

1 Timothy 6

Verse by Verse

Godliness with Contentment

Introduction

Counsel to
Timothy
6:11-16

Counsel to
the Rich
6:17-19

Final Words
on Knowledge
6:20-21

Conclusions

Counsel to
Slaves
6:1-2a

A Prosperity
Gospel?
6:2b-10

St. Paul, imprisoned, ends the letter to the Ephesians, and hands it over to Tychicus. Wood engraving, 1886, Gustave Dore (Wikimedia Commons)



Introduction

Previously in 1 Timothy

- In **1 Timothy 5** Paul began with principles for dealing with people in the church by treating them like family.
- He then moved on to **widows** - those who were really in need - and gave guidelines for their care.
- Their character was as important as their need for help.
- His final section was on those in the role of **elder**, that is, the *overseer* or *pastor*.
- These are worthy of honor and a paid position, but they are not exempt from correction as far as standards of behavior.

What's in
1 Timothy 6?

On
Contentment

Key Verses

What's in 1 Timothy 6?

- After a few words to slaves within the churches, Paul moves on to some teaching about money and/or greed.
- Perhaps something along the lines of a prosperity gospel had infiltrated the church in Ephesus.
- At the very least, there was always the possibility of the rich relying too much on their resources.
- Paul also has some direct encouragement for Timothy and some final words dealing with knowledge.

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On Contentment

Contentment: satisfaction or ease of mind (from Dictionary.com)

- Did anyone have to teach you how to complain?
- Has anyone here ever had to teach their children to complain?
- **Lesson:** Discontent comes to us naturally; contentment does not.
- We have to train ourselves to be content, satisfied, at ease with our situation.

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1 Timothy 6:6-7

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain,
7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.

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Counsel to Slaves 6:1-2a

From Warren
Wiersbe

- Paul is not so much defending slavery as an institution, but dealing with the realities of his time and place.
- In the Roman world as many as a third to a half of the people in some places were slaves.
- Perhaps 50 or 60 million people in total.
- Many of these slaves eventually received their freedom and became Roman citizens.
- Felix in **Acts 24** is an extreme case as he was a former slave who later became a governor.
- Paul's counsel to serve well is just as applicable to us right now.



Warren Wiersbe
(1929 - 2019),
pastor and Bible
teacher.

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

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

"Are you working just as hard for your Christian boss as you did for your other boss?" I asked. The look on her face gave me the answer. "Try working harder," I advised, "and show him real respect. Just because all of you in the office are saved doesn't mean you can do less than your best."

She took my advice and her problems cleared up.



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A Prosperity Gospel? 6:2b-10

- **6:3-5** Aside from general divisiveness, it looks like some of the false teaching in Ephesus had a focus on wealth.
- It was not from a biblical point of view.
- The answer to greed is contentment.
- **6:10** Take note that it is **not money in itself** that is the problem. It is **the love of money**.
- Some people have the ability to gain plenty of earthly riches without succumbing to greed.

Hebrews
13:5-6

Our Key
Verses

Philippians
4:11b-13

Hebrews 13:5-6

5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

6 So we can confidently say,

"The Lord is my helper;
I will not fear;
what can man do to me?"



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Paul and the
Philosophers

Ecclesiastes
5:10-11

A Prayer
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Paul and the Philosophers

- Certain Greek schools of philosophy - like the Stoics or the Cynics - also taught *contentment* as a key to a satisfying life.
- Paul even used the same word they did (*autarkeia*) to describe this ideal.
- Still, their intentions differ.
- The Greek ideal was more of a self-sufficiency, a condition in which no aid or support was needed.
- Paul's idea of contentment is built upon the foundation of a right relationship with God.

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10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. 11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?

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A Prayer from Proverbs

Proverbs 30:7-9

7 Two things I ask of you;
deny them not to me before I die:
8 Remove far from me falsehood and lying;
give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with the food that is needful for me,
9 lest I be full and deny you
and say, "Who is the Lord?"
or lest I be poor and steal
and profane the name of my God.

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11 ... I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.
12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound.
In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of
facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. 13 **I can do all
things through him who strengthens me.**



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- **6:11** Timothy has to avoid the trap of covetousness in the Christian life, but Paul gives him things to pursue.
- **6:12** He then has to remember that the Christian life will always be a battle.
- His goal has to be to fight to the end and receive his ultimate reward.

