

(Through the Bible) 1 Timothy 5-6

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon on 1 Timothy 5-6 emphasizes proper church conduct, the care of widows, and the importance of honoring elders while addressing health and healing issues.

Duration: 1:20:22

Scripture: 1 Timothy 5:1

Topics: "Godly Living", "Overcoming Greed"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of communication and helping those in need. He refers to a parable of a servant who, upon learning he would be fired, cleverly negotiates with his master's creditors to reduce their debts. The speaker encourages listeners to make God the center of their lives and to seek righteousness and godliness. He charges them to keep this commandment until the Lord returns. The sermon also addresses the issue of greed and how it is the root cause of wars and conflicts in the world, highlighting the need for responsible spending and prioritizing the well-being of others.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 5. Paul is a spiritual father to Timothy. Timothy's mentor. He looks upon him as a son.

In fact, he calls him his son in the faith. Timothy has been left in Ephesus to oversee the church that Paul established there. While he is in Ephesus, Paul wrote to him this epistle.

And in this epistle, he seeks to instruct Timothy in things of the church. In a Bible doctrine class in seminary, you would have a subject known as ecclesiology. And they use the epistles of Thessalonians and Timothy for their ecclesiology classes.

For as Paul said in verse 15, how that he has written these things in order that he might know how he ought to behave in the house of the Lord. So, as we get to chapter 5, he deals first of all with Timothy's behavior towards the elders, men, the younger men, the elder women, and the younger women. Rebuke not an elder.

Timothy was a younger man. He told them, don't let any man despise thy youth. And here Paul is telling him not to rebuke an elder, but entreat him as a father.

Looking upon him as a father and talk to him as you would a father. Entreat him as you would a father. Older people, I think, naturally resent being told by younger people what they ought to do or being rebuked by younger people.

So, Paul said, don't rebuke them. Entreat him as a father. And the younger men as brothers.

There is a right way and a wrong way of calling a person's attention to a failure in their walk. The wrong way engenders strife, resentment. The way I present it to a person can create an animosity.

Be careful that we don't build walls and barriers by the way in which we seek to correct someone. In dealing with the younger men, Paul said, entreat them like a brother. Treat the older men like fathers.

The elder women as mothers and the younger as sisters with all purity. Timothy was evidently unmarried. Paul tells him in another place to flee youthful lust.

Treat the younger women like sisters. And then honor widows that are widows indeed. And now Paul seeks to define for Timothy who are the true widows.

If any widow have children or the word nephew should be translated grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety at home and to requit their parents for that is good and acceptable before God. So, the first responsibility, and Paul will repeat this again, for the welfare and the care of the widows lies upon the children and the grandchildren. Now, the church did take upon itself the responsibility of caring for the needy within the body.

It was a part of the ministry of the church. You remember in Acts chapter 6 where the Grecians came to the apostles and they complained that their widows were not being dealt with as bountifully as were the Hebrews at the administration of the church's welfare program. And so there was a taking care of the widows by the church, but Paul seeks to define who are really qualified to come under the care of the church.

If a widow had children or grandchildren, then it was their primary and first responsibility to take care of their needs. Now, she that is a widow indeed and desolate, now these are the ones that the church is to take care of, one who is a widow indeed and desolate, who's trusting in God and is continuing in supplications and prayers night and day, and that is really the qualification for those widows that were to be taken care of by the church. They really were given a ministry within the church, and the ministry within the church was the ministry of intercessory prayer.

And so they trusted in God and were continuing in supplications and prayers night and day for the church and the work of the church. How grateful we are for those prayers of the older women within the church. I really feel a tremendous loss here at Calvary with the death of many of these older women who held the church up in prayer continually.

We had a blessed group of older women, many of them widows, who have now gone to be with the Lord, but who had this special ministry of prayer and supplication night and day. Paul said, in contrast to those, those that are living in pleasure are dead while they still live. I think that one of the most reprehensible things going is a dirty old woman.

Now, I think dirty old men are bad too, but you know, there is something about an older lady that there should have developed that softness and that beauty. And you see some beautiful older lady who is a

grandmotherly type, and then you hear her talk and she's using profanity and all. And it's just something that doesn't set right.

It's just not there. You know, I think that you usually think of the older women as mothers. And the way that some of them talk or act is just really reprehensible.

And one of the saddest things is to see in Las Vegas, these old ladies standing there at these one-armed bandits, just working those things all day long with a cigarette hanging out of their mouth, you know. I mean, that just isn't, in my mind, the picture of what old ladies ought to be doing. There is a beauty that comes to that older woman who has been walking with the Lord.

