

Introduction

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope, Jeremiah 29.11.

God has an incredible plan. The story of God's word begins at creation, continues to the cross and reaches beyond. We need to make this personal by examining how God's plan provides us with refuge, comfort, and hope. The key ingredient that makes it all possible is self-denial.

Will you have the courage to eliminate earthly pleasures and treasures in order to gain Christ?

Don't merely pay lip-service to the concept of self-denial, but actually implement it into your life. This is a lifelong challenge.

As you enter this study, a primary objective is to stress your commitment in living inside your identity every day. *You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart, Jeremiah 29.13.* This promise is coupled with our loving response.

There is nothing passive about Christianity.

To help us accomplish our responsibility of living inside our identity, this workbook examines Paul's writing in 1 Timothy 6.11–20.

Here you'll find what it means to *take hold of eternal life*.

Thanks for using this workbook as a personal growth and study tool!

Matthew Allen
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1 Timothy 6 Overview

1 Timothy 6 contains the final thoughts of a very personal letter from Paul to Timothy. As he prepares to close his writing, Paul describes those who reject the *sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness*, 6.3. The false teacher's pride leads to poor understanding of Scripture, a *craving for controversy*, envy and strife, *constant friction among people*, and greed. With the reference to money, Paul talks about contentment and avoiding the *desire to be rich*, 6.9–10.

In verse 11, Paul makes a sharp contrast. The false teachers were all about money, sin, and the world. However, Timothy was a *man of God*. Paul's appeal to him is intense and the contrast could not be greater. Timothy is told to *flee from these things*, 6.11a. To *flee* means to “escape from, to run or move away quickly, avoid and shun, vanish, or disappear.”¹ There are certain things that must be avoided at all costs and the present tense of the verb indicates the *man of God* is to constantly *flee from these things*. What things Paul has in mind are those listed in verses 3–10.

Beginning in 6.11b, the rest of the chapter defines what Timothy should be running after. *A man of God is known by what he follows after.*² We must not only flee from sin, but we are to continually pursue holiness. A similar statement is found in 2 Timothy 2.22: *So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart*. If we stop in our forward progress, sin will surely catch up.

Beginning in 6.11 and continuing through the end of the chapter, Paul lists a number of virtues that every child of God must pursue in order to be identified as a man or woman of God.

¹ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

² MacArthur, John F., Jr. *1 Timothy*. *MacArthur New Testament Commentary*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995.

Pursue Righteousness

1 Timothy 6.11b

Introduction

Defining Righteousness

It should be noted that the verb *righteousness* is the outward manifestation of the internal quality of *godliness* that Paul mentions next in verse 11. The two (righteousness and godliness) are inseparably linked. *Righteousness* is “the quality of conforming to a standard or norm, normally carrying an ethical overtone.” The word is used in the New Testament to “describe character and actions characterized by moral integrity as measured by God’s revealed will.”³

As a noun, *righteousness* describes a *status of acceptability* before God on the basis of faith — the resulting gift from justification. Righteousness is a state of being, an identity. Paul walked away from all his Jewish credentials so that he could: *be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith*, Philippians 3.9. See also Romans 4.5-9; 5.17; 1 Corinthians 1.30; and 2 Corinthians 3.9.

We must not confuse the fact that we have been declared righteous by God somehow means we don’t have to obediently respond to His will. The emphasis in the New Testament is to live inside our new identity. *You have been made righteous by God so now you must live like a righteous person does.* That is exactly what Paul is emphasizing in 1 Timothy 6. We must flee from immoral attitudes and practices and live like a man or woman of God every day of our life.

³ Mangum, Douglas, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, and Rebekah Hurst, eds. *Lexham Theological Wordbook. Lexham Bible Reference Series.* Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014.

Righteousness Is Something to Be Desired

Note the following passages, which outline the Christian's responsibility:

- Matthew 5.6: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*
- Luke 1.74–75: *that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.*
- Philippians 1.11: *filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*
- 1 John 2.29: *If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.*

How Are You Doing?

With honest evaluation, most of us have work to do. We must live inside our identity. While we may no longer struggle with what we define as “big sins,” there are probably a few of the “little ones” that are piling up and damaging our influence for Christ. While we live in the world, we must not be *of* the world. Every day, every month, and every year, the congruence between the way we live our life and our new identity in Christ should be increasing. *Be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, Philippians 2.15b–16a.*

Living inside our identity (practicing righteousness) will involve:

- James 1.19, 3.1–10 — controlling our tongue.
- Ephesians 4.26–27 — controlling our anger.
- Proverbs 4.23 — guarding our heart.
- Philippians 4.8 — giving attention to what we take in.
- Hebrews 12.14 — practicing holiness every day.

What are some other things you can think of that could be included on our list of practicing righteousness?

For Thought and Reflection

1. What does it mean to be a man or woman of God?
2. What happens if we stop fleeing sinful attitudes and actions? What is the solution?
3. To what does the verb *righteousness* refer?
4. To what does the noun *righteousness* refer?
5. Why do you think righteousness is something we are to desire?
6. Do you find self-evaluation difficult? What makes it hard for you?
7. What are some areas of your life you need to give closer attention to in order to more effectively practice righteousness?
8. How has today's lesson helped you as you live inside God's plan?

