

Truth Promotes Unity

1 Timothy 6:3-10

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TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- Pastor Doug noted that "a common commitment to truth promotes unity". When have you seen the opposite to be true—"shading the truth" (or an out-right lie!) resulted in disunity? Tell us about it.
- Read Ephesians 4:1-6. What is it about the nature of the church that makes strife and division so damaging?

What characteristics does a lifestyle (a "walk") have which is "worthy of our calling" (v. 1b-2)?

What "truth statements" (v. 4-6) provide the basis for Christian unity? What does each one mean?

- In comparison to our first ten thousand years in heaven, our earthly years will seem like the blink of an eye. Read 1 Timothy 6:7-8. In light of this, what should we tell ourselves when we're discontent?

When our children are discontent, we often explain that we cannot afford the item they are requesting. How do we reconcile the various "deprivations" **we** face with the fact that God can afford anything?

Read Psalm 84:11. What should we conclude when God withholds something from us?
Now read Psalm 84:10. What contrasts does the psalmist set up?

How do you think a person develops the attitude which says "I'd rather **be near** God's house than **live in** a wicked man's mansion"?

Does that attitude even sound attractive to you? Why or why not?

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Application-Challenge

- Has the pursuit of the so-called "good life" negatively effected your relationships with God or others?
- Do you embrace any unbiblical teachings or erect any pseudo-intellectual barriers to faith in God?
- Do you pursue the virtues of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness?

Take One Step: What is one small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week?



Sermon Summary

Faithfulness to the Scriptures will help protect the church from internal strife and the harmful consequences that follow pursuit of a materialistic lifestyle. This is the message of 1 Timothy 6, vv. 3-10. You will recall that the text before us is an ancient letter written by the apostle Paul to a young pastor named Timothy who was giving leadership to the first century church at Ephesus. False teachers had entered the church and were causing all kinds of problems. False teaching had to be corrected, public worship had to be safeguarded, and mature leadership needed to be developed. Here in Chapter 6, Paul addresses the threat false teachers pose to church unity. We see that Paul tests Bible teachers against four criteria: (1) a **truth** test, (2) a **character** test, (3) a **unity** test, and (4) a **motivation** test. Let's consider each in turn.

Paul begins with the **truth** test. It could be stated this way: "Does this person's teaching conform to the sound words of Jesus Christ and his apostles? The Greek word translated as "sound" (ὑγιαίνω) means "healthy and life-giving." God is our creator, and he knows what teaching promotes true wholeness and genuine happiness. We should follow that kind of teaching. When we embrace unbiblical perspectives, values, and beliefs, it inevitably leads to unwanted, often unforeseen, negative consequences. It is the sowing and reaping principle of Scripture. What you sow, you will reap. It may take a while, but as surely as night follows day, consequences follow choices. God has given us a blueprint for living: The Bible. In it, we find a Savior and his prescription for wise, healthy living. Jesus said that he came that we might have life, and that we might have it abundantly. We need to learn to trust him. After all, He knows us best, and he loves us most!

The second criteria are the test of **character**: Does the teacher model and does the teaching promote godly living as God defines it in the Scriptures? The fruit of applied Biblical teaching is godly, transformed living. If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, you already have the spiritual resources necessary to apply Biblical truth in a life-changing way. Paul's point here is that God-approved Biblical teachers are going to point you to Jesus. They are going to teach and model Biblical truth.

There is a third test for evaluating Bible teachers. Is there **unity** in the church body? The fruit of applied Biblical teaching is both transformed living and church unity. When everyone in the church submits to the Bible's standards as opposed to culture's standards, it promotes a growing, unified church family. Here at TCC, the Bible is the source of our authority, and that makes all the difference! What happens when a church rejects the Bible's authority, as many today have? It leads to conflict and division. It brings its own judgment, leading to "...envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth and who supposed that godliness is a means of (financial) gain" (vv. 4-5).

