

January 13, 1999

Blasphemy
1 Timothy 6:1-5

Introduction:

In this chapter the apostle gives some instructions to servants; ... The **instructions** to servants are of two sorts; first, to such who had **unbelieving** masters, whom they ought to **honour and obey**; that the name and doctrine of Christ be not evil spoken of: and then to such as had believing masters, that they despise them not being brethren, but should the more cheerfully serve them; because believers in Christ, beloved of God, and partakers of his grace; which duties are worthy to be insisted upon in the Gospel ministry, #1Ti 6:1,2, and **such who teach not these things are to be accounted false teachers**, whose characters are given in several particulars; as men unsound, proud, ignorant, quarrelsome, and covetous, and to be withdrawn from, #1Ti 6:3-5... (*John Gill, Online Bible.*)

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. (V. 1.)

What is *blasphemy*? Who are the *blasphemers* in 6:1? The Spirit's severe judgment against *blasphemers* (1:20) is cause to look into *blasphemy*.

Instructing Timothy in organizing the new church, Paul previously identified and dealt with several classes of people --- the bishop, deacon and widow --- explaining the qualifications and duties of each. Several times, Paul dealt with the Christian's proper attitude toward authority. Now Paul opens this chapter (vv. 1-5) with the servant-master (employee-employer) relationship, which lays the foundation for our attitude toward authority in general. Paul's words are firm regarding authority, telling Timothy that any teacher who does not teach according to vv. 1, 2, must be considered false teachers, from whom Timothy must depart.

Vv. 1-5

The tendency and purport of the exhortation manifestly is, to caution this part of the Christian community to beware of abusing their liberty in the gospel, of imagining that their spiritual calling and privileges entitled them to spurn the outward restraints under which they lay, and disregard the duties of their station... (*Pastoral Epistles, Fairbairn, Klock & Klock, 231.*)

V. 1, *servants as are under the yoke*... The Spirit is instructing those who have ungodly authority over them, for he speaks of *believing* authority in v. 2 --- godly authority must not be taken advantage of. The servitude discussed by Paul could be voluntary or involuntary, though *yoke* implies involuntary: The gospel does not cancel the obligations any lie under either by the law of nature or by mutual consent. (M.H.)

God has much to say regarding how Christians are to act toward those in authority.

Servants be obedient... (Eph. 6:5.)

Exhort servants to be obedient... (Tit. 2:9.)

Servants be subject... (1 Pet. 2:18.) Peter goes on to say *servants* must be subject not only to the nice masters, but also to the crooks and greedy masters, those under whom we might suffer wrongfully and endure grief.

Worthy of all honour...

Worthy... c. of one who has merited anything, *worthy*, both in a good reference and a bad; *a.* in a good sense; with a gen. of the thing; Mt. x.10; Lk. vii.4; [x.7]; Acts xiii.46; 1 Tim. I.15; iv.9; v. 18; vi.1. (*Thayer*)

God himself exalts people into places of authority, as firmly established in *Daniel*. (Dan. 4:25, 32, 5:21. See also Ps. 75:6,7, Rom. 9:21, 13:1-6.) Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel that he saw *an holy one from heaven* who said *that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and setteth up over it the basest of men.* (4:17.) Only one time is the word *basest* (or *base*) used in Scripture. It means, lowest, worst (*Online Bible*), contemptible, low-down, mean, miserable, vile, ungentle, illegitimate, contemptible, wicked (*WordWeb* dictionary). The Lord is the one

who establishes rulers *in the kingdom of men* who are the most contemptible people imaginable.

Honour, reverence or deference, as used in Romans 12:10, 13:7, 1 Timothy 5:17, 6:1. (*Thayer.*) *Deference*, courteous regard for people's feelings, humility. (*WordWeb.*) Thus even the most vile sinner in the place of authority is *worthy of honour* because the Lord raised him up.

Honour does not mean *obedience*, nor does it require blind *obedience*. However, Paul told Titus *to obey magistrates*. (Titus 3:1.) The apparent difficulty is cleared up by Peter: *We ought to obey God rather than man*. Acts 5:29 -- We should obey man only in so far that in obeying him we also obey God. (*Geneva.*) Christ said, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. (Heb. 10:7, 9.) Whether to spiritual authority (Heb. 13:17), family authority (Eph. 6:1, 3:20), occupational authority (Col. 3:22), or civil authority (Titus 3:1), obedience must always fit within the revealed, written will of God. We are servants, bondmen, of the Lord, not of man, so our obedience must always be to the Lord. (Rom. 6:16.) The only unreserved obedience is to the Gospel of Christ (2 Thes. 1:8) and to the truth as revealed in God's word (Gal. 3:1, 5:7); disobedience in these two areas results in the wrath and vengeance of God. (Rom. 2:8.)

Here we see that it is all the more important to keep a proper attitude toward an the unbeliever, master or otherwise, because of our Christian testimony.

That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

Normally, we think of *blasphemers* as the unsaved speaking evil of the Lord God. However, 1 Timothy 1:20 (*Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*) implies that those who profess Christ can *blaspheme*. In fact, Paul says these two men blasphemed God by departing from the faith --- they not only departed from sound doctrine, but they departed from upright conduct. (*Gill, Online Bible.*) They were hardened in sin. (*Cf.*, 1 Cor. 5. *Thayer* places 1 Tim. 1:20 with Lk. xxiii.65; Acts xiii.45; xviii. 6; xxvi. 11; 1 Pet. iv. 4; ... : Mt. xxvii. 39; Mk. iii. 28 L T Tr WH; xv. 29; Lk. xxiii.39; Tit. iii.2; Jude 10; ..., Mk. iii. 28...)