There's almost a sacredness. I love to just sit down and share with those who have been walking with the Lord through the years. And from their mouth there pours the richness of God's love and God's goodness through the years.

Widows indeed. But those that are living for pleasure, those poor gals in Vegas, they're dead, Paul said, while they're still alive. I mean, they may still be breathing, but man, they're dead.

And so is anybody who lives for pleasure. Spiritually dead, though they still may be alive. And these things, Paul said, give in charge that they may be blameless.

For if any provide not for his own, especially those of his own house, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. That is, if they do not take care of the members of their own family, if they do not take care of the needs of those of their own family, really they have denied the faith. Honor thy father and mother, the scripture said.

And you've denied the faith if you refuse to take care of your elderly parents, grandparents. Now, let not a widow be taken into the number under 60 years of age, having been the wife of one man. Now, this special ministry for widows, it seemed to be a ministry that was set aside in the church.

And it was something that was an honored position. It was more or less a lifetime commitment by the older women to really give themselves to the burden of prayer and the prayer ministry for the church. And there was almost an office for the widows of the ministry of prayer.

They were supported by the church. They were put on the church's payroll and their duty was just to continue night and day in prayer and supplication for the church. And I'll tell you, the church would be wise to hire the widows to do that, be profited by that kind of a ministry, a lot more than probably some of these young men that we put on staff who don't know quite yet what they're doing.

If we had some widows that we put on staff just to pray for the church, a valuable asset, you know, you widows looking for a job. So, let the widow not be taken into the number that is this special ministry group who are cared for by the church, who are under 60 years of age, having been the wife of one husband, who are well reported for their good works. These are their qualifications.

They've got to have a good report that they have been doing good works, if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. Great qualifications. Then there was this special area of ministry for them.

But Paul said, the younger widows, don't take them into this special company. Refuse them. For when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry, having not damnation, but condemnation because they have cast off their first faith.

So, Paul says that the younger widows should marry. If they are brought into this special company and ministry within the church and then should leave that, fall in love and so forth, having made that commitment to Christ, having put the hand of the plow turning back, they would feel condemned. Not good.

It is better that they just go ahead and marry and bear children and all, and not be brought into this special company of ministering widows within the church. For if the church is taking care of them, they're apt to be just going around from house to house, becoming idle and tattlers and busybodies, speaking about things that they should not be speaking. So, better that they marry, have the responsibility of bearing their children, guiding their houses, and it then gives no occasion for the enemy to speak reproachfully.

For he said, some are already turned aside after Satan. Now, if any man or woman that believes has widows, let them take care of them and not the church be charged, that they may take care of them that are widows indeed. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and doctrine.

Now, this indicates that there were other ministries for the older men besides just teaching the word and teaching doctrine. But these older men, these older saints, accounted worthy of double honor. Again, even as the older women are a tremendous blessing to the church, so those older men who have walked with the Lord for years can be a tremendous blessing to the church.

How I thank God for the ministry of the older men in this church. The blessing that they are, the ministry that they have, and they should be accounted worthy of double honor. For the Scripture says, you are not to muzzle the ox that treads out the corn, and the labor is worthy of his hire.

So, the double honor to the older men. Them, and against an elder, receive not an accusation unless there be at least two or three witnesses. Don't take one person's word for it.

Let there be two or three witnesses. Them that sin, rebuke before all that others may also fear. Now, I'm afraid that if the church practiced this open public rebuke of the sinners, it would create no doubt a fear, but it might also create an empty church.

You remember when the woman was brought to Jesus, taken in the act of adultery, and they said, our law says stone, or what do you say? And Jesus said, let him who is without sin cast the first stone. And he began to write on the ground. It doesn't tell us what, but I feel certain that he was writing the names of the individuals and the sins they were guilty of.

And it says, they began to leave from the eldest to the youngest until there was none left. And if there was an open rebuke for sin, and we started going down naming everybody and naming the sins, it would create fear, I'm sure, within the church. When I was a young man, there was a man that I admired very much.

I admired his ministry, Dr. Clare Britton. He was a medical doctor, as well as a minister. And at a summer camp, I listened to him one year, and he was saying that he could look into a young person's eyes, and the eyes are so revealing.

They tell everything that the young person is guilty of. It's all there in their eyes. Man, I was afraid to look at him.