≡Lesson 2≡

Pursue Godliness

1 Timothy 6.11c

Introduction

Previously, it was noted that the verb *righteousness* is the outward manifestation of the internal quality *godliness*. The two (righteousness and godliness) are inseparably linked. Whereas righteousness refers to external actions, in the New Testament *godliness* refers to “an internal attitude of reverence for God which reveals itself in a life of holiness in the world.”⁴

Godliness in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the word for *godliness* appears mainly in the pastoral epistles and in 2 Peter. (See 1 Timothy 2.2; 3.16; 4.7–8; 6.3, 5–6, 11; 2 Timothy 3.5; Titus 1.1; 2 Peter 1.3, 6–7; 3.11.) It refers to an *awesome respect accorded to God, devoutness, and piety*.⁵ It is a “reverent awareness of God’s sovereignty over every aspect of life, and the attendant determination to honor him in all one’s conduct.”⁶ Another author says that the word relates “to real, true, vital, and spiritual relation with God. Our English word ‘religion’ was never used in the sense of true godliness.”⁷

⁴ Champlin, J. Knox. “Godly, Godliness.” *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Baker reference library. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996.

⁵ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

⁶ Champlin.

⁷ Bullinger, Ethelbert W. *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908.

In the New Testament we see several examples of godliness:

- Luke 2.25; 2.37 — Simeon and Anna.
- John 1.47 — Nathanael.
- John 8.29; Hebrews 5.7 — Jesus.
- Acts 10.2, 7 — Cornelius and family.
- Acts 11.24 — Barnabas.
- Acts 22.12 — Ananias.

God Has a Special Concern for the Godly

Psalm 4.3 says, *But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him.* In the Old Testament “the saints” is sometimes used to refer to God’s people. See Psalm 32.6.

Godly Living

- 2 Peter 3.11 — Godliness should be seen in the life of a believer. See also 1 Timothy 2.2; Titus 2.12.
- 1 Timothy 3.16 — Jesus is the beginning and end of godliness. The model and power for godly living comes from Christ. See Hebrews 5.7; 2 Peter 1.3.
- 1 Corinthians 9.24–27 — Godly living demands self-discipline. See also 2 Corinthians 10.5; 1 Timothy 4.7–8.
- 2 Corinthians 7.10–11 — Sorrow for sin is a sign of godliness.

The Benefits of Godliness

- 1 Timothy 4.8 — It has value both in this world and the next.
- Deuteronomy 4.40; 1 Timothy 6.6 — It has present blessings. See also Isaiah 3.10; Titus 3.8.
- Titus 2.11–13 — It carries the promise of a future blessing. See also 2 Peter 3.11–12.

Godliness Does Not Guarantee Escape from Suffering

See Psalm 12.1; Micah 7.2; 2 Timothy 3.12; and 2 Peter 2.9.

Conclusion

In pagan literature, godliness meant showing proper caution, fear or reverence towards the gods. Such piety involved the offering of sacrifices and other cultic activities. It also meant honoring the gods by respecting elders, masters, rulers, and all the orders of life thought to be under the protection of the gods. When this terminology was used in the Bible, a different notion of fear or respect was intended. The one true God, as Creator and Redeemer, requires an active obedience to his revealed will and a personal devotion that surpasses lip-service, mere trepidation, or bare admiration (See Proverbs 1:7; Isaiah 11:2; 33:6; Luke 2:25; Acts 10:2; 22:12).⁸

⁸ D.G.P. "Godliness." Edited by D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, and D. J. Wiseman. *New Bible Dictionary*. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

For Thought and Reflection

1. How do we define *godliness*?
2. Is *godliness* an internal or external quality? Explain.
3. How did Cornelius and his family serve as good examples of godliness?
4. What does it mean to you that God has a special concern for the godly?
5. How are *godliness* and self-control connected?
6. How does *godliness* have value in this world and in the next?
7. What are some of the *present* blessings of godliness? The future?
8. Are godly people exempt from suffering? Explain.

Lesson 3

Pursue Faith

1 Timothy 6.11d

A Quick Review

Paul began 1 Timothy 6 by exhorting the young evangelist to flee pride, contentiousness, and greed by running toward righteousness, godliness, faith and love. Christianity is not passive. If you are not moving forward, you are moving backward. The goal for each of us is to walk in the light (1 John 1.5–7), making daily progress even if it is incrementally and slow. Paul *strained forward* to what is ahead, having left all of his former life behind, Philippians 3.12–14. So must we.

Previously we have defined *righteousness* and *godliness*. Righteousness is a state of being. God has deemed us righteous (acceptable) by our belief in Jesus' atoning work on the cross. Because of that we practice righteousness, living inside the new identity God has created for us. This also reflects the new inward quality God is creating for us on the inside: *godliness*. This is our desire to reverence God with great respect and awe. Casting off everything else, we have placed Him at the very center of our heart.

Defining Faith

As Paul progresses in his list of things to pursue, we see the familiar joining together of *faith*, *love*, and *steadfastness*. Together, these three define the foundation of Christian existence. When Paul mentions *faith*, he could be referring to either the ongoing faithfulness to the gospel or the continual act of believing.⁹ Certainly, in light of the grave danger and growing internal and external threats of false teachers Timothy needed to remain true to

⁹ Towner, Philip H. *The Letters to Timothy and Titus. The New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006.