By doing and teaching things unworthy of their Christian profession, they blasphemed God. (*JFB.*) Can a child of God *blaspheme* God? If so, how does he do it? How serious is *blasphemy*?

Blaspheme : 1) to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate, blaspheme 2) to be evil spoken of, reviled, railed at. (*Online Bible.*)

Blackstone's (1723-1780) definition of blaspheme is appropriate:

§ 58. 4. Blasphemy. The fourth species of offenses, therefore, more immediately against God and religion, is that of *blasphemy* against the Almighty, by denying His Being or Providence; or by contumelious (disrespectful, *ed.*) reproaches of our Saviour Christ.⁶ (⁶ The more celebrated English cases of prosecution for blasphemy are given in Stephen, 2 Hist. Crim. Law, 469. Most of the American states have enacted statutes against the offence; but it is held that the statute does not necessarily abrogate the common law. The principal American cases are Commonwealth v. Kneeland, 20 Pick. (Mass.) 206; ...) Whither also may be referred all profane scoffing at the Holy Scripture, or exposing it to contempt and ridicule. These are offenses punishable at common law by fine and imprisonment, or other infamous corporal punishment: ^s (^s 1 Hawk. P. C. 7.) For Christianity is part of the laws of England.^h (^h 1 Vent. 293. 2 Strange, 834.) (*Jones Blackstone*, II.2228-2229. Claitor's Publishing Division, Baton Rouge, LA. 70821. 1979 reprint.)

That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed simply warns against speaking evil of God's name, *blasphemy*. It does not say who is doing it. All the commentators I checked say that the *blasphemers* are the pagans in authority. They look at Christians' disobedient, rebellious or disrespectful attitudes (though the actions may be right), and say, What kind of God do these people serve? If this is the Christian God, he is no better than my god of mammon. Why do I need him? And the pagans *blaspheme* God because of the ungodly actions and attitudes of those who claim to love God. (Rom. 2:17-29.)

The doctrine of *blaspheming the name and doctrine of God* goes further than just one's attitude and actions toward authority as mentioned in our text. Romans 2:17-29 (v. 24, *For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you...*) tells us of a people who professed to love God and his word, yet because of their

actions were contrary to their professed love, they *blasphemed the name of God*. In other words, the very name *Christian* implies love for God the Father, God the Son and for the word of God. Thus when Christians act unbecoming of their Christian name, they *blaspheme the name of God*.

See also: 1) Ps. 50:16-23, the wicked profess love for the Lord and his word, but ignore its instructions. 2) Titus 2:5, Christian women who do not mind their own business in their own homes *blaspheme the word of God*.

Hence nonchristian attitudes and actions by Christians speak reproachfully against the *name of God*, against Christ, and against the Christian religion, which is the definition of *blaspheme*. We speak with our conversation, or conduct. (1 Pet. 3:2.)

Trapp (1601-1669) says of 1 Timothy 6:1:

Christians are very hardly spoken of at this very day, because their conversation is not as becometh the gospel of Christ, but they think to cover their faults with the fig-leaves of profession. (*John Trapp*, V.647.)

The attitude Paul is dealing with in v. 1, seems to be, I m saved now, and Christ is my Master, so I do not have to honour this heathen I am working for any longer. In fact, I do not have to honour the heathens at all, no matter where they might be in authority. Paul says it is all the more important to obey the unbelieving master because of our Christian testimony.

We fail to understand the importance of having the proper attitude under and toward authority, even pagan authority. That importance is stressed by the Spirit if we will pay attention to his word. *Blaspheme* (#987, 1 Tim. 6:1) and *blasphemy* (#988, Eph. 4:31, Col. 3:8, 1 Tim. 6:4, Jude 1:9) both come from the same word, *blasphemers* (#989, 1 Tim. 1:13, 2 Tim. 3:2, Jude 2:11). Interestingly, the *railing accusation* (i.e., *blasphemers*, #989) in 2 Peter 2:11, refers to speaking evil of those in authority. The *railing* (i.e., *blasphemy*, #988) in 1 Timothy 6:4 and Jude 9, refers to speaking evil of those in authority, even the Devil s authority. The *speak evil* (i.e., *blasphemy*, #987) of 2 Peter 2:12, Jude 8, 10, refers to speaking evil of those in authority. Hence, all three words (#987, 988, 989) are used to refer to speaking evil of authority.

Admittedly, when those in authority are *the basest of men* (many times it seems that the Lord intentionally found the most vile and wicked to *rule* for him *in the kingdom of men*), it is impossible to keep the proper attitude toward the office holders. However, *I can do all things that are required of me by God through Christ which strengtheneth me*. (Philip. 4:13.)

CONCERNING AUTHORITY.

Authority according to the Lord Jesus:

Luke 22:24 *And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. 25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. 26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.*

Rather than condemning the disciples for arguing over who would have the most authority, he teaches them by example: The Lord Jesus said, Look at me. Follow my example.

Jesus dares to cite his own conduct, though their leader, to prove his point and to put a stop to their jealous contention for the chief place at this very feast, a wrangling that kept up till Jesus had to arise and give them the object lesson of humility by washing their feet (#Joh 13:1-20). (Luke 22:27, *RWP, Online Bible*. Christ never taught rebellion nor self-assertion, or even standing up for one s rights. If he had, Christianity would have died. In fact, his example was just the apposite of self-assertion and claiming his rights. 1 Pet. 2:18.)