- **6:13-16** Jesus was faithful to the end before Pilate.
- He is the King of kings and Lord of Lords.
- There is no doubt that Paul expects Timothy and us to worship and serve Jesus as the one true God.
- Accept no substitutes.

Six Things to Pursue

Fighting the Good Fight

From Tony Evans

Six Things to Pursue

- **Righteousness** integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling, and acting
 - **Godliness** reverence, respect, piety
 - **Faith** belief, conviction, persuasion, also fidelity or faithfulness
 - **Love** this is “agape” love.
 - **Steadfastness** cheerful endurance, *patient stickability*
 - **Gentleness** humility, mildness or meekness
-
- We might say this is standard stuff, much like the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians. We have heard it all before.
 - That is true. And it is good to be reminded one more time.



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- Living the Christian life takes effort.
- While Christ's yoke is easy and His burden is light, it's still a yoke – and a yoke implies that some kind of work is getting done.
- Paul here describes it as a fight.
- It's a joyful victorious fight, but it still involves rejecting the values of this world and a willingness to identify with Christ when that is not fun.

Faithful to
the End

Faithful to
the End

How About
Us?

Faithful to the End: Paul

2 Timothy 4:6-8

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

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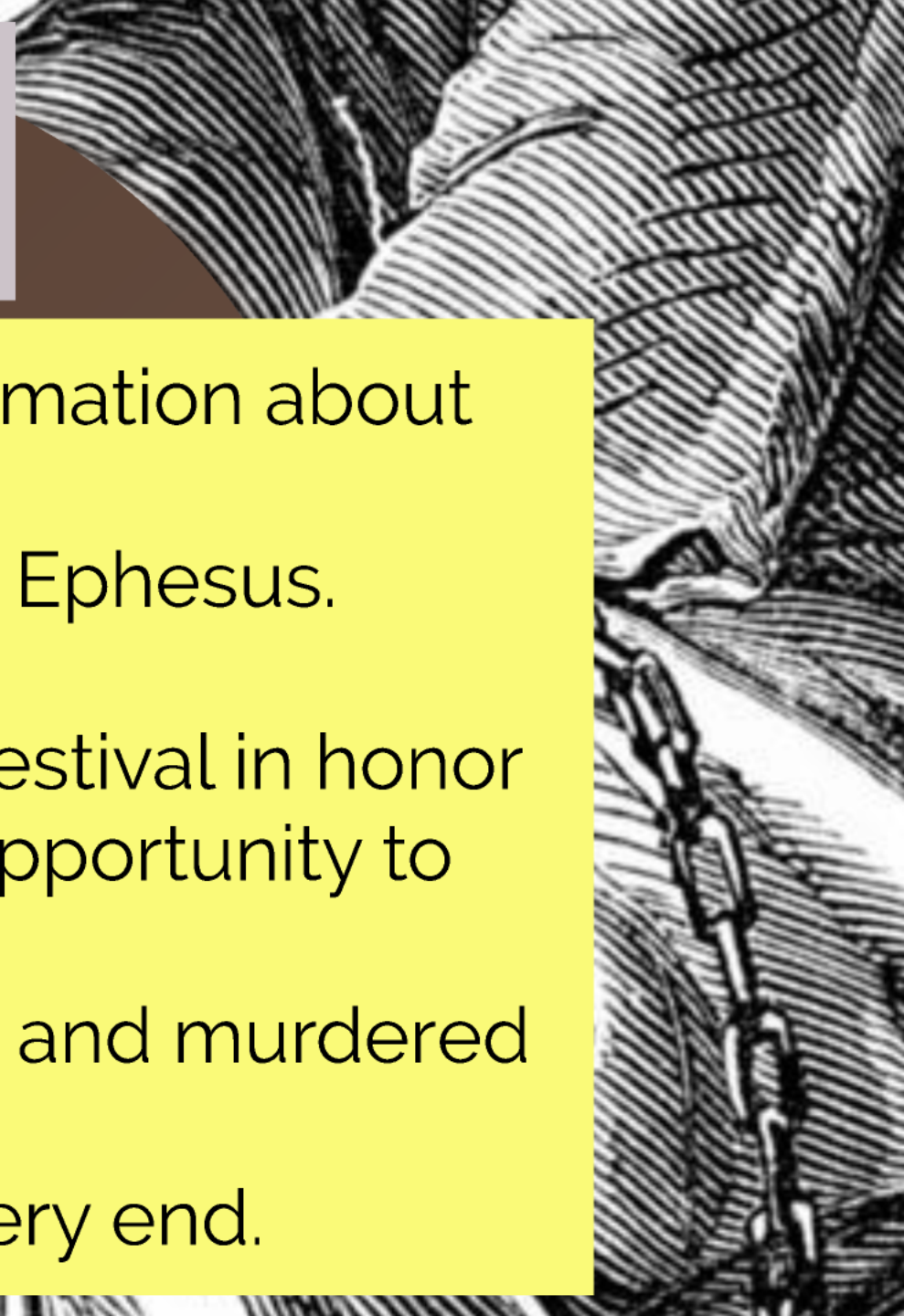
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Faithful to the End: Timothy