In this little phrase, we see Paul applying a fourth test of a Biblical teacher. It has to do with the **motivation** behind their teaching. (4) Is your goal your own financial gain, or is it the spiritual growth of those under your tutelage? Apparently, the chief motivation of some of these "Ephesian Bible teachers" was to enrich themselves. That was their driving motivation. But the minister's chief motive should never be to enrich himself. His chief goal should be the spiritual enrichment of others. After establishing that "getting rich" is an improper motive for Christian service, Paul turns his attention to the proper role of riches in the Christian life. The key, he says, is contentment (vv. 6-8). The goal of the Christian life is not the accumulation of wealth, but rather to become more like Christ—to grow in godliness. And godliness itself is a priceless gift when it is accompanied by contentment. Paul has more to say on the topic of riches. He warns that not only will the pursuit of riches fail to bring happiness; it will lead to a dark place, a place you don't want to go. He cautions us to avoid the pitfall of materialistic pursuits by cultivating godliness and contentment (vv. 9-10). To the person who believes that their work is so demanding that they have no time to pursue their relationship with God, a couple of questions to ponder: [1] Do you have time for a fractured, loveless marriage and all that it brings? [2] Do you have time to deal with rebellious teens who have rejected a Biblical morality in favor of "anything goes...if it feels right, do it?"

Pursuing wealth as an end-goal will take you to a place you do not want to go. On the other hand, the pursuit of godliness, along with contentment, is a priceless gift that will pay dividends for generations to come.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

To "pursue" is to "strive to gain or to seek to attain or accomplish" something. So, what are you pursuing? What should we pursue? First Timothy 6:11 tells us...

Monday— "Pursue righteousness."

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:30-31. Christ *is* our righteousness—so how do we **pursue** it?
- Read Romans 14:16. What role does righteousness play in living under the kingship of God?
- Read Galatians 3:6 and 5:4. **How** do we both **have** righteousness and **wait for** the hope of it?
- **How** are you currently pursuing righteousness? How can you "excel still more" (1 Thessalonians 4:10)?

Tuesday— "Pursue godliness."

- Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8. With what is godliness contrasted in v. 7?
With what is **the pursuit of** godliness contrasted in v. 8?
Do you give more time and money to the pursuit of physical fitness/health or to the pursuit of godliness?
- Read 1 Timothy 6:3. **How well do you know** "the **doctrine** conforming to godliness"?
Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10. Are you experiencing the "great gain of godliness"?
Are you content with food and shelter, or do you need more to be happy?
- **How** are you currently pursuing godliness? **How** can you "excel still more"? **Will you?**

Wednesday— "Pursue faith."

- Read 1 Timothy 1:5. How do your goals line up with the goals of biblical instruction?
- Which of the following are you doing in your pursuit of faith? Are you...
 "keeping it" (1:19)? "continuing in it" (2:15)? "holding to it" (3:9)? "fighting for it" (6:12)?
- **How** are you currently pursuing faith/trust/faithfulness? **How** can you "excel still more"? **Will you?**

Thursday— "Pursue love."

- Read 1 Timothy 1:5. Are you aiming at the goal? If not, at what are your life and energy aimed?
- Read 1 Timothy 1:14. Where is love found? How often do you experience Christ's love for you?
- Read 1 Timothy 4:12. Are you an **exemplary** lover, or do others have cause to look down on you?
- **How** are you currently pursuing love? **How** can you "excel still more"? **Will you?**

Friday— "Pursue perseverance."

- Read Romans 5:3-4. What produces perseverance? Are you willing for God to use that path?
- Read James 1:2-4. Yes, the testing of our faith produces perseverance—but it's not automatic. What is the significance of the fact that we have to **let** perseverance have it's perfect result?
- Read Romans 15:4-5. **Who gives** perseverance and encouragement (v. 5)?
How—through what means—does God give perseverance and encouragement (v. 4)?
- Read Hebrews 12:1. What two actions enable us to "run with perseverance" the race set before us?
- Are you merely "putting up with" the need for perseverance or are you **pursuing** perseverance?

Saturday— "Pursue gentleness."

- The world says, "**I won't be a door mat!**" Read Matthew 5:5. What does God say about door mats?
- Matthew 11:28-30 records Jesus' **only** description of himself. How does he describe himself (v. 29)?
What do we experience as a result of Jesus' gentleness?
Do others experience "rest" when they're around you?
- **How** are you currently pursuing gentleness? **How** can you "excel still more"? **Will you?**