I didn't want him to see everything that was there. Now, I charge thee, Paul said before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, that you observe these things without preferring one before another. Do nothing by partiality.

We are all of us children of God. And as such, each of you are equally important to God. There are no second-class heavenly citizens.

To you, I mean to Jesus, you are as important as anybody else. And it is the church's business to follow the example of Christ and to show love, appreciation, honor, respect, and all to everyone without partiality. We're not to say, hey, he's got big bucks, you know, treat him good.

And the church is guilty of sin before God. Paul is pretty straight with us. I charge you before God and before Jesus Christ and before the elect angels.

I mean, it's a heavy-duty charge. Don't show partiality. Treat everyone alike.

How opposite that is from the natural tendencies. If someone is a professional person, oh, he's a doctor, oh, he's a chief of police, oh, he's a lawyer or something, and oh, he's very wealthy, you know, and there is that tendency to, oh, you know, show little favors and oh, well, why don't you come and sit at our table, you know. James also wrote saying, have no respect of persons.

God is no respecter of persons. And we're not to have respect of persons. James says, hey, someone comes in, you know, and they're well-dressed and, you know, wearing diamonds and all.

He says, you say, hey, come on down, take this nice seat down here. Some guy comes in and rags you, say, hey, sit in the corner, man, don't, you know. And he said, that's wrong.

You see, in the eyes of the Lord, we are all the same. God doesn't look upon me with any greater favor or honor or anything than he looks upon you. It is a tragic thing that the church has set up certain men that we say, oh, well, you know, look how close he is to God.

We are equally close to God. We are equally in God's favor. God is no respecter of man's persons.

And we are not to be either. So doing nothing by partiality. Now lay hands suddenly on no man.

What does that mean? Don't come up and say, you know, lay hands on him suddenly and shock him. No. He's talking now in the laying on of hands for the ordaining of a person for a ministry within the body of Christ.

Let a person sort of prove themselves. Don't be quick to ordain people to a particular task. Oh, glad to see you here this morning.

Here, take a Sunday school book. We need a teacher for our sixth grade class. You know, a lot of churches feel that you got to lock the person in to a job, you know, get them in and involved, you know, and hold them.

And Paul said, don't lay hands on. You know, it's a lot easier to get people in than it is to get them out. And a tragic thing has taken, has happened in the church and without really learning the individual, ordaining them for a particular task or a particular job.

And then you can rue that quickness of judgment for a long time. So don't lay hands on any man suddenly and neither be a partaker of other men's sins. Keep yourself pure.

Hey, that's not just good exhortation for Timothy. That's good for all of us. Keep ourselves pure.

Now, this is for Timothy. Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thy oft infirmities. Most of the people in that culture and in that day did drink wine.

The wine that they drank was a mixture of water and wine, three parts of water, two parts of wine. And it was as common as water as far as a drink was concerned, because in many of the areas, the water was polluted. It would be like someone going down to Mexico and writing back and say, oh man, I've got, you know, the turista, Montezuma's revenge, you know, and, and, you know, so you would write to them and say, hey, you better drink Cokes or something, you know, instead of that watered, you know, drink a little wine for your stomach's sake for this dysentery and so forth.

And that's basically what Paul is suggesting to Timothy. Now, this is to me quite interesting, however, in that I have no doubt that of those men in the New Testament who had the gifts of the Holy Spirit in operation in their life, the gift of miracles, healings and all, certainly Paul ranks with the chiefest of the apostles in the ministry gifts of the Spirit. Paul had many miracles wrought through his ministry.

Paul had, I'm sure, the gift of faith, the gift of working of miracles, gifts of healing, working through his life. And yet here is his son in the faith, Timothy. Now, when Paul was in Ephesus, they took his aprons and his sweatbands and they laid them on the sick people and they were healed.

Why didn't Paul just anoint a handkerchief and send it to Timothy and say, sleep on this? Now, I am certain that Paul had prayed for Timothy's stomach disorders. And there are indications that Timothy was a very feeble person and was a sickly person, yet a companion of Paul. The question, why didn't God heal Timothy? Why was he allowed to be sickly? Why would Paul write sort of a medical, physical prescription for his ailment rather than just pray for his healing? I am convinced that Paul did pray for Timothy's healing, but nonetheless, Timothy wasn't healed.

I believe the reason why is that we would not be caught up in that kind of heresy that would say, well, brother, you're still sick because there's some sin in your life. Or you're still sick because you just don't have enough faith. Or you're sick because you have this personal problem or something of that nature.

