

1 Timothy 6:11 Commentary

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GODLINESS AND PASTORAL CARE

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Another Overview Chart - [1 Timothy](#) - Charles Swindoll

THE PASTOR'S PRIMER: PAUL'S PRACTICAL PASTORAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE LOCAL CHURCH				
1 Timothy 1	1 Timothy 2-3	1 Timothy 4	1 Timothy 5	1 Timothy 6
TIMOTHY'S CHARGE...	TIMOTHY'S INSTRUCTIONS...			
Concerning Sound Doctrine	Concerning Prayer & Church	Concerning Last Days Apostasy	Concerning Widows & Elders	Concerning Conflict & Contentment
Danger of False Doctrine	Public Worship Church Officers	Antidote for Apostasy	Pastoral Duties Toward Others	Instructions for the Man of God
Warning	Worship	Wisdom	Widows	Wealth
Written in Macedonia Circa 62-64AD				

1 Timothy 6:11: But **flee** from these things, you man of God, and **pursue** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [Su](#) [de](#). [o](#) [anthrope](#) [theou](#). [tauta](#) **pheuge**: (2SPAM) **dioke** (2SPAM) [de](#) [dikaiousunen](#). [eusebeian](#). [pistin](#).
[agapen](#). [hupomonen](#). [praupathian](#).

Amplified: But as for you, O man of God, flee from all these things; aim at and pursue righteousness (right standing with God and true goodness), godliness (which is the loving fear of God and being Christlike), faith, love, steadfastness (patience), and gentleness of heart. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Lock: But you, who are God's own prophet with a message from Him, turn your back on all such desires and empty discussions: nay, press forward to gain true righteousness, true piety, loyalty, love, endurance, and a patient forbearing temper.

ESV: But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

KJV: But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Moffatt: Shun that, O man of God, aim at integrity, piety, faith, love, steadfastness, and suavity;

NET: But you, as a person dedicated to God, keep away from all that. Instead pursue righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness.

NLT: But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: But you, the man of God, keep clear of such things. Set your heart not on riches, but on goodness, Christ-likeness, faith, love, patience and humility. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

TLB: O Timothy, you are God's man. Run from all these evil things, and work instead at what is right and good, learning to trust him and love others and to be patient and gentle.

Weymouth: But you, O man of God, must flee from these things; and strive for uprightness, godliness, good faith, love, fortitude, and a forgiving temper.

Wuest: But, as for you, O man of God, these things be constantly fleeing. But be as constantly eagerly seeking to acquire righteousness, godly piety, faith, divine and self-sacrificial love, steadfastness, gentleness.

Young's Literal: and thou, O man of God, these things flee, and pursue righteousness, piety, faith, love, endurance, meekness

Personal Paraphrase: But in contrast to the man who loves money, you O man of God continually make choices (enabled by the Spirit) to run and flee things mentioned (especially the love of money), continually pursuing hard (enabled by the Spirit of Grace), after right (righteous first before God and then before men) thoughts, words and deeds, the things that God loves and that please Him, genuine faith that readily obeys, sacrificial love that dies daily to self and a meek spirit like a gentle but powerful horse.

BUT FLEE FROM THESE THINGS, YOU MAN OF GOD: Su de, o anthrope theou, tauta pheuge; (2SPAM):

- **Flee:** 1Co 6:18 10:14 2Ti 2:22
- **Man of God:** 1Ti 6:20 Dt 33:1 1Sa 2:27 9:6 1Ki 13:1,26 17:18,24 20:28 2Ki 1:9,13 2Ki 5:20 23:17 1Ch 23:14 2Ch 8:14 Ne 12:24,36 Jer 35:4 2Ti 3:17

Related Passages:

Genesis 39:11; 12 (**JOSEPH**) Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. 12 She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside.

A COMMAND CALLING FOR A DRAMATIC CHANGE OF DIRECTION!

But (de) - Whenever you see this conjunction of **contrast (see discussion)**, stop and ask what is being contrasted (See **inductive Bible study**)? How is the author "changing direction" and why? In this case we need to look at the previous two passages to answer...

But (This should force us to read the prior passages!) those who want to get rich fall into **temptation** and a **snare** and many foolish and harmful **desires** which plunge men into ruin and **destruction**. For the love of

money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. (1Ti 6:9, 10)

Comment: What is the main subject in these passages? Clearly the trap Paul wants Timothy to avoid is the desire **to get rich** and the **love of money**. **Who are those who want to get rich in 1Ti 6:9?** In the context of this letter, this is a description of the false teachers, those who are "*money's men*" (MacArthur). As noted above "**but**" (and other contrast words) mark a **change of direction** and that is literally true in this passage! **These false teachers were running toward Gold, BUT Timothy is charged to continually run toward God!** How the televangelists of our day need to read and heed Paul's warning! How often do we attempt to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with someone and they raise the argument "What about those guys on TV? They're a bunch of fakes!" It's difficult to refute this argument. As **Expositor's Greek Testament** says "*love of money in ministers of religion does more to discredit religion in the eyes of ordinary people than would indulgence in many grosser vices.*" Sad but too true!

Hiebert says: "But thou" sets Timothy in contrast to those who fall into destructive perils through their desire to get wealth.

