

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 6:11 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Fleeing And Pursuing

INTRO: As you get older, at times do you wish that you had listened to good advice when you were younger in the past, particularly in regard to things you should stay away from? And do you further try to figure out why your thinking compelled you in the past to ignore and proceed in a manner contrary to the good advice? After contemplating this for awhile, do you eventually conclude that your thinking that caused you to ignore good advice back then was defective and/or corrupted, even though at that time back then you thought you were thinking clearly?

Through this study today of 1 Timothy 6:11, you may discover or realize that you have been and currently are proceeding in a manner that is contrary to good advice - in fact perfect advice from God.

READ: 1 Timothy 6:11, with vv.6-10 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - According to God, we believers commit sin if we "want to get rich". (vv.5,9)
- - And thereupon, we become entrapped by and through this choice of wanting to get rich, which thereafter progressively moves us into self-inflicting of adversity and progressively moves us farther away from the faith and from maturing spiritually. (vv.10,9)
- - Let's see what God says we need to do if we want to be a true "man [or woman] of God". (v.11)

v.11a - READ

[Lesson Question: What precaution should be utilized in the church to ensure that this command is being adhered to?]

SECTION POINT: Every pastor, elder, and ministry leader should be regularly evaluated to ensure that each one has not fallen into the temptation of wanting to get rich.

"But you, man of God, flee from all this,"

- - The command is given here to "flee", "shun, or run away" from the things that relate to wanting to get rich. (Strong's #5343)
- - Even though this desire of "wanting to get rich" (v.9) is prevalent in society all around us, we believers must reject this worldly philosophy and keep ourselves separated from it and all of its trappings.
- - We are commanded to flee from this desire of wanting to get rich because by our nature all humans gravitate to it.
- - Keeping ourselves pure in this regard is required if we want to be a "man [or woman] of God". (cf. v.5:22)

- - And for those persons who function as a pastor or elder in the church or overseer of a ministry, they are disqualified from holding these leadership positions if they are a "lover of money". (v.3:3)
 - - Therefore, a vital necessity is to include inquiry about this topic in yearly evaluations of every individual pastor, elder, and ministry leader to ensure that each one has not become a lover of money - wanting to get rich.
 - - Failure to do a yearly evaluation like this of every pastor, elder, and ministry leader is to risk being led by a no-longer qualified person who has "wandered from the faith" and has opened himself/herself up to potentially engaging in "all kinds of evil" because his/her godliness has become corrupted by discontentment. (vv.6:10,6)
 - - This risk is also present if candidates for leadership positions are not screened in this regard during the interview process.
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v.11b - READ

[Lesson Question: Define theologically each of these virtues. What are the implications of the commands in this verse for pastors, elders, and ministry leaders, and for believers?]

SECTION POINT: Every pastor, elder, and ministry leader, along with every believer, should be completely devoted to thoroughly pursuing the virtues of the faith and be consistently implementing them in their life.

"and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness."

- - In conjunction with the fleeing from all the things associated with wanting to get rich, the man or woman of God is to pursue the qualities that lead to true and comprehensive godliness.

- - Both of these commands are intended to be conducted actively and continuously - as if to say, "Man of God, take these actions! Run from that, and pursue this. And don't stop!".

-- "Pursue" and chase after and strive for and work strenuously to gain and/or accomplish each of the following:

- - - - **"righteousness"** - being and acting in accord with or conforming to God's own moral standard, in other words living rightly before God, which consists of "right thinking, feeling, speaking, and behavior, and includes living in right relation with God, living according to His teachings as described in the Scriptures, and living according to His will"; (Toon pp.688,687)

- - - - **"godliness"** - having and exhibiting sincere and earnest and devout reverence toward God, which is characterized by the same virtues that God possesses, especially holiness and sacredness (set apart for God's holy service);

- - - - **"faith"** - firm and loyal belief and trust in God, and in all that He is, all that He does past / present / future, and all that He says as recorded in the Holy Bible - even though there may be little or no physical evidence or proof to support such belief and trust (Hebrews 11:1); faith is to be active - living in a manner that is based on faith (2 Corinthians 5:7), and producing good works in practical application of faith (James 2:17);

- - - - "**love**" - to summarize simply: "a deep, genuine, and tender feeling of affection" that is accompanied by corresponding responses, which are directed towards God and towards fellow human beings; (*AHD*; Mark 12:30-31; cf. 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a)

- - - - "**endurance**" - "to persevere, remain under, patiently bearing up under" difficulties that challenge one's faith, and "not surrendering to circumstances or succumbing under trial"; (Zodhiates #5281 p.1425)

- - - - "**gentleness**" - "meekness, mildness, and calmness towards God and His dealings with us, considering them as good in that they enhance the closeness of our relationship with Him". (Zodhiates #4236 p.1208)

- - The command here is that every person who is a leader in a ministry is to be pursuing these virtues of the faith, striving to gain and/or accomplish each of them in fullness and with consistency in their personal life.

