

**Letters From My Father**  
**Week 20**  
**1 Timothy 6:17-21**  
**“Conclusion”**

**Introduction**

***But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.*** **Matthew 6:33**

There is a wealth of truth to be found in the pastoral epistles of Paul (**1 & 2 Timothy, Titus**). To me, they are the perfect handbooks for how a church should function. There are so many false teachers and pseudo churches in this world today operating with impunity. They have methodically, and even maliciously, compromised The Word of God little by little over the years until the truth almost seems a foreign concept. This is the reason that we see such wickedness prevailing in our country. Even many people who claim to be evangelicals quite literally have no idea of what they believe. Christianity in America has become a casserole who's ingredients are bits of truth mingled and stirred with dime-store psychology and fleshly desires. But make no mistake, it is a dish that is poisonous to all who partake of its deceptive delicacies.

Timothy had been dispatched and changed by the Apostle Paul to purify just such a church. The city of Ephesus was a hot bed of wealth, lust, and debauchery. And as a result, much of the world had crept into the church there. There were false teachers who had risen to prominence within the church with their enticing teachings that watered down the truth of God's Word in order to make it more “palatable” to the masses. We see the very same thing in our world today. You can certainly grow a church by *endorsing* sin, but you can *not* grow the kingdom that way. What a tragedy it will be when many who thought they were saved will stand before The Great White Throne of Judgment and hear Jesus say, **“I never knew you. Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!”** (**Matthew 7:23b**).

As Believers in Christ, it is imperative for us to fiercely guard and defend the truth of God's Word. It was Paul's ultimate charge to Timothy, his young son in the faith. And it is our charge as well. Believers must first know exactly what it is that they believe, and then defend it with all their strength. This is not a time for the faint hearted my friends. Now more than ever, we must become “pillars of the truth”.

***But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is The Church of The Living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.*** **1 Timothy 3:15**

We too have this great charge laid before us for we are God's household, The Church of The Living God, and as such, we must take our stand in this evil day, for Christ's return is more imminent than it has ever been. So let us be about the business of making disciples, **baptizing them in the Name of The Father, and of The Son, and of The Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you** (**Matthew 28:19b-20a**). Do not miss the part about teaching “everything” that Christ has commanded. For you see, many so called churches are leaving out the parts that they think their listeners won't like! And that is the very root of the problem we have in our society. The church of the “last days” will be more concerned with pleasing the ears of its congregants than preaching the truth. We will see Paul address this very issue as we continue our study into **2 Timothy**.

So, as the great apostle of Jesus wraps up his first letter to his son in the faith, we can see how he emphasized three things that every Believer, whether rich or poor, powerful or weak, should prioritize in their lives. We ALL must love The LORD our God, with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We must love our neighbor as ourselves, and we must love The Truth of God's Word, for it is the compass that guides us to our true north. *Love God, Love Others, and Love Truth*. These are the priorities of God's holy people.

**Love God (vs. 17)**

**Instruct those who are rich in this present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, Who richly provides us with all things to enjoy.**  
**1 Timothy 6:17**

After reading Paul's warning earlier in the chapter in regards to those who are lovers of money and ruin their lives as a result, it is helpful that he continues with this passage. If he had not, it would have been naturally assumed that having wealth was, in and of itself, a sin. It is not a sin to have money. It is a sin, however, if your money has you! Ephesus was a very wealthy city in its day, and if Paul had not clarified his warnings concerning greed, many of the members of the Ephesian church would have begun to judge one another based upon the amount of material wealth they each possessed.

It is not a sin to be rich. Many of God's people were wealthy. Abraham was, as we have preciously mentioned in this study, a very wealthy man indeed. For God had richly blessed him. But Abraham demonstrated by his life that he loved God far more than he loved riches. This is the message that Paul is trying to convey as well. We are to **love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.** Nothing is to come between us and our love for God. If it does, then we have fallen into idolatry. As long as our priorities are straight, having things is not a problem.

In fact, Paul goes on to say that we are to enjoy the things that God has so richly provided for us! This means that there is nothing wrong with enjoying life. I for one am grateful for that. God has blessed my family. All of us have a roof over our head. We have clothes to wear, and food to eat. We are thankful for so many things that we have been given. And it is imperative that we never forget from where all these blessings came. This is why the Scriptures command us:

**Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**

**Philippians 4:6-7**

For you see, we have a God that loves us. And if we are His children, then He Himself will provide for us. Therefore, we have nothing to worry about. And we must always remember where our blessings come from, giving Him thanks and praise for all He has provided. And when you have this understanding and attitude, it is perfectly fine to enjoy the riches that God has given you! You do not have to feel guilty that God has been good to you, my friends. But you do have to acknowledge that He has!