- The Bible doesn't give us any information about the death of Timothy.
- History tells us that it took place in Ephesus.
- At an annual procession during a festival in honor of pagan gods, Timothy took the opportunity to preach Jesus to them.
- An angry mob fell on him in anger, and murdered him with stones and clubs.
- Timothy remained faithful to the very end.



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- What would it take to get you to give up the fight of faith?
 - Discouragement?
 - Temptation?
 - A bad day at work?
 - Bad news about a family member or friend?
 - Peer pressure?
 - Or is your relationship with Jesus firm?
- **6:15-16** If we understand who Jesus really is we will be better equipped to fight the good fight of faith.

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Fighting the Good Fight

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When trials and tribulations strike, remember that God is sovereign. When you think more highly of yourself than you ought, remember that God is sovereign. When your life hits rock bottom, remember that God is sovereign. The worst nightmare of the wicked is that God is sovereign. The overruling hope of the saint is that God is sovereign.



Tony Evans, Bible Teacher
and Commentator



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Counsel to the Rich 6:17-19

- **In this present age** Riches now provide no guarantee of riches in the age to come.
- **Not to be haughty** Pride is usually a very real temptation to those who are wealthy. It can be easy to think you deserve all you have.
- **The uncertainty of riches** Riches give the illusion of certainty. Only Jesus provides a firm and lasting foundation.
- **Do good, to be rich in good works** Rich people can often do more good than others because they have the means to do so.
- **Generous** They may be able to give more than others – a very good investment in eternity.
- **Ready to share** Those lacking in means can benefit from the wealthier brother or sister sharing what they have.
- Read **6:19** again to see the ultimate result.

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Final Words on Knowledge 6:20-21

- In NT times, various religious groups would initiate their followers into secrets, mysteries and exclusive forms of knowledge (*gnosis*).
- In later times we see a full-blown *gnosticism*, which included elements of Christianity blended into a false faith.
- Paul wants Timothy to avoid such things in order to stand firmly in Christ.
- There is still plenty of nonsense out there today that we also need to avoid.
- And it still often tries to pass itself off as *knowledge* that we ignorant, traditional Christians simply do not have.

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- It seems something along the lines of a prosperity gospel had infiltrated the church in Ephesus.
- Then there was the possibility of the rich relying too much on their resources.
- Paul wants Timothy to set these attitudes straight.
- Paul also has some direct encouragement for Timothy, who needed to fight the good fight
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Standing Firm

Godly Contentment

Key Verses

A Final Prayer

Standing Firm

- Sometimes we can underestimate what it is going to take to remain faithful to Christ and firm in our faith.
- Even in Paul's day, many gave false professions of faith, while others deserted the apostle and his ministry.

- **2 Timothy 1:15**

You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

- See again **6:10** and **6:21**.
- Let's rely on the Lord's help and stay determined to finish well.

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Godly Contentment

Contentment: satisfaction or ease of mind (Dictionary.com)

- For Paul, this contentment has to start with a firm faith in Christ, who remains trustworthy even in our trials.
- We saw four forms of contentment in this chapter:
 1. Contentment with our work
 2. Contentment with our income level
 3. Contentment with a biblical life
 4. Contentment with a biblical faith
- Contentment does not rule out improving your current position.
- It does rule out anxiety over it.

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A Final Prayer

Heavenly Father,

- Thank you for all the practical instruction that we receive from your word.
- Keep us mindful that having Jesus, we already have all that we need to keep us safe and secure for all eternity.
- Teach us to be content as we trust you to provide for our daily needs.
- We don't want so little that we would be tempted toward coveting what others have. We don't want so much that we would be tempted to forget you - our true Provider.
- In Christ,
- Amen

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