Wiersbe says: The phrase "But thou" indicates a contrast between Timothy and the false teachers. They were men of the world, but he was a "man of God." (**ED: A MAN OF THE WORD**) This special designation was also given to Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and David; so Timothy was in good company.

A BEAUTIFUL EPITHET: MAN OF GOD

There are 4 PARTING EXHORTATIONS to Timothy in these remaining verses: 1.1Ti 6:11, 12, 2. 1Ti 6:13-16, 3.1Ti 6:17-19, 4. 1Ti 6:20, 21. The word "**YOU**" is in the EMPHATIC position.

O man of God - This is a beautiful "epithet", which is defined as a phrase that is used in place of the name of the person. The first use of **man of God** in Scripture is in a description of Moses as "**the man of God**" (Dt 33:1, cp Josh 14:6, Ps 90:1). "**Man of God**" is used over 70 times in the Old Testament (eg, 1Sa 9:6, 1Ki 13:1, 2, etc) to describe a number of different prophets (some named and some not named). Nehemiah describes David as "the man of God." (Neh 12:24) **Bengel** writes that in the Hebrew sense, the **man of God** is "*a prophet, a mediating messenger of God to men, one removed from earthly things.*" Indeed, designating Timothy as **man of God** draws a dramatic contrast to the false teachers who clearly are **not** men of God and not removed from earthly things! The **NET Bible** translation picks up on this sense rendering it "*a person dedicated to God*"

THOUGHT - This begs the question "How would Paul describe me -- as a man (woman) of God or a man (woman) of mammon?"

Steven Cole adds that "The title, "**man of God**" is used in the Old Testament of men like Moses, Samuel, Elijah, David, and a few prophets. It means a man who belongs wholly to God, who follows God's Word in every aspect of life. A **man of God** has a certain dignity and aura about him so that when you're with him, you sense the presence of God, because his life is so entwined with God. There's no greater title that any Christian can covet for himself or herself than to be called a man or woman of God. But it doesn't happen automatically! "*Some (1Ti 6:10)... but you (1Ti 6:11)!*" To be a man or woman of God, you must resolve to stand against the tide. You must flee worldliness, pursue godliness, fight for the faith, and take hold of eternal life. ([1 Timothy 6:11-12 Going the Distance](#))

Newport J D White writes that "He was a man of God, i.e., a man belonging to the spiritual order of things with which that which is merely temporal, transitory and perishing can have no permanent relationship. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

Barclay observes: When the charge is given to Timothy, he is not reminded of his own weakness and his own helplessness and his own inadequacy and his own sin; that might well have reduced him to pessimistic despair; he is rather challenged by the honour which is his, the honour of being God's man. It is the Christian way, not to depress a man by branding him as a lost and helpless sinner, but rather to uplift him by summoning him to be what he has got it in him to be. The Christian way is not to fling a man's humiliating past in his face, but to set before him the majestic splendour of his potential future. The very fact that Timothy was addressed as "Man of God" would make him square his shoulders and throw his head back as one who has received his commission from the King. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

Lock on Man of God: Here the thought is either that of the prophet with a command to carry out, a message to deliver, or more widely of one who is God's soldier, "The King's Champion," one whose whole life is lifted above worldly aims and devoted to God's service (Borrow [1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

Hiebert says: "Man of God" is the regular designation for a prophet in the Old Testament. Some think that the application of this Old

Testament title to Timothy suggests that he had similar privileges and responsibilities. In II Timothy 3:17, the only other place in the New Testament where the expression occurs, it undoubtedly has a general connotation as indicative of a mature Christian. The epithet can be applied to any mature believer standing in a place of leadership responsibility. (Borrow [First Timothy- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#) - excellent resource)

As used by Paul, the phrase **man of God** is not an official title, but most likely reflects the fact that Timothy was a godly man. Or one might say he was "God's man" in Ephesus, just as you beloved are God's man or God's woman at your workplace, your school, your athletic team, etc, etc. God has you there as His man or His woman. This unique phrase **man of God** is found only here and in Second Timothy where Paul states that the inspired Word of God is that by which the "**man of God**" is made "**adequate, equipped for every good work.**" (2Ti 3:17) It follows that the **man of God** is a man of the "Book", a man of the Word of God. Some scholars feel that the word "**man**" (anthropos) is used in a Semitic fashion with a genitive (possessive case - God is the owner of this man so to speak!) to suggest relationship. For example compare 2Th. 2:3 where we see a description of the Antichrist, the "**man of sin**", which is the stark contrast with Timothy, "**the man of God**"! The idea is that the Antichrist is "possessed by sin" and thus has a strong relationship with sin, whereas Timothy is possessed by God and has a strong relationship with Him. In the context, Timothy is not a man possessed by riches or love of money, but is a man who is possessed by God!

THOUGHT - What a beautiful description and one we should all seek to emulate! There is no greater epitaph (memorial inscription on one's grave) that can be written on one's tombstone then that "John (Sarah) Doe was a man (or woman) of God!" May their tribe increase! Amen.