- - And by implication, this command also pertains to every believer - that each believer is to be striving to become a man or woman of God by likewise engaging in this pursuit.

- - Notice, though, that this is a deliberate and active pursuit - it will not happen on its own.

- - Each believer must choose this pursuit and then act on this pursuit.

- - This is also a progressive pursuit (theologically called 'progressive sanctification').

- - We are to continue this pursuit throughout our lifetime, striving and refining to make more and more progress in attaining each of these virtues in fullness in our life.

- - But our progress will be somewhat hindered and stunted without empowering assistance from God, because as stated in Philippians 2:13, "for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose".

- - So to maximize progress, a wise extra step to add to this pursuit would be to daily offer yourself to God while simultaneously asking for cleansing of your sins - thereby each day becoming spiritually cleansed, open, yielded, and suitable for Him to work in you as He wills and to transform you. (Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 1:9)

BIG IDEA: Every pastor, elder, and ministry leader, along with every believer, is to consistently stay away from wanting to get rich, and instead be completely devoted to thoroughly pursuing and implementing the virtues of the faith in their life.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

- - Perhaps you think you can do both - you think that you can pursue these virtues of the faith while you strive after wealth.

- - Perhaps you think you can do ministry during some times of the week while you strive for wealth during the rest of the time of the week.

- - Perhaps you think that your substantial financial support of your church or ministry justifies that you strive after wealth (- in other words the end result of what you are doing justifies the means you use to get there).

- - Clearly, God opposes all of these dualistic approaches, and thereby at least to some degree He opposes you - personally - even as a believer or as a ministry leader.
 - - It is good that you financially support your church or ministry, but God is nevertheless actively and distinctly and directly opposing you because your allegiance is corrupted and diverted away from "purely" "seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness". (1 Timothy 5:22; Matthew 6:33)
 - - And even though you may hold a position of authority or leadership in your church or ministry, God still has a problem with you because you are not successfully "fleeing from all this" "wanting" and striving "to get rich". (1 Timothy 6:11,9)
 - - If you continue down the same compromised path that you have chosen - striving after wealth, then God's opposition of you will remain.
 - - So, whom do you think will win in the end - you or God?

 - - Why not repent right now, this very moment?
 - - Comprehensively turn away from and flee from striving after wealth.
 - - And instead comprehensively pursue godliness with contentment of having the basic necessities of life. (v.8)
 - - Become a true "man [or woman] of God" rather than a compromised 'wannabe' - 'you-want-to-be-and-you-think-you-are-but-in-actuality-you-are-not' a man [or woman] of God.
 - - Pursue the godly virtues listed in this verse 11 rather than the aspects of acquiring wealth.
 - - And embrace contentment rather than acquisition.
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[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - What would be a good technique to use to annually test and evaluate each of the pastors, elders, and ministry leaders in order to determine whether or not any one of them is in reality wanting to get rich?

Have you ever encountered a pastor, elder, or ministry leader who in reality wanted to get rich?

- - Without disclosing information that identifies him/her, describe how difficult or easy it was to determine that he/she had fallen into this temptation and trap. (1 Timothy 6:9)
 - - Corresponding to wanting to get rich, in what ways was he/she compromised in his/her ministry functioning, which includes:
 - - - - in directing the affairs of his/her ministry and managing its budget; (v.5:17)
 - - - - in teaching of the Bible; (vv.4:6,11,13)
 - - - - in holding of sound doctrines; (v.4:16)
 - - - - in managing his/her own household and their budget; (v.3:4)
 - - - - in personally pursuing and implementing the virtues of the faith that are listed in verse 6:11;
 - - - - in staying away from other "foolish and harmful desires"; (v.6:11,9)
 - - - - and in any other ways?]
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