

Letters To Timothy (part 2)

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The People of God Must Pursue...

Righteousness, godliness, faith, love

In the same way that there are a number things that Paul teaches Timothy to avoid, there are also important attitudes and actions that Timothy, as a man of God, must pursue. In fact, in our opening text, we find this is the case. *“But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness”* (1 Timothy 6:11). What is most significant is the fact that Timothy is never told to simply avoid evil in the world, but to also (and perhaps more importantly) pursue good things to replace the evil things.

Study of the Scriptures

What person can call himself a *“man of God”* if he is not truly concerned about the very words of God? Who, after being baptized and believing in Christ, would not be intensely interested in reading, studying, knowing, and applying every precious word given him by the Almighty? Indeed, Paul makes it clear in his correspondence with Timothy that studying and applying the Bible to our lives is essential in developing and maturing into the kind of person, man or woman, who can truly claim godliness.

Consider 2 Timothy 3:14-15, which says, *“You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”* It is amazing to me to see that from childhood Timothy had the kind of heart that was eager to seek out the scriptures and know them thoroughly. As a young man, Timothy was so engrossed in his studies that Paul could say he was *“convinced”* about the scripture. This shows all of us that a child is never too young to start learning about the Bible. Our little boys and girls should be reading the Bible often, going to Bible classes, learning to sit quietly through worship assemblies, and understanding the need for prayer and its positive effects.

Into his adult life, Timothy continued the habits he learned as a boy – in fact, few would not assert that the good study methods we learn as children will be reflected in us for all the rest of our lives! Paul gave Timothy some excellent advice about studying in 1 Timothy 4:15-16, writing, *“Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.”*

Perseverance

For generations, suffering has been the symbol of Christianity, and Paul the apostle was not immune to it. In fact, the two epistles to Timothy are filled with references to suffering, death, and renewal. So the final point of my article is this: the people of God must always persevere to the end, through all trials and tribulations, through poverty and wealth, and to the close of our days when we will be taken up into glorious light and salvation evermore!

Paul wrote to Timothy, *“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God”* (2 Timothy 1:8). As he neared the end of his life, Paul knew what was coming to him. Although he would lose everything (physically speaking) for the sake of the Gospel of his Lord, he knew it meant nothing in comparison to glory. He continued by writing, *“For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day”* (2 Timothy 1:12).

As Paul closed His letter to the young *“man of God”* he made it clear that he had no regrets in His diligent service to God, and his ministration of the Word. He solemnly, but joyfully wrote those eternal words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:7-8. If you are not a person who is wholly devoted to God, if you cannot say you have the qualities of the *“man of God,”* then you must strive to have those qualities this very day. *“For if we have died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself”* (2 Timothy 2:11-13).