Matthew Henry comments that Paul now seeks to caution Timothy "and to counsel him to keep in the way of God and his duty, and particularly to fulfill the trust reposed (deposited, placed in confidence) in him as a minister. He addresses himself to him as a **man of God**. Ministers are men of God, and ought to conduct themselves accordingly in every thing; they are **men employed for God, devoted to His honor** more immediately. The prophets under the Old Testament were called **men of God**. He charges Timothy to take heed of the love of money, which had been so pernicious to many: Flee these things.

HOW TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT: FLEE SIN & PURSUE VIRTUE

Flee these things - Flee is the first of 3 imperatives in v11-12 - be fleeing, be following, be fighting is a good summary. Whenever you observe a phrase like "**these things**", pause and interrogate the text (See hints on how to interrogate with the 5W/H'S), asking at the very least the simple question "What things?" Sometimes the answer is easy to observe from the context, while at other times it may be more problematic. In the present context, "these things" could be summarized as "love of money" (and riches) or one could extrapolate and say "worldliness in general." Recall that the Christian soldier has three mortal enemies, the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**. Most of us think of the devil as our most formidable foe, but how does James say to wage war with him?

Submit (aorist imperative) therefore to God (Indeed this "imperative" is "imperative" before we can "resist"! I.e., we need to *bow* before we can *stand and resist*!). **Resist** (aorist imperative) the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:7-note)

But here when Timothy is faced with the "foe" of worldly riches, what does Paul command? Flee. Run. Don't debate. Don't rationalize. Certainly don't partake. Just part ways with the love of money! In God's wisdom in the Bible there is a time to stand firm and a time to run fast. In several other scenarios Paul issued a similar command to **FLEE!** -

- (1) Immorality (1Cor 6:18-note, cp Joseph in Ge 39:12, Note that Scripture repeatedly associates idolatry with immorality - see the relationship and the antidote),
- (2) Youthful lusts (strong desires in our old flesh nature) (2Ti 2:22-note),
- (3) Idolatry (anything that you are more devoted to than God has the potential to be an idol!) (1Cor 10:14, note that Scripture repeatedly "defines" one aspect of idolatry as greed or covetousness! = Col 3:5-note, The covetous man = an idolater in Eph 5:5-note). (Compare **flee** from the wrath to come - Mt 3:7, **flee** from strangers [strange shepherds] - Jn 10:5)

Flee (5343)(**pheugo**) means to take flight in order to seek safety or to escape something so that one is safe from danger. In the present passage the idea is to keep from doing something (in this case flee from the desire for riches) by avoiding it in view of its potential danger to tempt and ensnare the unwary Christian worker! These truths make me think of some wonderful, godly Christian vocalists (I will mention no names) who became very popular (and rich) and who were ensnared by their own fame and success. If we are all honest, money is one of those otherwise necessary and neutral things in life which can really test our integrity and our heart's devotion to God.

Webster has an interesting and relevant definition for "**flee**", stating that it means to avoid deliberately and especially habitually; to

run away from danger or evil or to hurry toward a place of security.

Flee is in the **present imperative**, which pictures Paul like a General taking his commands from the Captain of our salvation, Christ Jesus, and passing those commands on to his young soldier in the field to make it his habitual practice to **flee** from worldly riches and love of money! To flee is mandatory, not optional. It is not a suggestion! It is not literal running but is a call for separation from the sinful things just described, especially the love of money. "The tense stresses the continuing duty, "Be ever fleeing," never let them, catch you; the margin of safety can never be too great" (Hiebert)

Paul repeats the **flee/pursue** commands in his second letter (Do you think Paul feels this is important? Remember 2Timothy is Paul's last written communication.)

Now **flee** from youthful lusts, and **pursue** righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2Ti 2:22)

THOUGHT- Pheugo is the root of our English word "**fugitive**" defined as one who escapes from something or someone. Before we were saved, we *chased after sin*. Now *sin chases after us!* [Lat., *fugia*= flight.; Eng= fugitive ~

Empowered by the Word and the Spirit may we all be "fugitives" in this world -- it's not our home. Amen

Why does Paul use the present tense signifying habitual, continuous effort? The simple answer is these temptations continually pursue us and seek to ensnare us (see especially 1Pe 2:11+). We must make a conscious decision (**flee** is in the **active voice** = calling for a choice of my will) to flee so that fleeing becomes our default reaction, our heart motivated and Spirit energized habit. When we recognize the temptation, Paul commands us to run away, to continually shun these ungodly enticements, those siren calls to the "little idols" which seek to tear us down and destroy our soul! I fear that sometimes I do not take the struggle seriously enough, thinking more in terms of time (time to confess, time to repent, etc) than in terms of eternity (and the impact of passing pleasures on my eternity)! (cf 1Th 4:3+ 1Th 5:22+)

Lenski says: "ever flee these things" like a pestilence, like poisonous serpents, like the devil's snares. One would cease to be a man of God if he did not so flee these things, if he let them catch him. Alas, some only pretend to flee. They often stay near and think they are at a safe distance until they are overtaken and caught. Continue to flee, do nothing but flee, the margin of safety cannot be too great. (See [Interpretation of St Paul's Epistle to Timothy](#))

Saints, "set apart ones" ("set apart to One") are to daily conduct their lives as if they were fugitives on this alien godless planet, daily fleeing from the onslaught of overt and subtle dangers that might inoculate us, that might contaminate our spiritual lifeblood. But we don't flee into a spiritual vacuum but into the arms of our Master, the Lover of our soul for He alone is our quiet refuge from the storms that rage, He alone has the strength to shield us from the forces that would so quickly undo us. Hallelujah. Amen.