The primary understanding of the Lord s words is toward pastors --- their call is to serve God s people, not to rule as do pagan rulers (v. 25). In other words, Christians, especially pastors, must not have the pagans attitude toward authority --- the *base* pagan in some way stirs us up with his wickedness and misused

authority. But we do not have the freedom to allow our irritation to come out in our words, actions nor attitudes toward him.

We should be able to say to those around us, to our families and friends, Look at me for an example of the Christian attitude of service. Our human nature is no different than was the disciples in Luke 22. It wants to say, I have been in the ministry for 40 years, or I have been a Christian for 40 years, and I now have the right to *be accounted* great among you. No one has the right or authority to instruct me, especially that pagan.

The Lord Jesus also exemplifies the proper attitude toward authority in general: that proper attitude is spelled out throughout the word of God.

Notice what Peter said:

1 Peter 2:11 *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

Paul said:

Galatians 5:13 *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

It does not matter how the authority --- or anyone, for that matter --- acts, the servants of God must always keep Christ-like actions and attitudes. When we do not act and respond in a way befitting the name of Christ, we speak against that worthy name: *We blaspheme the name of God.* (Cf., Rom. 2:24.) When we do not act and respond in a way befitting the name of Christ, the unsaved will have occasion to speak against Christ: They will *blaspheme the name of God*, and we will be held accountable, as King David found out:

2 Samuel 12:13 *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. 14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.*

We all know the story. The point is that the Lord sent Nathan to David with a message David's ungodly actions gave the pagans reason to *blaspheme the name of God*. The results in David's life and family were seen for every generation till the time of Christ. Christ broke the curse placed on David's line for his ungodly actions.

On the other hand, though the ungodly sought *occasion* against Daniel to *blaspheme the name of God*, they were unable to do so. (Dan. 6:4, 5.)

We can be assured that the enemy of our souls and the unsaved around us are continually looking for an *occasion* in us to *blaspheme the name of God*. The wicked rejoice over inconsistencies in the lives of God's people, so they can boast of their heart's desire to ignore God. (See Ps. 10:1-4.) According, failure on the part of his people to live righteously in actions and attitudes compromises the power of the gospel to influence those around us.

1 Corinthians 15:34 *Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.*

And again, Peter says:

1 Peter 2:15 *For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.*

Failure to act properly under authority blasphemes the name and doctrine of Christ. (1 Tim. 6:1.)

Failure to live according to what we profess blasphemes the name and doctrine of Christ. (Rom. 2:17-29.)

Failure to live according to our Christian profession gives *occasion* for the enemies of God to blaspheme the name and doctrine of Christ. (2 Sam. 12:13, 14.)

We must not ignore the fact that the men of 1 Timothy 1 (v. 20) were delivered by apostolic authority to Satan's school. Satan would be the one to teach them not to *blaspheme*.

Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

that they may--not "might"; implying that the effect still continues--the sentence is as yet unremoved. learn--Greek, "be disciplined, "namely, by chastisement and suffering.

blaspheme--the name of God and Christ, by doings and teachings unworthy of their Christian profession (#Ro 2:23,24 Jas 2:7). Though the apostles had the power of excommunication, accompanied with bodily inflictions, miraculously sent (#2Co 10:8), it does not follow that fallible ministers now have any power, save that of excluding from church fellowship notorious bad livers. (JFB, Online Bible.)

That they may learn not to blaspheme; or "that being chastised", corrected, or disciplined, "they might not blaspheme", as they had before done; either by words, contradicting, reviling, and scoffing at the doctrine of the resurrection; or by their unbecoming lives and conversations, giving themselves great liberty in sinning, supposing there was no truth in that doctrine; whereby they not only blasphemed the Christian religion themselves, but caused it to be evil spoken of by others. (John Gill, Online Bible.)

Was not David's family delivered to the enemy because of his unchristian actions? Are we any better than he was?

I must raise the question: Has American (and the general Western Christian social order that came out of the reformation) Christianity been delivered to Satan?

The above does not mean that Christians must lay down and be trodden under the feet of *base* authority. Nor does it mean that wickedness in high places must be overlooked or ignored. Elijah was commanded to personally confront King Ahab by name over his theft and murder. (1 Kgs. 21:17-22.) John the Baptist openly rebuked King Herod over his violation of God's law. (Mt. 14:3.) Paul said that though they profess to be godly, are to be named and rebuked openly. (1 Tim. 5:20.) The Spirit of God showed the new church that the Lord does not overlook sin. (Acts 5:1-11.) The *base* office holders, both religious and civil, should be confronted and removed by lawful means. But those means must not include unlawful attitudes and actions.

RIGHTS ARE RIGHTS

Several times, Paul stood up for his rights as a Roman citizen, *e.g.*:

Acts 16:37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

But Paul said the above after he was beaten. Why did he not claim that citizenship before the beating? (We know that a reason was the salvation of the jailer, but that is not the question.)

Acts 22:25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. 29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Acts 23:27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

But Peter said (though there are several words for *suffer*, I only refer to the ones as used in v. 19, *suffering*

wrongfully for Christ):

1 Peter 2:19 *For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering [3958] wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer [3958] for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered [3958] for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered [3958], he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*

1 Peter 3:17 *For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer [3958] for well doing, than for evil doing.*

1 Peter 4:15 *But let [3958] none of you suffer [3958] as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 19 Wherefore let them that suffer [3958] according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*

So where are we left concerning *suffering wrongfully* under the authority of the **basest** of men?