Now, I know what some of you may be thinking: "This doesn't apply to me, pastor, because I am certainly not rich." Actually you are, if you are in Christ. You have been adopted by The King of kings. If He did nothing else for you, you are still rich beyond measure. But listen to me my friend, for you are richer than you realize. Just this past week, Sandi and I went to the movies. It cost us about twenty dollars just to get in, and for some reason my wife cannot watch a movie without having a bucket full of popcorn. That was another \$8 dollars I believe. So we spent approximately \$30 dollars last week that we had not planned to spend. This was not a crisis for us. We were able to do it without catastrophe.

Now, by the standards of American living, my wife and I are certainly not rich. But we are able to spend some of our money on things that we do not need. This is known in economic circles as "discretionary income". It defines money that you are able to use for things that are not necessities. Can I tell you that a large percentage of this world has no such income. Many people do not even have enough to feed their families, much less afford the luxury of going to a theater to see a movie. My point is simply this; if you have any amount of discretionary income, then you are richer than most of the people in this world. So give thanks!

Paul also warned those who had means not to become arrogant. The word in the Greek (*hypsēphroneo*) literally means “high-minded”. He is speaking of any who become proud and conceited due to their wealthy status. Here is something that every born-again child of God should reconcile within themselves. **You are saved by grace, through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift - not from works, so that no none can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).** And if you possess any material wealth whatsoever, it was a gift from God. And He can take it away just as easily as He can give it (**Job 1:21**). So, in the end, what do you have to be proud of other than Jesus? Answer: *Nothing whatsoever!* So do not allow yourself to look down upon others because of what you have and what they do not. In fact, instead of taking pride in your wealth, you should have compassion, for you have been given the capacity to use your riches to enrich the lives of others. Which brings us to our next point!

### **Love Others (vs. 18-19)**

**Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share, storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of what is truly life. 1 Timothy 6:18-19**

I LOVE this verse, for it puts everything in perfect perspective. How can you tell if a person who has material wealth is rich toward God? How can you tell if they love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength? Answer: *By the way that they love others!* When you come to realize that all you have comes from God, then you won't be stingy with all you have. For you will have a desire to use your wealth to improve the lives of those around you. **Love The LORD your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.** These are the timeless beatitudes of God's chosen people.

And would you like to know why a wealthy person, who is rich toward God, is not concerned with losing their wealth by sharing it? It is because they realize that the source of their riches has an inexhaustible supply!

**...I AM God, your God. I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices or for your burnt offerings, which are continually before Me. I will not take a bull from your household or male goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and everything in it is Mine. Psalm 50:7b-12**

When I was a kid, I heard an old country preacher say, “When I need something I go to my Heavenly Father and ask Him for it. All that He has to do is go and sell one of His cows. He has them scattered over a thousand hills. He will go and sell one if I need it.” What a wonderful truth! We never need to worry about our God having enough riches to supply our needs. He's loaded. And He will always share what He has with His kids. And because He is generous, He has called us to be generous with all that He has given us as well. It is really a simple concept when you think about it. So be a cheerful giver (**2 Corinthians 9:7-8**), for God loves those who are generous. We should give because we love Him, as well as, the people that He loves. And that alone should bring us joy when we share. We need no other reward than this.

I remember many years ago when I was an associate pastor of a very large church. One day I received a phone call from a very wealthy man in the congregation who owned a large furniture store. He asked me if I would come down to his showroom, because he wanted to talk to me about something. I thought that maybe he had a need for prayer or some kind of counsel so I went.

When I arrived at his massive store, he gave me a tour of the place and told me of all the money that he made from his very lucrative businesses. After boasting of his wealth for about an hour, he entreated me to go onto the showroom floor and pick out any piece of furniture that I desired. “Money

was no object," he said, "Choose whatever you like." I respectfully declined, telling him that I appreciated the gesture, but I that I had everything that I needed.

About a week later, a box truck showed up in my driveway, and two men carried a large loveseat up to the porch telling me when I came to the door that the man at the furniture store had sent this to me as a gift. I wondered what strings were attached to this offering, but I said nothing and allowed the men to bring it into our home. It was, without question, a beautiful piece of furniture that fit wonderfully with our home's decor. In fact, it was a perfect centerpiece for our living room, one that we could not have afforded for ourselves.