WHAT DOES THE WORD SAY TO FLEE? (ALL COMMANDS IN PRESENT IMPERATIVE THUS ALL CALLING FOR CONTINUAL [dependence on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)):

- IMMORALITY: 1Co 6:18
- IDOLATRY: 1Co 10:14
- Evil doctrine, questionings, disputes of words, envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings, and the love of money, 1Ti 6:11
- YOUTHFUL LUSTS: 2Ti 2:22

TO WHOM IS PAUL ADDRESSING THESE ADMONITIONS AND COMMANDS? "You MAN OF GOD" So this must be bedrock truth for in fact being GOD'S MAN in this foreign land. TAKE HEED TO GOD'S WISDOM, and live wisely (wisdom practiced).

GOING THE DISTANCE

I love **Pastor Steven Cole's** introductory remarks in his sermon on **Going the Distance** (1Timothy 6:11-12 - As an aside, I strongly encourage you to become familiar with Steven Cole's material which almost reads like a verse by verse commentary! see [Sermons by Book](#))...

Question: What do diets, exercise programs, marriage, and the Christian life have in common? Answer: It's fairly easy and even fun to begin, but it's not so easy to hang in over the long haul.

Eugene Peterson, in his book, [A Long Obedience in the Same Direction Discipleship in an Instant Society](#), writes,

One aspect of world that I have been able to identify as harmful to Christians is the assumption that anything

worthwhile can be acquired at once. We assume that if something can be done at all, it can be done quickly and efficiently. Our attention spans have been conditioned by thirty-second commercials. Our sense of reality has been flattened by thirty-page abridgments.

It is not difficult in such a world to get a person interested in the message of the Gospel; it is terrifically difficult to sustain the interest. Millions of people in our culture make decisions for Christ, but there is a dreadful attrition rate. Many claim to be born again, but the evidence for mature Christian discipleship is slim. In our kind of culture anything, even news about God, can be sold if it is packaged freshly; but when it loses its novelty, it goes on the garbage heap. There is a great market for religious experience in our world; there is little enthusiasm for the patient acquisition of virtue, little inclination to sign up for a long apprenticeship in what earlier generations of Christians called holiness.

(Peterson adds [not quoted by Cole] "Religion in our time has been captured by the tourist mindset. Religion is understood as a visit to an attractive site to be made when we have adequate leisure. For some it is a weekly jaunt to church; for others, occasional visits to special services. Some, with a bent for religious entertainment and sacred diversion, plan their lives around special events like retreats, rallies and conferences. We go to see a new personality, to hear a new truth, to get a new experience and so somehow expand our otherwise humdrum lives. The religious life is defined as the latest and the newest: Zen, faith healing, human potential, parapsychology, successful living, choreography in the chancel, Armageddon. We'll try anything—until something else comes along.")

The Christian life is not a hundred-yard dash; it's a marathon, a **long obedience in the same direction.**"

Starting well is easy;
finishing well is another matter.

We all will encounter numerous hindrances. But, like Bunyan's Christian, those whose burden has been lifted at Calvary will persevere.

In the final section of this letter, Paul tells Timothy and **show to go the distance**. Timothy found himself in a difficult situation that was seemingly not suited for his timid personality. He had to confront the false teachers who had arisen among the Ephesian leaders by refuting their errors and by teaching the truth. No doubt he was catching flak from many in the church who had been led astray by these men and their errors. So Paul, like a coach at half time in a rough game, reminds Timothy of the game plan and challenges him to hang in there, even though it's not easy. He gives four commands in 1Timothy 6:11-12 that are pillars for perseverance: **Flee; pursue; fight;** and, **take hold** (Ed: **And these are all imperatives or commands, not suggestions!**):

To persevere, a man of God will flee worldliness, pursue godliness, fight for the faith, and take hold of eternal life. ([1 Timothy 6:11-12 Going the Distance](#))

FLEE - I didn't see the movie The Exorcist, but I do recall its impact on my community. It left a lasting impression on many people about Satan's power. Even many Christians began to live in fear, swayed by the vivid images of evil. It seemed as if the devil was almost as powerful as God.

Is this perspective biblically sound? Of course not. God is the Creator, and all others, including demons, are just created beings. Only God is almighty.

It's easy to blame the devil when things go wrong. Although he does propagate wickedness and sin, we must be careful not to conclude that we are powerless against him. We are told in the Bible that the Holy Spirit within us "is greater than he who is in the world" (1Jn 4:4).

The Bible also says we have a role to play in overcoming evil and doing what is good. We are to "flee sexual immorality" (1Co 6:18, 19, 20), "flee from idolatry" (1Co 10:14), "flee" from the love of money (1Ti 6:10, 11), and "flee also youthful lusts" (2Ti 2:22).

James said that our attitude toward the devil should be to "resist" him (James 4:7). How do we do this? By submitting ourselves to God, allowing Him to direct our lives. Then it will be the devil who will flee from us.—Albert Lee ([Copyright. Used by permission of Our Daily Bread](#))

When Satan launches his attack,
We must take heart and pray;

If we submit ourselves to God,
He'll be our strength each day.
—Sper

To defeat Satan, surrender to Christ.