To keep us from that kind of foolish, unscriptural speculation, we have the case of Timothy, a close associate, companion, son of Paul in the faith, who Paul is giving some just pure advice to from a physical level for his oft sicknesses rather than having a divine touch of God and a healing upon his body. God does not heal in every case. And in those cases where God doesn't heal, God has a purpose for not healing.

It is not the lack of faith. It is not something wrong in the life of the individual. There is something within those eternal purposes of God that we cannot, do not, and will not understand.

And I am thoroughly opposed to that kind of teaching that if you will follow this formula, you will be healed. And then that person who has this chronic illness feels constantly guilty. There's something wrong with me, something wrong with my relationship with God.

Why aren't I healed, you know? What's wrong with me? And actually, you are kicking a person when they are down. If you lay some kind of heavy trip on them that way, oh brother, you know, there's just got to be something wrong, you know. If you just had enough faith, it would happen to you too.

There's an interesting scripture concerning Jesus that we do not understand in our modern culture today. It said concerning Jesus, a bruised reed he would not break. To put that into a modern vernacular would be, he would not kick a man who is down.

That's what's meant by a bruised reed he would not break. He wouldn't kick a man when he's down. Paul himself had an affliction, which he prayed three times that God would deliver him from it.

God finally answered, but not by delivering him, but by just giving him the grace to endure it, declaring, my grace is sufficient for you. My strength will be made perfect in your weakness. So let us not be guilty of judging wrongly or of laying some heavy burden upon someone who is already burdened because of their illnesses, because of their weaknesses.

Let us just recognize that God doesn't heal in every case. Now, God does heal in some cases. He doesn't heal in other cases.

Why he heals some and does not heal others is totally bound up in the sovereignty of God. As the Holy Spirit divides to each man, several as he wills of the gifts of the Spirit. So, Paul is encouraging Timothy for this stomach problem, just drink a little wine.

Don't drink that water anymore. You know, it's dangerous stuff. I understand when they come to the United States from Mexico, they always warn them, now don't drink the water.

It's because we have different amoebas here than they do down there. And they get the same kind of problems from our water that we get from theirs. It's just that they become immune to those amoebas in their water as we have become immune to the amoeba.

Hey, we don't have the purest water in the world, believe me. Now, he said, some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men they follow after. Likewise also, the good works of some are manifest beforehand, and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

In other words, before you meet the person, often you hear about them, and their sins have gone before them. People have told you, oh, hey, he's done this and he's done that and all. Before he ever comes and you meet him or he confesses or whatever, you've already heard of what he has done.

That happens so many times. A person comes to confess something and you've already heard it from two or three persons. And the same thing with a person's good works.

They also go before them or, you know, people have shared with you, oh, he's really, you know, outstanding in this, that or the other, and you hear of them before you meet them. Their works precede them, they're manifest beforehand, cannot be hid. Now, Paul turns to the subject of servants in chapter six.

Let as many servants as are under the yoke, that is to a master, count their own masters worthy of all honor. Now, this is actually the word slave, and in that day slavery was a very common practice. And Paul said, if you are a slave, then count your master worthy of all honor or respect, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

In our day and age, it is so important for us as Christians to be above reproach in our work and in our work habits, because people are expecting more from you as a Christian than they expect from a normal person. It may be that everyone is fudging on his break time and is, you know, taking a half hour for break when 15 minutes is allowed. If you're a Christian, you should take 15 minutes, though the others are taking a half hour.

Now, if the other is so, you're taking a half hour and the others are taking 15 minutes. You say, well, you know, I'm a Christian, all they say, hey, supposed to be a Christian, look at that. And many times by our actions and by our attitudes, we cause the name of Jesus to be blasphemed.

And that's tragic. That was the thing that Nathan nailed David with. After David's experience with Bathsheba, he has said to David, David, you've caused the enemies of God to blaspheme.

You give an occasion to the enemies of God to lay blame against Christianity or against Jesus Christ because of your slovenliness. More is expected of you because you are a Christian. Produce more, Paul is saying.

If you have a master who is a believer, then don't despise them because that they are your brothers, but rather do service to them because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the same benefit. These things, Paul said, teach and exhort. So basically the servant was as a Christian to be exemplary in his service, whether he had a unbelieving or a believing master.

Now, if he had a believing master, he may sort of resent the fact that he still is requiring this of me. After all, we're brothers in Christ and we are believers, you know. But Paul is just exhorting them to have the respect and honor of their masters.