ANSWER ANOTHER DAY

V. 2, Paul moves on to the Christian *servant's* responsibility toward a Christian *master*. Rather than the *servant's* attitude being "I'm saved now, and Christ is my Master, so I do not have to honour this heathen I am working for any longer. In fact, I do not have to honour the heathens at all, no matter where they might be in authority", the *servant* is inclined to say, "He's saved, and so am I. So why should I work so hard. He's already saved. So if he is going to stay right with the Lord, he will have to treat me right. Or, He is a good Christian, so I can get away with more than I would be able to otherwise."

Being on various Church staffs, I have seen the attitude of "They won't fire me because I am a Christian. And the people push it to the limit. Besides, it is far more difficult to hold a Christian brother accountable than it is to hold a pagan accountable for doing a good job. I know Steve finds that a problem with his employees. And it should not be so."

Paul says here that the Christian should turn out far superior work than does a non-Christian. Note that Christ frees us from the bondage to sin and from the bondage of the Old Testament rites and rituals that pointed to Christ. He does not free us from the bondage to **base** men. (Gal. 5:1.) Moreover, part of the great mystery of Christ is that he repays his people according to how they act toward even pagan authority. In addition, being in the same context, part of **the whole armour of God** is proper response to authority. (Eph. 5:1-11, Col. 3:22ff.)

Christianity teaches that all are equal by the blood of Christ. (Acts 17:26.) So a common problem dealt with by Paul here is that the Christian *servant* is tempted to exalt himself to the same level as his Christian *master*. But the equality is in the Lord, not necessarily in society.

The modern attitude of labour vs management is not new. Paul dealt with it at the very beginning of the Church.

An application also between vv. 1 & 2 is that the master was converted to Christianity. The Christian *servants* of v. 1 did right, and God used that testimony to speak to the unbelieving *masters*. Remember, a reason for wicked masters is to form the image of Christ in the *servant*. (Rom. 8:28, 29, &c.) When the Christian is conformed as is pleasing to the Lord, then the Lord can deal with the *master's* heart.

God will not change our circumstances until we learn what he has for us where we are. We may change our circumstances that we do not like, but we do so at our own risk. (Obviously, when the *master* requires us to violate our Christian faith, then we have no choice but to change our circumstances.)

V. 2, Timothy, Teach this; exhort the saints in their proper attitude toward authority.

V. 3. **If any man teach otherwise...** Paul goes on to say that his instructions are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ --- that is, doctrine of godliness.

Servants, be obedient, subject to your unsaved masters as far as you can within the bounds of Scripture.
Servants, be obedient, subject to your saved masters.

This teaching is --- wholesome words. This doctrine leads to the healthful state of the church and contentment in the Christian life.

HOW CAN THIS BE? When a person realizes that God works through all things to make us into what he desires us to be, and that when he accomplishes his purpose in our even unpleasant circumstances, he will change it. Without this understanding, we cannot be content in whatsoever state we are in. (Phil. 4:11, 1 Tim. 6:8.)

These are the very words of Christ (1 Pet. 2:18.) This is the doctrine of godliness.

Then Paul gives the other side of the coin. Paul has some harsh words to say about all who **believe or teach otherwise** :

V. 4. (Note that it does not matter how good the man seems to be nor how pure his intentions seem to be.)

First, He is proud (Smoke, fume - inflated, conceited, highminded).

The man who fails to encourage *servants* to be obedient and respectful to authority (within Scriptural bounds) and who might condone *servants* to despise (neglect their duties) their *masters* are wrapped in smoke; they stink before God. (Isa. 65:1-5.)

This man is saying that he knows better than does God. His ideas are better than God's ideas as revealed in his word. His ideas will accomplish more than will the Lord's.

Second, He knows nothing (unable to understand, or unacquainted with the doctrine of godliness). He is a fool. He does not understand how God works, nor does he understand God's nature. God's ways do not seem right, so he follows and teaches the way that seems right to him. (Pro. 16:25.)

Third, doting (sick — a metaphor for any ailment of the mind). The teachers of v. 3 who teach otherwise than vv. 1 & 2, have opposite of a sound, healthy mind of a Christian.

but doting about questions and strifes of words: or he is "sick or diseased"; his mind is distempered; he is like one in a fever, that is delirious; his head is light and wild; his fancy is roving, and he talks of things he knows not what; his head runs upon "questions"; foolish and unlearned ones, about the law and works, and the necessity of them to justification and salvation; concerning genealogies, and other fruitless and unprofitable subjects: (Gill)

Fourth, strife of words (arguing or fighting over the meanings of words; see Isa. 58:4, Jude 16, &c.). Typically, the Jewish false teachers who followed Paul around argued over the meaning of Paul's words. Apparently, Timothy had already encountered these teachers, and Paul is telling him to **withdraw** himself from them.

THUS UNSOUND DOCTRINE IS DEFENDED WITH ARGUMENTS OVER WORD MEANINGS. We must also add that sin is also defended with arguments over the meanings of words, *e.g.*, Clinton's defense against the charges against him was/is the meaning of the words *sex*, and *is*. (February 2, 1999.)

