

Letters To Timothy (part 1)

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The young man Timothy was given some advice by Paul in 1 Timothy 6:11, *“But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.”* In this single verse, the mission of every Christian is clearly outlined in the simplest, purest, and most honorable terms. What I would like to do in this two-part article series is examine this verse and how the *“man of God”* can accomplish his task of obeying the Lord. We will seek to define and apply the lessons learned by Timothy, so that we can all become people of God. By focusing entirely on verses and phrases found in the two letters written to Timothy, we are able to get a very special view of a man of God.

The People Of God Must Flee...

From Temptations

Timothy is told twice by Paul to flee from his temptations (1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:22). Most of the time, as much as we do not want to admit it, we are not strong enough to face sin on its terms. Instead of turning around and fleeing from it, we think we can face it head-on and eliminate it. We all hate to lose a fight; that is normal. But we cannot win if we try to fight it when we are ill-prepared, or when we walk into a situation naively thinking this time *“will be different.”* This is why the apostle Paul makes it so clear to Timothy that he must run away from his sins.

Consider any sin; we are all susceptible to different forms of sin, each of us in one way or another. None of us is completely free from the love or lust of something sordid. And whatever sin is particular to your life, how can you say you will beat it if you walk yourself right into its arms? Paul said it best when he described the hold of sin on people’s souls, *“[that] they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, held captive by him to do his will”* (2 Timothy 2:26).

What, then, is the answer to all of these things? If sin is like a snare, and we are powerless against it in its strongest form, and on its own breeding ground, how do we beat it? We listen to Paul’s exhortation to Timothy and *“flee from it!”* We run away from it, in whatever form it happens to be taking. Like Timothy, if we flee from sin, we will never give it a chance to ensnare us.

From Vain and Worldly Chatter

“O, Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’ – which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith” (1 Timothy 6:20-21). In the exact same way as Timothy, we have been entrusted with the Word of God, the knowledge of truth. And like Timothy, we also have an obligation to guard that which has been freely revealed to us.

Paul gives Timothy some timely advice in 2 Timothy 2:14-16. We, too, must avoid getting ensnared in endless discussions with people who do not want to see the truth, but stubbornly hold to some doctrinal hobby or divergent view. Some men and women will believe what they want to believe, and will never really look at the Bible for what it is. We must not allow ourselves to spend all of our time wrangling over words with them. There comes a point when we must simply leave them be and move on (*“But*

refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels” 2 Timothy 2:23) – truly, there are better things to do than this!

From The Love of Money

Consider 1 Timothy 6:9-10, which says, *“Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”* The importance of this verse cannot be emphasized enough to young people as they head out into the world to find careers. If we can impress on our young people early on that the love of money is a *“root of all sorts of evil”*, then it will be easier for them to find contentment in whatever jobs they end up finding. This also means that when they are very deep into a career, and perhaps making good money, they will already have a proper attitude toward wealth and its ultimate vanity.