And if any man teach otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine, which is according to godliness. Paul uses this word godliness some six times, I believe it is in this epistle. He talks a lot about godliness.

Great is the mystery of godliness. You remember last Sunday's message. God was manifest in the flesh and all.

Now again, if someone teaches otherwise and does not consent to the wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine, which is according to godliness. And that's the purpose that we might be like God, that we might be godly in our actions. That person who is teaching otherwise is proud.

He knows nothing but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof comes envy, strife, railings and evil surmisings, the perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth. And what is their main thesis? Supposing that godliness is a way to gain. Paul said this is one of the worst heresies.

Godliness is a way to gain. Godliness is a way to gain. Withdraw yourself from such a person.

You see, here is a slave who is saying, hey, I have a godly master. So, you know, he ought to make it easier on me. It's a way for me to gain.

Here is a master saying, oh, I have a godly servant, you know, I can trust him and I can put him in a position of trust because he is godly. I can use that for my gain, for my benefit. Godliness is a way to gain.

So many people are following this heresy. There are many people who are advocating this heresy. You know, if you want to be rich, if you want to drive a Cadillac, just receive the Lord and have enough faith.

Go out in faith, put the down payment on the thing, put a deposit on it, you know, believe and trust the Lord to make the payments. Godliness is a way for prosperity. God wants you to have the best.

You're the king's kids and God wants you to live like king's kids and go out and go for it, you know. Indulge your lust. God wants you to have everything.

Godliness is a way to gain. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, they're destitute of the truth. From such withdraw yourself.

The truth is, godliness with contentment, that's great gain. That's really being rich. The person who never has enough, who is always wanting more, is not really rich.

I know a man who has over 150 million dollars, over 100 million deposited in certificates of deposit in the bank. He keeps that for the acquisition of new breweries that might come on the market. This man works 16 hours a day, 16 to 18 hours a day, seven days a week, never takes a day off, never takes a vacation, drives himself.

He's not rich, he's poor. That's not really being rich. What is really rich? A man who is godly and is content.

A man who doesn't have a need, that's the man who is rich. He's got everything he wants. That's real riches.

That contentment with what I have. And so Paul speaks about contentment. He said, we've brought nothing into this world and it is certain we're not going to carry anything out.

When you die, you're going to do just exactly what everyone before you has done. You're going to leave everything here. You're not going to take a cent with you.

Naked I came into the world, naked I'm going out of the world. I brought nothing in, I'm going to carry nothing out. And therefore, having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.

How many people have brought themselves into really great poverty because they're never satisfied with what they have? Always wanting something more. And that discontentment has brought many people to bankruptcy. Having food and raiment, be content.

You have food, you have clothes. Praise the Lord. Be content.

For they that will be rich, if this is your goal, if this is your drive, if this is your purpose in life, they that will be rich will fall into temptations and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lust or desires which drown men in destruction and perdition. The wealthy person has far many more temptations than I have because of his wealth. The opportunities are there of doing so many more things.

I don't have to worry about a lot of things because I don't have the money to do them. I'm not tempted by them. I can't afford them.

But a wealthy person runs into all kinds of temptations that you never dreamed about. So they that will be rich will fall into these snares, the temptations, many foolish, hurtful desires which just drown men in destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evil.

Now that's quite a statement. Notice he does not say money is the root of all evil and you've often heard it quoted that way, haven't you? That's not what he says. Money is not evil.

It's not good. It all depends on your attitude towards money. And the love of money is the root of all evil.

James said, from whence comes the fightings and the wars? Does it come from man's own lust, the desires, love of money, the greed behind all of the wars and strivings and jealousies and all within the world? The love of money, the root of all evil. And so you can take the evil and you can trace it all back and it comes back to greed, the love of money. And the world is in the mess that it is today because of greed.

It is not that we are running out of natural resources. It isn't that the world isn't big enough to accommodate the population. It isn't that we could not feed everybody.

The problem with the world is how men are spending the money. Last year, throughout the world, there was over one trillion dollars spent for the defense budgets in the nations of the world for buying war equipment to destroy other men. Over one trillion dollars.

Had we spent one trillion dollars last year in agricultural development, there would not be a single hungry person on the face of the earth instead of the fact that two-thirds of the world are living on starvation diets tonight. Not enough food. It isn't that we can't produce enough food.

It isn't that there isn't enough arable ground and so forth. It's a misdirection, the greed of man. It's more profitable to make bombs than to plant corn.