Disappearing Act - What if suddenly one day all followers of Christ disappeared? What if we all just vanished?

I'm not talking about Christians being removed from planet Earth. I'm talking about something that we can control.

What if suddenly all the Christians vanished from places of entertainment where we, as children of the heavenly Father, didn't belong?

For instance, what if Christians refused to watch TV programs in which immorality masquerades as entertainment? What if we all vanished from the Nielsen ratings? And what if we no longer watched movies that are ungodly or whose characters use God's name in vain and take God's standards so lightly?

Would our absence make a difference? Would the people in Hollywood notice that we were gone?

I think so, but that's not really the point. Our duty in life is to live each moment in fellowship with God. That means we don't let anything in our lives interrupt that fellowship. Our close relationship with God is at stake.

Let's vanish from the hordes who are being influenced by ungodly entertainment. And even if nobody notices but God, that's really all that matters.

More purity give me, more strength to o'ercome,
More freedom from earth-stains, more longings for home;
More fit for the kingdom, more used would I be,
More blessed and holy, more, Savior, like Thee.
—Bliss

**If you walk with God,
Ayou won't run with the world.**

PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS, GODLINESS, FAITH, LOVE, PERSEVERANCE AND GENTLENESS: **dioko** (2SPAM) de dikaiosunen, eusebeian, pistin, agapen, hupomonen, praupathian:

- **Pursue:** 1Ti 5:10 Dt 16:20 Ps 34:14 Ps 38:20 Isa 51:1 Ro 14:19 1Co 14:1 2Ti 2:22 Heb 12:14 1Pe 3:11
- **Righteousness:** 1Ti 4:12 Gal 5:22,23 Php 4:8,9 Titus 2:11,12 2Pe 1:5-7

Related Passages:

Proverbs 15:9 The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but He loves one who pursues righteousness.

Romans 14:19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

2 Timothy 2:22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

1 Peter 3:11 "HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.

REVERSE DIRECTION PURSUE THE POSITIVE

Pursue (**dioko**) - After a brief negative command to flee, Paul "[accentuates the positive](#)" (after "[eliminating the negative](#)") with six Spirit and Word energized virtues.

Hiebert points out: The negative was briefly stated, but the positive activity is elaborated in the enumeration of six virtues, named in three pairs, which must be actively (**ED: PURSUE IS ACTIVE VOICE CALLING FOR DAILY CHOICE!**) and energetically pursued. "Righteousness, godliness" point to the attitude of the soul toward God. The former designates the conformity in character to the divine will in purpose, thought, and action, while the latter denotes the devotion to God in reverence and worship. "Faith, love" are the fountal source of the Christian life. "The one may be termed the hand that lays hold of God's mercy; and the other the mainspring of the Christian's life" (Spence). "Patience, meekness" look outward and set forth the disposition necessary in those who encounter the antagonism of a Christ-rejecting world. The former denotes a steadfast endurance of life's trials and persecutions, while the latter expresses that meekness of disposition which makes no high claims for itself nor strenuously insists upon its own rights. (Borrow [First Timothy- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#) - excellent resource)

Why does Paul use a verb like "pursue"? That makes it sound a little like works righteousness doesn't it? The point is that these Christian virtues will not bloom forth to fruition "automatically" just because we are children of the King. To say it another way, these virtues are not "*easily caught*" which is why they need to be actively pursued! As alluded to earlier Paul explained to the saints at Philippi, that the development of our Christian character (righteousness, godliness, etc) requires a **daily choice to work out** our salvation in fear and trembling (Php 2:12+) remembering that we have been given the Spirit to enable us to have the desire and the power to make this daily (yea, even moment by moment) choice (Php 2:13NLT+). The athletic (or hunting) metaphors of flee and pursue remind us of Paul's clothing metaphor for the "well-dressed" man of God - put off and put on (e.g., Col 3:9,10). See [William Dyer's 20 Precious Directions for Your Souls](#) where he mentions some "put offs and put ons" -- don't speed read it! Chew it, digest it, live it out in the power of the Spirit and for the glory of our Father Who art in Heaven. Amen

In light of the truth that saints have everything necessary for life and godliness and all of God's precious and magnificent promises at their disposal, Peter encourages them to apply all diligence and to make every effort (yes, growth in Christ likeness requires effort)...

in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, **perseverance**, and in your perseverance, **godliness**; 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, **love**. (**Ed:** Notice the overlap with Paul's list of "virtues") 8 For (See discussion of terms of explanation - What is Peter explaining? Why is pursuit of these virtues so vital?) if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For (term of explanation) he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore (term of conclusion - Always ask "What's it there for - and be sure to pause and ponder your answer - you are learning to meditate!), brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things (What things? Always seek to interrogate the test with the 5W/H'S), you will never stumble; 11 for (term of explanation) in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. (2Pe1:5-11)

Guy King says: In the Bible, the Christian life is never contemplated as a merely negative thing: it is, in all respects, a fundamentally positive thing. And so Paul lays it down here in his advice to his young pupil and comrade: he gives him six things that he should take pains to pursue--we may, perhaps, not unhelpfully, think of them as a sixfold relationship.

