What does that say? There's a verb you didn't think

was in the Bible.

What does it say? To enjoy. Absolutely. Absolutely.

See, Deuteronomy 8.18 points that out. We are not owners of anything. We're just stewards.

I remember my wife and I, many years ago, were buying a piece of property. And the realtor made that point. It was a very beautiful home, and we were able to put it together.

He says, you don't really own a home like this. You just share it for a while. And it's really true.

Regarding wealth, Joshua chapter 1.8. It's one of the life verses. Many people have this as a life verse. It's a neat verse.

But many people, unless they've really studied it, miss what it says. If you ever sing the song, Showers of Blessing, you may find verse 8 of chapter 1 of Joshua interesting. Joshua is getting instruction here.

The Lord spoke to Joshua and gave him his charge. In verse 8, the Lord tells Joshua, This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein. It doesn't finish yet.

But notice, you don't just read it. You see that you observe it, right? Notice what it says then. For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous.

It doesn't just flow. Then you get up, roll up your sleeves, and you make your way prosperous. Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

One is a prerequisite to the other, but you don't eliminate effort. You see? They inherited the promised land, but there were wars there. They had to go claim it.

They had to go do it, and so forth. But anyway, I love this word enjoy in this verse. The word enjoy is in the Bible.

The Latin equivalent, I think, is carpe diem. Seize the day. Enjoy each day as a blessing from the Lord.

Enjoy every sunset. Enjoy the real blessings. And the tragedy of wealth is that that can get in the way with things.

Things, toys, whatever. So you seize the day. What for? To glorify God.

The greatest joy you'll have. Eighteen. That they do good, that they be rich in goods that works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

You're to trust God, not wealth. See, the pursuit of wealth is a fundamental insecurity. The people I've known that are really successful, the wealth was just the way they kept score.

They weren't after the money. They were after getting things done, and they measured their progress by wealth. I'm speaking just in materialistic, secular terms.

There are hundreds of studies about entrepreneurs. They don't do it to get rich. They do it to get something done.

If they do it cleverly and properly, they get wealth as a byproduct. That doesn't mean they don't enjoy it, they're not motivated by it. Don't misunderstand me, but their real target is to get things done.

And they have a dream, or they see a need, or they respond to that. And so it's the pursuit of wealth that is usually a form of insecurity. And often the apparent, ostensible, that's how I use the term, ostensible security of wealth, is a barrier to walking with the Lord.

Because your balance sheet is your comfort blanket. It wasn't for me. We had at one time a very substantial net worth.

We taught Bible studies, very sincere in all of that. Don't misunderstand me. For more than 20 or 30 years.

But had a very successful executive career, had a very, very substantial net worth. But that was always, in our heart of hearts, a security blanket. Without realizing it constantly, that was our trust.

We were comfortable, not because we trust the Lord, but because, gee, we had an investment portfolio or whatever. See, it can get in the way. You don't trust wealth.

You may use wealth for good purposes, but you don't trust in it. It's too ephemeral. Verse 19, Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life.

By the way, they say you can't take it with you. Wrong. You can.

You set it up ahead. Luke 16 will tell you how. Okay.

Verse 20, O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and the oppositions of science, falsely so called. Now indeed, what we have that masquerades as science in our culture is not science at all. Science purports to be the pursuit of truth.

That's not true. That's a lie. Science seeks to explain things, restricting itself to naturalistic explanations.

They put that self-imposed constraint on themselves, which is their privilege to do, but they don't call it by a name, by its name. They're not willing to really follow the evidence, and the best example of that is this utter nonsense that's called biogenesis or what we call evolution. No longer supportable in the minds of many, many competent scientists.

Not necessarily fundamentalists or Christians or biblical. It doesn't explain what we know about the universe, and yet it's still taught in our schools. But the word science here, we could prattle on about that, but candidly, the word science here is not science, the technology thing that you and I associate with that label.

But it's rather knowledge falsely so called. Pseudo-scholarship is what's really in view here in a much broader sense than just picking on the scientists per se. But by the way, denotatively, Paul probably was speaking against the Gnostics.

G, it's Gnostics, but pronounced Gnostics. The G is silent. This was a sect that emerged in the early centuries that claimed to have special knowledge.

And by, see, the Greek word for knowledge is gnosis, or gnosis, if you will. An agnostic is one who does not know. Gnostic is one that claims to know, and agnostic is one that says he doesn't know or can't know.

And it's very interesting, you know, if you're at a cocktail party, it's very fashionable in some circles to say, well, I'm an agnostic. They say, well, you're using the Greek root. You know what the Latin root is? The Latin root doesn't quite work.

I'm an ignoramus. It's the same word. Agnostic is the Greek, ignoramus is the Latin.

But the ignoramus doesn't work at cocktail parties for some reason. Gnostics that was probably specifically in view here was a strange amalgam of Christianity, Oriental mysticism, Greek philosophy, and Jewish legalism that Colossians and other letters were written directly to. Well, we're almost at the end.

Verse 21, which some professing have aired concerning the faith. Grace be with thee, amen. There's an important word here that closes.

I don't mean the amen. The word thee. I wanted to get into this.

I thought we'd spend the next 20 minutes going through the exegesis of this particular Greek, but we're out of time. No, I'm kidding. The word therefore thee is the second person plural.

Plural. Now, understand what that means. Let me translate this more properly.

Grace be with all of you. It isn't to Timothy. It was understood by Paul all the way through here, even though he's instructing Timothy, that this was to be read and observed by the church, the entire church.

And all the church had a responsibility to hear and obey as well. And so do we today. Let's stand for a closing word of prayer.

Let's bow our hearts. Well, Father, we thank you for this evening. We thank you that you've brought us all here together in the assembly, in this kingdom of priests that you've ordained.

We thank you, Father, for drawing us into what you are doing. We pray, Father, that you would indeed increase in each of us a sensitivity to your heart and your will for our lives. We pray, Father, that you would ordain our desires to be what you would have us desire.

We pray, Father, that you would have our goals be those goals that you would have us aspire to. We pray, Father, that you would increase in each of us knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and that you would help illuminate for each of us that path that you have before us. And, Father, we pray that you'd help us recognize that each of us are called into a full-time ministry, even though we may be at work or at play or in school or whatever, that we are still to be in your service.

And, Father, we would just seek more discernment in all our decisions that they might be prioritized by your Word and by your Spirit. We pray, too, Father, that you'd make us ever more effective stewards of the resources that you have entrusted to us. The most precious of all resources being the time that's available.

Help us, Father, to seize the day, to enjoy the blessings that you shower upon us, to have the insight and the gratitude to recognize what you've provided for us, and the discernment to exploit that opportunity for your glory. And, Father, we also pray for increased resolve in all our commitments before your throne. We pray, Father, that we would indeed approach our faith as soldiers that are serious about our commitments, leaving the victory in your hands.

Father, we would seek to have the same commitment to our faith as an athlete does to his sport, keeping our eye on the prize. And, Father, we commit ourselves once again into your hands. Indeed, in the name of Yeshua HaMashiach, our Lord and our Savior, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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