And so the greed of man, the love of money, that's the root of the evil. If it weren't for the love of money, we would have no drug problems today. What's behind the drug problem? What's behind all of this drug smuggling and so forth? What's behind it all? The love of money.

If we did not have the love of money, there would be no prostitution today. Were it not for the love of money, think of how many evils would be eliminated from our earth. The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

An interesting observation because the lie that we believe is just the opposite. The common deception is, if I just had enough money, I would be happy. Paul is saying that these who have achieved turning from the truth, erring from the truth, have brought themselves into great sorrows.

And interestingly enough, the most wealthy men I know are also, at the same time, the most miserable men that I know. Interesting, isn't it? I have them invite me out to lunch. They pour out their stories of woe, misery, loneliness.

One fellow was sharing with me how he didn't know if anybody truly loved him or not. All of these women throwing themselves at him, but he said, I don't know if they really love me or not. He's married three of them so far, and they've all taken him for a pretty good ride.

And now he's in a real dilemma. Since the last one left and made out pretty well in the courts, there's a lot of others that are thinking, my, I'd like to retire too, you know. Live with a guy for six months and retire, you know.

He said, I don't know if they really love me or not. Miserable, doesn't know true love. How can I know if they really love me? Sad, isn't it? Guy's so wealthy, he doesn't know if anybody really loves him or not.

Are they just after him for his bucks? Are they friendly just because he has bucks? Are they hoping to cash in on his bankroll? Poor fellow. I have a cousin who's so rich, as far as money goes. The poor fella is over in the Philippines somewhere with a butterfly net, chasing butterflies through the jungles.

That's how he spends his life, chasing butterflies through the jungles. Worth millions of dollars. He has never worked a day in his life, but life is a bore.

Life is a drag. The only excitement he has is chasing butterflies. Poor fellow.

Next to him, I'm rich. But thou, oh man of God, flee these things. Flee what? The love of money.

Follow after righteousness. Pursue after righteousness. Don't pursue after wealth, after being rich.

Pursue rather after righteousness, godliness. There's that word again. Faith, love, patience, meekness.

Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold to eternal life. Whereunto thou art also called and has professed a good profession before many witnesses. So, it all comes down to what is the center of your life.

If money, the desire for money, the desire for gain is at the center of your life, then you're going to be a miserable person. If God is at the center of your life, you're going to be rich. Your life is going to be blessed.

Your life is going to be full. So, put God at the center of your life. Put righteousness at the center of your life.

Godliness at the center of your life. Then you might really be a rich person. Enjoy the true riches, the eternal riches.

Because one of the tragic things about my poor cousin is the only one he has to leave his money to is a idiot cousin, his daughter. It's tragic, isn't it? But she's already got so many millions, you know, but she lives in a care home in Ojai. She's not able to take care of herself.

Her grandmother died recently and left her another seven million dollars, but it's all under trusteeship while she just sits there in the home and puts peanut butter on Ritz crackers. That's tragic, isn't it? I went to visit her and she said, oh, I have this special recipe. I want to fix for you, you know, this special recipe.

She brings out all these Ritz crackers with peanut butter. Oh, she made this up herself, you know. Poor child.

My heart goes out to her. I really, my heart does go out to her. I wouldn't trade places with her for anything, with all of the bucks that she has.

Or my other cousin, I wouldn't trade with him with anything, with all of the bucks he has. I wouldn't want to be running around some jungle in the Philippines tonight, you know, chasing butterflies. God is the center of your life.

It's a life that is content, a life that is happy, a life that is rich, a life that is full. I give you charge, he said, in the sight of God who makes all things alive. And before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.

Pilate said, art thou a king then? And Jesus said, to this end was I born and for this cause I came into the world. Good confession before Pontius Pilate. So, this is going to be heavy, heavy duty charge.

I charge you before God who makes all things alive before Jesus Christ, that you keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, he gave them this commandment. What was it? To make God the center of your life.

To seek after righteousness and godliness. I charge you before God. Do this until the Lord comes again.

Keep Him at the center of your heart and life. What did Jesus say about this? He said, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else will be taken care of. You see, man's life exists on two planes, the vertical and the horizontal.

The vertical plane is your relationship with God and that is the axis upon which your life revolves. If your relationship with God is out of kilter, then your relationship with your fellow man is going to be out of kilter, out of balance. And this is the problem in our world today.

People are trying to live a well-balanced life and they are struggling and striving to have a well-balanced life, to have a well-balanced relationship with others. And they're fighting constantly to find this balance in relationships. Spending millions going to the psychologist and psychiatrist trying to find the balance.