Gary Demarest - Christian discipleship. There are things that must be constantly avoided--and **not just passively**. To flee implies that something is after us. Paul's view of evil was active. He was aware of "principalities and powers" at work in the world. While we may not choose to express our view of sin and the devil with the same language and images of that era, we ignore, at our peril, the active power of evil in the world. Many of us were taught that big boys never run away. But when it comes to active evil, wisdom calls for flight as well as fight. Yes, there are times when we must dig in and resist. There are other times when it is best to flee. True wisdom is choosing the right response. (BORROW [The communicator's commentary. 1, 2 Thessalonians. 1, 2 Timothy. Titus](#))

Pursue (1377) (**dioko** from **dío** = pursue, prosecute, persecute) means to follow zealously after or press hard after something (in context the virtues listed). Run swiftly in order to catch a person or thing. This verb conveys a picture of an intense, diligent, determined, earnest, eager effort in pursuit of something in order to obtain or acquire it, in the present case godly virtues. **Dioko** paints the picture of going on the track of something even as the hunting hounds would tirelessly pursue after the fleeing fox.

Dioko was one of Paul's favorite verbs to denote the pursuit of moral or spiritual ends. (Romans 14:19; 1 Peter 3:11. The verb is used of the pursuit of moral and spiritual ends, Romans 9:30, 31; 12:13; 1 Corinthians 14:1 (pursue love); Philippians 3:12, 14; 1 Thessalonians 5:15 (pursue good for other); 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22, cp Heb 12:14, 1Peter 3:11 (pursue peace)

As noted above, **pursue** is in the **present imperative**, which calls for this to be Timothy's (and our) habitual practice, our lifestyle. We must continually make the choice to vigorously, earnestly, zealously pursue the Christian virtues listed by Paul. Note that in the Greek text the two commands are placed side by side (pheuge dioko - flee pursue) as if there is no MIDDLE GROUND, because

there isn't. We have one soul and it cannot straddle two worlds. As **Steven Cole** quipped "*you won't accidentally attain these qualities by hanging around church buildings long enough. You've got to go after them deliberately over the long haul.*" These virtues will elude us if we do not make the necessary (Spirit and grace enabled) effort to chase after them! **How would you describe this past year of your Christian life -- a life of vigorous pursuit of God's best or a year of pursuing passing pleasures or just a year of spiritual indifference?**

A SACRED SYNERGISM: OUR RESPONSIBILITY GOD'S SOVEREIGN PROVISION

How can believers heed the charge to continually flee and pursue? While I am not an advocate of the saying "*let go and let God*," the latter phrase is vital to comprehend because if believers had to rely on their natural strength, they could never fulfill the divine commands. Every believer retains an indwelling anti-God tendency known as the **flesh**. The Spirit of God Who indwells the believer is the only power Who can overcome the ungodly or anti-God inertia of the **flesh** (see **notes** on Galatians 5:16). As we learn to surrender and yield and be filled and be controlled by the Holy Spirit (cp Eph 5:18-note), He gives us not only the **desire** to obey the commands, but also the **power** to obey that we might be pleasing to God (**Study Php 2:13-note**). And yet it is not all "*let go and let God*", for we have a responsibility to work out our salvation in fear and trembling (**Study Php 2:12-note**). Is this a bit mysterious? Does it sound like "spiritual double-talk?" As believers we are to work out our salvation and that is **100% our responsibility** and yet it is **100% God's enabling ability!** This is a picture of "**synergism**" which is defined as the interaction of discrete agents (in this case believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit) such that the total effect is greater than the sum of the individual effects.

Jerry Bridges terms this mysterious partnership the Holy Spirit's "**synergistic work**"...

which refers to occasions that combine **our effort** with **His enabling power**. But this isn't a pure synergism, as if we and the Spirit each contributed equal power to the task. Rather, **we work** as **He enables us to work**, so we use the expression **qualified synergism**. We're 100 percent dependent on His power in order to participate in the work, as the psalmist illustrated: Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain (Psalm 127:1-[Spurgeon's note](#)). Two activities are mentioned: **building** a house and **watching** over a city. The Lord's involvement isn't one of helping but of building the house and watching over the city. At the same time, the builder builds and the watchman watches. The verse's message is that the Lord doesn't merely help the builder and the watchman; He's totally involved with them in this **qualified synergism**. He supplies all the enabling power, and they do all the tangible work. There are many such examples in the New Testament. We're to "*put to death the deeds of the body*" (**Ed**: Our part) —the sin that remains in us—yet we do so "*by the Spirit*" (**Ed**: His power) (Romans 8:13-note). We're to use the spiritual gifts we've received to serve God and other people, yet we do so "*by the strength that God supplies*" (1Peter 4:10,11-note). (Bolding and italics added for emphasis). ([The Bookends of the Christian Life - Jerry Bridges, Bob Bevington](#) - I highly recommend this book - it will give you some wonderful insights into pursuing righteousness, etc! If you don't believe me, read some of the [Customer Reviews](#)).