Paul lists the fruit of *doting about questions and strifes of words* :

- 1) **Envy** — the desire (displeasure) that arises from seeing the prosperity of others.
- 2) **Strife** — contention (Pro. 13:10, *Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.* James 3:16 *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*)
- 3) **Railing** — harsh, abusive language; the effects of disputes.
- 4) **Evil surmisings** — suspicions, *e.g.*, They are out to get me, to destroy my ministry.
- 5) **Perverse disputings** — to rub one another the wrong way. Galling. It is a waste of time talking or arguing.
- 6) **Corrupt minds** — wicked hearts.
- 7) **Destitute of the truth** — they don't know the truth; they really do not understand the Christian doctrine of life. (V. 4.)
- 8) **Gain is godliness** — Paul is here dealing with the *servant-master* relationship. These men of v. 3 are teaching otherwise than what Paul is teaching, *i.e.*, *servants be subject to your masters*. The teachers of v. 3 are teaching

a doctrine that will bring them the most gain, *e.g.*, Patriots for Profit:

Supposing that gain is godliness; such were Simon Magus and his followers, and other false teachers, who made merchandise of men, looked everyone for his gain from his quarter, and acted as if there was nothing in religion but worldly profit and gain; these served themselves, their own bellies, and selfish interests, and not the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore the apostle gives the following advice to Timothy, and through him to all ministers and churches... (Gill.)

supposing, etc.--The Greek requires, "supposing (regarding the matter in this point of view) that piety (so translated for 'godliness') is a means of gain (that is, a way of advancing one's worldly interests: a different Greek form, *porisw*, expresses the thing gained, gain)"; not "that gain is godliness, "as English Version. (JFB.)

Paul's use of such strong language here implies that there were some people here in Ephesus who were stirring *servants* up to strike. I suppose the unionization movement is a good example. I do not condone in any way the bad situations that led to the rise of unions. I do, however, say that the unions were the wrong approach to the situations. Christ's instruction toward those who *despitefully use us* is to pray for them, which would also include ungodly authority over us. We say again, we only stay under that authority within the bounds of Scripture. (See also 1 Tim. 2:2.)

Paul tells us that many times worldly gain is the motive for religious activity and for moving the *servant* against his *master*, his proper authority. It is equally obvious that many who stir up racial discontent do so for the prospect of any gain that is in it for them, gain in power and/or wealth. (Some time ago, Stan Solomon interviewed a black business man who had a legitimate complaint against a large company for discrimination against his business. He went to Jessie Jackson for support in his claim. Jackson admitted the claim was just, but he refused to support him unless he gave his Rainbow Coalition a parentage of the company's income. The man refused, so Jackson refused to support him. In fact, Jackson sided with the big corporation against the man. The man said he had no doubt that the Jackson went to the company, and the company paid him off.)

Paul is quite clear and dogmatic: ***from such withdraw thyself.*** Remove yourself from those who teach otherwise, v. 3.

Note some things the passage does not say concerning the *servant/master* relationship.

1) Does not forbid a Christian from desiring his freedom from the bad masters.

If everyone would leave the bad masters and go to the good ones and then outproduce the bad ones, then what kind of incentive would there be for the bad ones to change?

2) Nothing here nor elsewhere forbids us to go to the master himself to show him his evils and encourage him to change.

3) Two views of this passage: *Servant* = slave in bondage, bought with money or captured. *Servant* = subject without bondage.

This passage does not condone the buying and selling of slaves, nor does it condone continued holding of slaves. Nor does it consider the slave holder in good standing with the church. This passage does not condone slavery, as we consider slavery. Moreover, the word *slave* is not used in Scripture, not even in the Old Testament. Among God's people, it was buying and selling of one's labour, not of his body.

Christ gave several parables concerning the *servant/master* or the *employer/employee* relationship which would confirm that this passage refers to the *employer/employee* relationship. See Matthew 20:1-16, where the owner has the right to do as he pleases with what he owns, and the worker has the right not to work for him if he does not want to, or if he thinks the owner is unfair.

Vv. 6-12

V. 6, ***But godliness with contentment is great gain.***

V. 6 instructs the servant who is demanding more at the urging of those of v. 3. The false teachers of v. 3

convince the servant that more money is the answer. God says that the good life is contentment with where we are, with food, shelter and clothing; these things equal inner peace.

Sadly, modern society is built upon JUST A LITTLE MORE.

V. 7, Paul shows the folly of pursuing gain rather than godliness we brought nothing with us into this world, and we will take nothing out.

V. 8, **food, raiment...** Raiment is every necessary covering, including cover and shelter from the weather. (Gill)

V. 9, it does not say, *they that are rich*, but *they that will be rich...* Those who build their lives around the desire to be rich rather than building their lives around godliness *fall into temptation*.

Fall, as fall into a pit (Mt. 12:11, Lk. 14:50), or fall among thieves (Lk. 10:36). Along with the desire to be rich comes temptations and snares. Those who desire to be rich willingly place themselves in the line of fire. They willingly place themselves in temptation. The desire to be rich is a **snare** of the devil. (1 Tim. 3:7.)

The desire for just a little more leads to all kinds of strife and confusion, **many foolish and hurtful lusts**. It leads to defrauding the neighbour, oppressing the poor, lying, perjury, theft, murder, plunder, violence, and injustice of all kinds. It leads to foolish actions of all kinds.

Gambling must be defined as a foolish lust. The desire to be rich leads to foolishly gambling our money away, hoping to obtain that dream of riches.