The reason why the life is out of balance, the reason why your relationships are out of balance is that your relationship with God is out of balance. The vertical axis of your life is off-center. Now, Paul is giving to Timothy fantastic advice.

Put God at the center of your life. Godliness, righteousness. Put these things at the center of your being.

I charge you before God, do this until Jesus comes. Because if the center of your life is right, if your relationship with God is right, then you will be a very rich person because it will affect every other relationship in your life. They will all be right if your relationship with God is right.

You'll have a right relationship with the devil. You'll defeat him every time you meet him because your relationship with God is right. You'll have a right relationship with your possessions.

For you will know that they are really God's and only entrusted to you. And you'll use them wisely. You'll have a right relationship with your fellow men sharing, loving, giving God at the center.

The vertical axis, the horizontal automatically falls into place. You cannot correct the horizontal axis by working on the horizontal. I mean, you can't correct the horizontal plane by working on the horizontal

plane.

I'm going to work on this relationship. Well, while you're working on this relationship, you're messing up five more. Spending too much time trying to get this relationship right and everything else is going wrong.

So you finally get this one right and you turn around and, oh man, everybody else, oh, help, you know. So you grab ahold of another. I'm going to work on this relationship.

While you're getting that one corrected, then others go out of balance. And so you spend your whole life trying to get balanced here, you know, when in reality you need to come back to the vertical axis, get your relationship with God, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things will be taken care of. They'll all be added to you.

So that is why Paul is so forceful in charging Timothy to get your life right with God. Put God at the center. Seek after righteousness and godliness.

For when Jesus comes in His time, He will show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen. So Jesus, when He comes, is going to show who the true, the only God is, the only and blessed potentate, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, who dwells in a light which no man can approach, whom no man hath seen.

In John, the first chapter, we read, no man has seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son is in the bosom of the Father. He has manifested Him, but Jesus will show us then who is the only true God. Now, you see, riches are not a true God.

They are a false God, but they are the God of many people. Many people are worshiping wealth. It's the center of their life, and you don't have to be wealthy to have it at the center of your life.

In fact, it probably is a problem that is almost more endemic to poor people than it is to wealthy people, because poor people so often live under the illusion that wealth would be the solution to all their problems. Wealthy people know that that's not so, but poor people think that it would be so. All my problems would be solved by wealth.

So, the love of money can actually be a stronger drive in a poor person than in a rich person. It is not a true God. It is a false God.

When Jesus appears, He will show us who is the true God, the only potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords. And so, He said, Timothy, charge those that are rich in this world that they not be high-minded nor trust in the uncertainty of riches, but teach them to trust in the living God. This whole area now is on who is your God? Rich is your God? The desire for money your God? Is that the heart of your being? Or are you living a godly life, a righteous life, serving the only true and the living God? Charge those that are rich in the things of this world, in the worldly things, that they not be high-minded and don't trust in your riches, they are uncertain, but trust rather in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

I love that. God gives to us richly all things to enjoy. All the money in the world can't buy the thrill of sitting on the beach and watching the sunset behind Catalina Island and just enjoying the sky as it lights up in brilliant color and just sitting there and communing with God.

What a rich experience that is. What a rich experience it is to walk through the forest and smell the pine needles and hear the waterfalls and the singing brooks and the blue jays and the chatter of the squirrels. God has given to us richly all things to enjoy.

God wants you to enjoy life. God wants you to have the fullness of joy in your life and He has given you the laws by which, the rules by which you can have a life that is filled with joy. Our problem is that we don't always agree with God.

We think that many times God has set rules that are too restrictive, that they are holding me back from joy or from something that would be pleasurable or exciting and I find myself rebelling against the law of God saying, God you're not right. You know it isn't fair to deny me that because if I could only do that then I would really have joy and happiness. But every time we defy the law of God we find that it brings misery and sorrow to ourselves.

God has given us the rules of happiness and the rules of joy. Happy is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly nor stands in the way of sinners nor sits in the seat of the scornful but whose delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law does he meditate day and night for he will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water bringing forth fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither whatever he does will prosper.

The ungodly are not so but are like the chaff which the wind drives away therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the day of judgment. Oh the happy man is the man who has put God at the center of his life because when God is at the center of my life I can then enjoy all that God has given to me. I can enjoy it fully for God has given to me all things richly, freely, richly to enjoy.