Newport J D White observes that "The six virtues fall perhaps into three pairs, as Ell. suggests: "righteousness and godliness have the widest relations, pointing to general conformity to God's law and practical piety... ; faith and love are the fundamental principles of Christianity; patience and gentleness, the principles on which a Christian ought to act towards his gainsayers (those who contradict or oppose in words) and opponents". As a group, they are contrasted with the group of vices in 1Ti 6:4, 5 but we cannot arrange them in pairs of opposites. We may add that faith (pistis) results in patience (hupomone) (James 1:3; Ro 5:3; 2Th. 1:4; 2Ti 3:10; Titus 2:2; Heb. 12:1), as love (agape) does in gentleness. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

Wiersbe says: "Righteousness" means "personal integrity." "Godliness" means "practical piety." The first has to do with character; the second, with conduct. (Borrow [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Righteousness ([1343](#))(**dikaioσune** from **dikaioσ** = being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified being or in accordance with what God requires) in simple terms is the quality of being upright. **Dikaioσune** conveys the idea of conformity to a standard which for Timothy and all believers is the Word of God. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by the Word of God.

Vincent says that **righteousness** in this passage is "*Not in the Pauline dogmatic sense, but as Ephesians 5:9, moral rectitude according to God's law.*"

Bob Utley - "righteousness" This must refer to holy living (cf. James 3:13-18), not to imputed (forensic) righteousness as in Romans (cf. chapter 4). Romans 1-8 (a doctrinal summary) speaks of our position in Christ (i.e., justification). The Pastoral Letters (letters against false teaching) speak of our possessing our possession (i.e., sanctification, see Special Topic). For "righteousness" see [SPECIAL TOPIC: RIGHTEOUSNESS](#)

Paul's "*dogmatic sense*" relates to the **righteousness** associated with initial salvation, for when one is justified by faith (not works) they are declared righteous. Justification is a judicial action in which God puts our sin on Christ and He credits Christ's righteousness to our account it is by faith, not by works. Having been justified (declared righteous) by faith, the Christian is commanded to then pursue a life of righteousness. In other words, when Timothy was first saved, he was made **positionally righteous** in Christ. Then as a new creation in Christ, Timothy was to pursue practical or experiential righteousness (right behavior before God and before men) in his daily life, a process which theologians term progressive sanctification.

John describes the practice of righteousness in his first epistle writing...

Little children, let no one deceive you (**Ed**: Implying some were trying to deceive them into believing you can say "I believe in Jesus" and then go on your merry way and live the rest of your life for self -- this teaching is in the modern evangelical church, and it is deceiving those who believe it!) ; the one who **practices** (present tense = speaks not of perfection but of the general "direction" of one's life) righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices (present tense = habitually, endlessly practices) sin is of the devil (**Ed**: How much clear could John have been?)... By this the **children of God** and the **children of the devil** are obvious: anyone who does not practice (present tense = direction not perfection) righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:7-8a, 10+).

In Romans 9 Paul describes a **pursuit for righteousness**, but in that context it refers to the righteousness which one obtains when they are justified by faith. It is not the righteousness or right behavior that is associated with daily sanctification or growth in Christ likeness.

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not **pursue** righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, **pursuing** a law of righteousness (**Ed**: Which in essence was self-righteousness, not supernatural righteousness found only in Christ), did not arrive at that law. (Ro 9:30, 31)

Godliness (2150) (**eusebeia** from **eu** = well + **sebomai** = reverence. Sebomai is in turn derived from "seb" which refers to sacred awe or reverence exhibited especially in actions) most literally means "well worship". It describes reverence or awe that is well directed. Eusebeia is characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him

In the pastoral epistles **eusebeia** denotes a manner of life. In other words it is a Godward life which is in stark contrast to those just described who set their desire on earthly riches and money! It is interesting that here in the first epistle Timothy is charged to pursue godliness whereas in 2Ti 2:22 this virtue is not listed as one he is to pursue. Some surmise that this indicates godliness is not indispensable as are faith and love, but I am not sure that is a fair conclusion.

Guy King addresses the word "GODLINESS" by saying: Is His Word our constant study; His Will our earnest endeavour; His Work our happy employment; His Worth our daily theme? Is it our chief ambition that we may please Him? I suppose that, "godliness," means "god-likeness": are there increasing evidences of a growing likeness, such as is contemplated, for example, in II Corinthians iii. 18, "We all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit". If our relationship to Him is "right", that sort of transformation will be taking place in our character.

Steven Cole explains that "A godly person lives with an awareness of God's holy presence, and so he fears God and flees from sin. As we saw in 4:7-8, we must discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness. You won't roll out of bed some morning and find out that you magically attained it overnight. You won't get it by going to a spiritual conference or having some emotional experience. You have to diligently discipline yourself to pursue godliness. ([1 Timothy 6:11-12 Going the Distance](#))

TDNT -- "Over against the way of life associated with false teaching, *eusébeia* is the godliness that accords with sound teaching (1 Tim. 6:3; Tit. 1:1). False teachers have a form of it but it does not shape their lives, and they use it for gain (2 Tim. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:5-6), thus missing the gain of true godliness. Christian *eusébeia* is not moralistic, for it is rooted in the Christ event (1 Tim. 3:16). It is not just outward worship, nor a mere concept of God, nor a virtue, nor an ideal. Over against a Gnosticizing asceticism that regards creation as bad and dissolves its orders, true *eusébeia*, born of faith, covers everyday conduct in honoring God as Creator and Redeemer, even though it may expect persecution from the very orders of God which it respects. The term *eusébeia* plays a role here probably because the author hopes that a manner of life that exhibits *eusébeia* will elicit a favorable verdict from non-Christians who set store by it. In this sense it is profitable for this world as well as the next (1 Tim. 4:8). Respect for the orders, however, is now grounded in the will of the Creator who is also Savior (4:10). (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#))

Related Resource:

- [Click for more discussion of godliness](#)

Eusebeia is true religion that displays itself in reverence before what is majestic and divine in worship and in a life of active obedience which befits that reverence. **Eusebeia** is a term used, not of God, but of men.