The desire to be rich is like a millstone around one's neck it draws him down into the sea. And this is the testimony of many who sought to be rich, whether they obtained it or not.

BC (Before Color) there was a TV series called The Millionaire. It was a good show in that it showed what happened to people who received a million dollars that they did not have to work for. The vast majority of the people who received the money destroyed themselves and all those around them.

V. 10, **the love of money...** There are many lawful uses for money; in fact, it takes money to take the gospel into all the world. (Deut. 8:18.) And there are godly rich people who use their wealth to advance God's kingdom.

The love of money is given in the context of the desire to be rich. Thus *the love of money* is the root of all the evils one might do to obtain their desire. But *the love of money* is not only a snare to those who desire to be rich, but it can be a snare to anyone. Anytime money is placed above the Lord God, it is evil placing one's trust and confidence in money instead of in the Lord, and/or compromising one's stand for just a little bit more money.

The problem is that **some have coveted after** money. They violate the word of God so they can be rich. When the love of money replaces the love of God, only evil can result.

Erred from the faith. The problem here could be that those who desire to be rich see Christianity as a religion of losers, of the poor or of the not so well to do. So they abandon the Christian faith. (Mat. 13:22, *deceitfulness of riches*. Riches deceive; they offer much more than they can produce.)

Pierced themselves... (*Pierce through* --- metaph. To torture one's soul with sorrows; they willingly walk through the thorn patch.) They torture their own soul by the desire to be rich.

With many sorrows. It is the desire to be rich that brings the torturous sorrows upon the person. Using every means, lawful and unlawful, to obtain riches, they may or may not obtain them. They did obtain something though, sorrows.

And they may indeed gain the riches, but how many would trade all their wealth to be free from the torture and sorrows their riches brought upon them?

V. 11, speaking particularly to the man of God, men who fill a peculiar office, preachers, the Lord tells them

to be content with food and clothing. He tells them to **flee** the trap of gold, *flee these things* that have snared the covetous. *Flee* shun, avoid by flight. Those desiring to be rich in the world's goods are open to temptation, a snare (trap), foolish and hurtful lusts, which destroy men: v. 9, *drown men* as a sailor going down with a ship.

(Today, March 30, 1999, I know pastors who are willing to go down with the Greater Ministries ship. In my opinion, they are willing because they saw GM as a great opportunity to gain riches, and now they are unwilling to admit wrong.)

They that will be rich never have enough, and get deeper and deeper until they reach final destruction. Those who desire to be rich **fall** into many evils; those desiring to serve God must **flee** from these things, *i.e.*, the desire to be rich and all the evils that come with it.

However, in our day, this is close to impossible. V. 10, money is the root of all evil, and the world's system is built on making us discontent, so we will buy more, and they will make more money.

So many men of God have been caught in the trap of think money holds the answer for all our needs. The result is that they **pierce themselves through with many sorrows**.

Gill here says that the flight is from the evils of vv. 4, 5:

flee these things; the Arabic version reads "these abominations"; namely, all questions and strifes of words, from whence so many evils follow, #1Ti 6:4,5 and all worldly gain, selfish interest, and mercenary views in religion; a wicked resolution to be rich, at any rate, and an immoderate love of the things of the world, and an eager pursuit after them, which expose to great danger, and even utter ruin; things very unbecoming any professor of religion, but much more a minister of the Gospel. (Gill)

follow after... The things Paul lists that the man of God is to follow after are opposed to the things followed after by those who desire to be rich, *e.g.*, *love* for God rather than the love of money; *patience* involves loss of material possessions for the sake of Christ and the gospel; *meekness* involves being content with where God has placed us in life. (See Gal. 5.)

V. 12, **Fight the good fight of faith** is given in the context of being content and not controlled by the *love of money*. Those desiring to be rich fall into the snare of the devil, v. 9. The man of God must fight to stay out of the snare of gold. **Fight the good fight** implies that it takes dedication and effort not to get caught in the snare of the desire to be rich.

Fight... There is only one fight the man of God, applied also to the people of God, is to be involved in that is, the fight of faith, or defence of the gospel. (Ph. 1:7, 17.) We must say that the gospel includes all the word of God, and more than just the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The man of God must **fight**, or carry on militant action, against every spirit of antichrist, no matter where it is found. He does this by proper teaching and application of the word of God.

Lay hold would be akin to **work out your own salvation**, or prove your calling by your works. (Philip. 2:12.)

Moreover, **has professed a good profession before many witnesses** is given in the same context. Therefore, is not the good profession the clear message to others that the pastor is not controlled by the love of money, and that he is indeed content with what God has supplied for him? Paul tells Timothy not to get caught in the gold trap, but to place his efforts in fulfilling his God-given responsibility. What do the *many witnesses* who are watching see?

Note that there are continual attacks against the relevancy of the word of God into every area of life and thought. The especially serious attacks come from within the church, but the attacks from the pagans are also serious. The *man of God's* calling is to produce the fruits of righteousness first in his own life, and then in the lives of those in his spiritual care. His calling is not to make a good living, but to make living good for those in his care. (This is a point at times hard to remember when he is living from hand to mouth, as do many preachers I know. This kind of living makes him easy pray for the snare of gold.)

The believers responsibility is also seeking **first the kingdom of God**, and at times that may produce a good

living for him.

If Christians would put as much priority in the *kingdom* work as they do in making money, great things could be accomplished for the Lord.