And so charge those that are rich that they do good and that they be rich in good works ready to distribute and willing to give to those that are in need. The word communicate is that of communicating of help unto the needy for in so doing they will be laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life. Jesus gave a parable that has been a problem for many people to understand.

The parable was of a servant who found out he was going to get fired. His master said okay make an accounting of everything you know you're fired. So he said hey man what am I going to do? I'm ashamed to beg.

I don't want to dig ditches. I know what I'll do. And he started calling in the creditors.

How much do you owe my boss? Well I owe him a hundred measures of meat. Here let me have your bill. Scratched out the hundred.

Fifty. Called in another creditor. How much do you owe my boss? I owe him a hundred barrels of oil.

Here fifty. And he cut all of the bills in half figuring as soon as he's fired he'll go and say hey remember how I wiped out 50 barrels of oil off your bill? I need a little bit. Could you help me here? He was taking advantage of his present situation to set himself up for the future.

He knew he wasn't going to always be in this position of helping himself for the future. It's going to be short-lived. I'm going to be fired in a week.

So you know take advantage of my present position to hedge for the future. Now Jesus said the Lord commended the unjust steward and that's where the parable runs into difficulty. Commended him? He ought to have condemned him.

He should have thrown him in jail. He commended the unjust steward for Jesus said the children of this generation are wiser than the children of light. Therefore make use of the unrighteousness of mammon that when you die you might be received into the everlasting habitations.

What was he talking about? Right now I have the opportunities of laying up for myself treasures in heaven. I will not always have this opportunity. The day is coming when I will die.

After I die I will have no further opportunity of laying up for myself an eternal heavenly store. That opportunity is only now while I am here. Jesus said make use of the unrighteousness of mammon.

You see your money, your dollar is not worth anything in heaven. It's not worth very much here. But it's worth nothing in heaven.

If you could take them there. If you could carry them out. If when you die you could take a suitcase full.

When you get the gate say hey Peter look what I brought you know. You know show me a nicest room you've got. Peter say what's that junk? Your money is not current in heaven.

Here I brought all this gold. Well throw it in the street and let it mix with the rest of the pavement. We use that stuff for asphalt up here.

So my only opportunity of laying up an eternal heavenly store is now. So charge those that are rich. That they do good.

That they be rich in good works. That they are ready to distribute to the needy and to help those that are in need. That they might lay up for themselves a store in heaven.

A good foundation against the time to come. That they might enter into that eternal kingdom. Laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt or decay.

Thieves cannot break through and steal. So rich on earth poor in heaven. How long you gonna be on earth? 100 years? How long you gonna be in heaven? Poor on earth rich in heaven.

Who's better off? So I don't have much. So it is tough. I have all I need.

I'm happy. I'm satisfied. I don't have any real needs or real wants.

I'm rich. But more than that, hey, the eternal riches. Rich eternally.

Issues that I debated years ago when I was debating between a career as a medical doctor or as a minister. Where do I want my riches? Now or forever. It makes good sense to me to be rich eternally more than to be rich temporally.

It makes better sense for me to lay up my riches in heaven where I might enjoy them world without end. Then to try and amass riches now, which can only bring misery and strife and unrest, the true riches. Oh, Timothy, keep that which is committed to your trust.

Avoiding the profane and vain babblings and the oppositions of science falsely so-called. You want to know what is the greatest science falsely so-called in the world today? Evolution. They call it science, but it's falsely called science.

There's nothing scientific about the evolutionary theory. It's science falsely so-called vain babblings, profane and vain babblings. Paul said, avoid them, Timothy, which some professing have erred concerning the faith.

Grace be with thee. Amen. Paul's first letter to Timothy.

Father, we thank you for the good counsel. May we take heed. And Lord, may we indeed seek to put Christ at the center of our lives.

Godliness, the center of our being. Keep us, Lord, from the delusion and the lie of the enemy that would say that godliness is a way to riches. But God, may we not have riches as the motive and the center, the master passion of our lives.

Knowing that the love of money is the root of evil has destroyed so many people. Oh, God, give us wisdom to put you first. In Jesus' name.

Amen. May the Lord give you a blessed weekend. May you go out and begin to enjoy all things richly that he has given to you.

Begin to enjoy those eternal riches that you have as a child of God. May God help you to just sort of slow down from this mad drive for more and just begin to enjoy what you have. May he give you some blue skies to observe, clouds.

Get on down to the beach. Sit there and just watch it and commune with God. Enjoy what God has given to you.

And may your life be enriched and blessed as you walk in fellowship with him. God at the center. In Jesus' name.

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