Everything seemed fine until we went back to church the following Sunday. Several people came up to me and mentioned the nice gift that I had received. How did they know? Because the owner of the store had told everyone in the congregation of his wonderful gift to the poor Associate Pastor. He didn't say it exactly like that, but that is exactly how it made me feel. Sometime later I gave the chair away, never to be seen again. For you see, that man was not giving me something as a cheerful giver. He wasn't trying to do something nice for me. He did it to make himself look good. And I suppose he succeeded, but as for me, I never felt so used in all of my life.

So if you have been blessed by God, then **love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and then love your neighbor as yourself.** Share graciously what you have been given, not because it makes you look good, but rather, because you are honored to be gracious to others. Paul instructed those who are rich to be "willing to share". The word in the Greek "*koinonikos*" means *to freely share with those who are in need*. The word derives from "*koinonia*" which was a common word used in the book of **Acts**, often translated as "*fellowship*". For you see, in the early church, the people would sell their belongings in order to see to it that all the members had what they needed. What caused them to do this? They were far more concerned with the eternal life that is to come than they were with this present world, that's why.

This is the reason that Paul instructed the wealthy to be generous in this life, for by doing so they are making an investment into the kingdom of heaven. They are as he has also stated earlier in the text, "taking hold of eternal life." In other words they are living for eternity rather than the temporal. This my friends is a great way to live, making every decision base upon the eternal consequence rather than the immediate. It is the prioritizing of everything according to the faith we have in The One Who died to save us. So share what you have been given, there is plenty more where that came from. God can always sell a few cows if you need Him to!

### **Love Truth (vs. 20-21)**

**Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding irreverent and empty speech and contradictions from what is falsely called knowledge. By professing it, some people have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all. 1 Timothy 6:20-21**

In his final thoughts, Paul returns once more to the importance of guarding truth against all false teaching. The corruption of sound doctrine is not intended to enhance, but rather, eradicate the truth of God's Word. The Christian must never compromise the word of God. We are to love it as we love God and each other. And just as one should be willing to fight in order to protect his loved ones, we must be willing to take a stand in defense of God's Word.

To love God's Word is to refuse the company of the false teachers. As Scripture has plainly taught us, there are some things in this world, from which, we must run away. Those who would distort the Word of God for their own personal gain are to be avoided. Paul didn't charge Timothy to enter into a debate with the false teachers at Ephesus. He instructed him to stand for truth and avoid entering into such a debate. The truth doesn't need to be evaluated. It merely needs to be proclaimed. God's Word isn't up for discussion. The Law given to Moses was called the *Ten Commandments*, not the *ten suggestions*. When I disagree with God's eternal truth, it is me who is in the wrong. I must repent and adjust my thinking, rather than try and convince God to change His mind.

To be a pillar of truth is to love truth and to proclaim it at all cost. There will often be violent opposition, if you intend to stand firm upon God's Word. So be forewarned. But false teaching, no matter who it comes from, is dangerous. I am reminded here of a preacher/prophet that God sent to warn the evil king Jeroboam in **1 Kings 13**. God had personally instructed this man to go and warn Jeroboam that disaster was coming because of his failure to obey God. God also told the man not to accept food or drink from anyone and to return home after his message by a different route. The prophet did *exactly* as God had instructed. He preached to the king, refused to eat or drink from the king's table, and subsequently, began his journey home by a different route.

On his way home, however, he was intercepted by an older prophet who claimed that God had instructed him to offer the younger man food and shelter on his return trip. The old man deceived the younger preacher, who accepted the invitation to come and eat with him. No doubt he was tired, hungry and thirsty from his difficult journey. He assumed that the old man was being honest about receiving a message from God. So he accepted the old prophet's invitation. And in the end, it cost him his life. Why? Because he failed to do what God had personally told him to do. This my friends is just how dangerous a false teacher can be. They entice us away from the truth, to our own demise. And this is why we must not only *know* what we believe, but *defend* it with every fibre of our being.

***For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand.***

**Ephesians 6:12-13**

Had the Ephesians heeded this warning, then Timothy would have never needed to go there to fight for the truth. To love God is to love God's people and to love God's truth with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. So in the words of Paul, grace be with you all.

**Truth!!!**