Personal Note: I have noticed that being at this one location for 16 years (Jan 83-Jan 99) and involved in many community issues with pagans, it is not unusual for unsaved man to tell of the men of God and Christians in general they have met who seemed to have one goal, money.

Of all people, the man of God must be free of covetousness; he cannot fight the good fight for the Lord if he is controlled by the love of money. Many men of God have fallen by the wayside because of the money squeeze. 5:17 tells us that a responsibility of a local congregation is to see that the man of God has no financial worries; remember, however, that the godly Elders worthy of *double honour* are content with what they already have.

Vv. 13-16

V. 13, through Timothy, Paul gives a charge, or command, to the *men of God* of all time, a command in force *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

In 5:21, the charge was to not prejudice people nor events *before the time*:

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. (1 Cor. 4:5. See also 1 Tim. 5:24.)

In 6:13, the charge is for the man of God to avoid the trap of the *love of money*. Religion is one of the strongest holds that can be on a person. Religious leaders and churches have learned well how to use that hold to increase their personal wealth and power. Christ himself warned against trying to serve both God and mammon. Paul is applying Christ's warning especially to religious leaders.

V. 14, the command to remain uncontrolled by covetousness, is one of the few commands given specifically to pastors. *This commandment* given to the *man of God* is the command to remain uncontrolled by *the love of money*, v. 10. For that love causes God's men to compromise the word of God. How many have I known over the years who practice and defend unscriptural activities because of the gain in power and/or gold that is in it for them, e.g., Greater Ministries International Church, whose defenders have yet to offer a Biblical defense for its activities.

The *commandment* is given *in the sight of God*, who knows all things and keeps all things going, *quickeneth all things*. (Hand to mouth, financial need, is known about by God.)

The *commandment* is given *before Christ Jesus* — the point being that Christ *before Pontius Pilate* kept the faith. Despite the pressure placed on him (he who did live hand to mouth), Christ Jesus did not depart from the Father's will for his life here on this earth. (See Heb. 10:7, 9, and 5:8.) This *man of God* remained faithful to his calling. (See 1 Pet. 2:21.) He *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*. (Heb. 4:15.) We have the same Spirit of Grace as he had.

Before Christ Jesus... V. 15 tells us that this *same Jesus, whom ye have crucified*, is now *both Lord and Christ*. (Acts 2:36.) V. 15 also tells us that though this is a fact, we do not yet see it in practical application, but we will one day in his timing *Which in his times he shall shew...* This could refer to *the appearing* in v. 14, or it could refer to his showing through his people before his visible appearing. (See CHS in Ps. 45.)

The *commandment* is given before many *witnesses*. (See Heb. 12:1-3.) The world around us is watching to see what our motives are in life. This is especially true for the *man of God*. Paul urges Timothy, the man of God, to retain a good report among those around him — free of covetousness.

WHAT DO THEY SEE??

V. 16, *Who only hath immortality...* Money gives a false sense of security, so people spend their lives labouring

for those things which perish. (See Jn. 6:27 & Lk. 12:18.) Only the Lord has *immortality*. (See Mat. 6:33ff.)

Money will not help our approach to the Father, for that is through Christ alone. Money will not purchase any kind of spiritual blessing, as many churches would have us believe, *e.g.*, Rome. (One would think this passage was written with Rome in mind.)

Money purchases power and honour among fallen sinners, but money will not provide power nor honour in that day.

V. 17, Paul spends a good deal of time on the subject of money, probably more on this one subject than any other one subject in Timothy. He tells the *man of God* to avoid covetousness, and he tells the *man of God* to warn those who might have money --- he *commands* Timothy to make the dangers of money known to those who do have an abundance of the world's goods.

Vv. 1-19, though Paul tells Timothy to teach the proper *servant master* relationship, he is dealing with money, *i.e.*, covetousness. Most of the *servant master* conflicts over the years have been over money. The servant covets more, so he works against the master. The master covets more, so he works against the servant.

Paul told the servant to be content with *food and raiment*. John the Baptist told the soldiers to be honest and to be content with their wages. (Lk. 3:14.)

We should point out in this section, v. 11, that the *man of God* is addressed by Paul as a *servant*, not as a *master*. He is a *servant* of God as Christ is his example, v. 13. (See Mk. 9:35, 10:44, Lk. 22:27, Jn. 13, Php. 2:7.) Though the *man of God* is considered a *servant*, he, along with all believers, is elevated to the level of friends and *sons*. (Jn. 15:15, Gal. 4:7.) However, though he must consider himself a servant, for he is addressed that way by the Spirit, he is given the place of rule in the church. Thus, he must keep the attitude of a servant though he is in the place of authority.

V. 17, Paul's *commandment, charge*, to Timothy involves instruction to those who *are rich in this world*. (I must admit that this would be a very difficult *command* to carry out if one had *rich* people among his hearers. Timothy is to instruct them:

1) not to be *highminded*... Riches have a way of making a man feel exalted over others. God instructs the preacher to tell the rich that they are no better than anyone else. Everyone is equal before God, though they may not be before men.

As mentioned above, v. 13, through Timothy, Paul gives a charge, or command, to the *men of God* of all time, a command in force *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*. And then in 5:21, the charge was to not prejudice people nor events *before the time*. Paul tells Timothy not to be prejudice for or against those who are *rich in this world*.

Note: Though the pastor may not have anything of this world's goods, how does he treat those who do? The world is watching to see what his attitude is toward those who are rich. (See James 2.) I know a pastor who has some well to do men in his church. Because of their riches in the world, the pastor gives the man almost a free rein in the church, *e.g.*, he can walk in and out of the pastor's office at will, something no other person would dare do. Actually, I suppose every pastor I have known has been in this trap, except Ford Porter. I must admit, it would indeed be an easy trap to get caught up in.

2) *nor trust*... As pointed out above, there is no security in gold. A man can be rich today, and penniless tomorrow. Those who have no need to trust others will have a hard time trusting God.

And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. (Job 1:21.)

Very few folks can keep this attitude toward riches. Paul tells Timothy that this is the attitude he is to work for in those who *are rich in this world*. God gave it, and God can remove it; it all belongs to him.

V. 18, God gives all good things to enjoy. Now he tells us, especially those who might be *rich in this world's*

goods, what we are to do with the things he has provided.

1) *Do good*. The important thing is *rich in good works*. This type of riches anyone can have. (Scripture defines good and evil in outer words, supporting causes that undermine Biblical Christianity must be defined as evil works.)

2) *Good works* are defined here as willing to help those in need, *ready to distribute, willing to communicate...* The Lord expects those whom he has blessed with this world's goods to be **willingly** liberal with those goods, always ready to share with those in need. (Eph. 4:28.)

He has every right to tell us how to use what we have:

1 Corinthians 4:7 *For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*

God provided those goods to finance his kingdom work on earth, Deuteronomy 8:18. Romans 12:8, mentions the gift of giving. In order to use that gift, one must have something to give. Thus Paul instructs Timothy to instruct those who do have something to give to use it for *good*.

We know that as folks obey v. 18, God will bless, and they will receive more *good* from the Lord. It is so easy to think that we gained worldly goods by our own effort and hard work, but just look around. Many put a hard work into life, and have very little to show for it. On the other hand, some put very little effort into life, and have an abundance of worldly goods. What is the difference?

EDUCATION: No! Just look around. There are well educated people doing very menial jobs, just making ends meet.

DRIVE, motivation: No! Again, just look around. There are many who work very hard, yet have very little.

Basically, prosperity is a result of being at the right place at the right time, with the right idea, *e.g.*, Bill Gates. He just happened to be available when IBM was looking for someone to write a DOS program. IBM approached someone else first, but that other person did not make himself available; Gates did. And the program Gates provided was not his.

Circumstances work out for certain people, and seemingly for others they do not. And we must define *circumstances* as *Divine Providence* at work, Daniel 4:34-37.

Riches do not belong to the *rich*; they belong to God, and are to be used for *good*.

V. 19, *laying up...* Paul is telling Timothy what to tell those who are *rich in this world*. Timothy is to instruct the rich to give liberally and joyfully to God's kingdom work on earth, *i.e.*, godly causes and to those in genuine need. Doing so, they lay up treasures for themselves in heaven, Luke 16:9.

Philippians 2:12 *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Different people are given different gifts and abilities. Each person, therefore, is commanded to use his unique ability in a way befitting his calling in Christ. Prove our faith by our works. Those who are not *rich in this world* cannot *work out* their salvation, prove it, by giving that which they do not have. On the other hand, those who *are rich in this world* are required to do that very thing. Neither the *rich* nor the poor will buy their way into heaven. But those who do have heaven will show it by their proper use of what God has given them.

Moreover, regardless of one's financial status, only what is sent ahead will be there for us when we meet the Lord.

We might also keep in mind that Paul is instructing Timothy in some basic points that are to be passed on to religious leaders, chapter 3.

Vv. 20, 21.

Paul now summarizes his instructions to Timothy in this first letter. Paul has committed something to Timothy's trust. What is committed to Timothy is treated as a single thing, **keep that which...** Notice what is **committed to him!** It is not money, but **that which** is far more important to Paul than money—that is, sound doctrine. (Sad to say, the average Christian today refuses to sit under serious and sound doctrine, but maybe this is just me.)

The sound doctrine has been: organization of the local church, offices and qualifications of officers; the servant/master relationship; proper attitude toward and use of this world's goods, which are to be used 1) to do good, 2) for the needs of the saints, and 3) to finance God's kingdom work..

In closing this letter, Paul reminds Timothy to remember his instructions, put them in practice, teach them to others, and see that they are carried out.

Paul opens and closes this section warning Timothy to avoid men who teach contrary to sound doctrine, though they might appear under the color of Christianity, vv. 1-6. Evidently, the primary reason for departing from sound doctrine is money, for money is the basic warning in this section.

Avoid profane and vain babblings, or empty words that do not promote unity and sound doctrine.

Science falsely so called. Evidently, even in Paul's day there were corrupt men using science to undermine the gospel. When science does not fit within the general teaching of Scripture, then it must be considered *science falsely so called*. And that is the definition of most of modern science, as it is used in a vain attempt to overthrow God.

V. 21, tells us that there are Christians who have been and who are influenced away from sound doctrine by *false science*, as it is used to undermine the word of God, e.g., evolution. It seems that the government education system for years has had one major goal—undermine Christianity and sound doctrine. The primary tool that has had the most apparent effect has been science. Science has been used to disprove Scripture, and the students have accepted what the secular (without God) text books have said over what Holy Scripture says.

Timothy, and men of God of all ages, avoid this trap.

Grace be with thee. And only by God's grace can anyone avoid the snares so skillfully set by the enemies of God's people.

April 7, 1999