Marvin Vincent says that **eusebeia** "is from **eu**, well, and **sebomai**, to worship, so that the radical idea is worship rightly directed. Worship, however, is to be understood in its etymological sense, **worth-ship**, or **reverence paid to worth**, whether in God or man... In classical Greek the word is not confined to religion, but means also piety in the fulfilment of human relations... Even in classical Greek, however, it is a standing word for piety in the religious sense, showing itself in right reverence; and is opposed to ungodliness, and profaneness." Vincent goes on to quote a secular definition of **eusébeia** which is defined as "The recognition of dependence upon the gods, the confession of human dependence, the tribute of homage which man renders in the certainty that he needs their favor — all this is **eusébeia**, manifest in conduct and conversation, in sacrifice and prayer." Vincent adds that this secular "definition may be almost literally transferred to the Christian word. It embraces the confession of the one living and true God, and life corresponding to this knowledge." (Bolding added. Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament. Vol. 1, Page 3-677)

C H Spurgeon in his sermon on a "form of godliness" (Read this pithy sermon "The Form of Godliness without the Power) offers several descriptions of true godliness, first asking...

What is that power? God Himself is the power of godliness, The Holy Spirit is the life and force of it (cp Jn 6:63).

Godliness is the power which brings a man to God, and binds him to Him.

Godliness is that which creates repentance towards God, and faith in Him.

Godliness is the result of a great change of heart in reference to God and his character.

Godliness looks towards God, and mourns its distance from Him; godliness hastens to draw nigh, and rests not till it is at home with God.

Godliness makes a man like God. Godliness leads a man to love God, and to serve God; it brings the fear of God before his eyes, and the love of God into his heart.

Godliness leads to consecration, to sanctification, to concentration.

The godly man seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt 6:33-note), and expects other things to be added to him.

Godliness makes a man commune with God, and gives him a partnership with God in his glorious designs; and so it prepares him to dwell with God for ever.

Many who have the **form of godliness** are strangers to this power, and so are in religion worldly, in prayer mechanical, in public one thing, and in private another. True godliness lies in spiritual power, and as they are without this, they are dead while they live. (Excerpt from **The Form of Godliness without the Power**)

John MacArthur - Godliness is a right attitude and response toward the true Creator God; a preoccupation from the heart with holy and sacred realities. It is respect for what is due to God, and is thus the highest of all virtues. ([MacArthur, John: 1Timothy Moody Press o](#))

Dr. Wayne Barber's thoughts on godliness

"Remember though that **Worship** is NOT an feeling! As we act upon the Truth we have learned in the Word, the Spirit begins to develop His character within us (sanctifies us) and the spiritual knowledge (**gnosis**) becomes so practical that God begins to meet every need of your life. Paul had to learn this truth too (Php 4:11, 12, 13-see **notes** Php 4:11-12,13). You begin to find yourself experiencing self-control in areas you never thought possible and you can bear up under things that before were seeming impossible circumstances. Godliness comes out of this quality of obedient faith and one result is the ability to worship well. Jesus "worshipped" His Father... not My will, but Thine be done. The essence of real worship is when we say "No" to our flesh (Ro 6:12-note) and "Yes" to God (Ro 6:13-note). Paul explains well worship in Ro 12:1 (note)

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and

holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, [which is] your spiritual (= reasonable, Greek word "logikos" for "logical") service of worship.

Worship is not a feeling you get when someone sings a wonderful song at church. Worship is a verb, a response to what God has done in my life. Not my will but thine be done is the essence of genuine worship.

There is a pseudo-godliness Paul warns Peter to avoid describing those in the last days who are...

holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power (2Ti 3:5-note)

What is the power of real godliness? It's the power to lay my life down in order for Christ to be glorified in me. As Paul warns, many ostensibly very "religious" people have a form of godliness, going through the motions of religion, but they don't have the power to truly lay down their lives. Out of this process and grounded in faith, comes a god-likeness. We begin to become like Jesus, conformed to His image, enabled by His Spirit to manifest His character summed up in John's gospel...

Greater love hath no man but to lay down his life for his brother. (Jn 15:13)

This is essence of a benevolent good -- when a person is willing to lay down his own life for the benefit of another. How can you be like this? If Christ is in you, Peter says you can do it as you apply all diligence.

Biblical Godliness...

(1). **Necessitates effort on our part** (1Ti 4:7, 8-note)

Discipline yourself (present imperative) for the purpose of Godliness

(2). **Must be pursued:** (1Ti 6:11) **Flee** (present imperative) from these things, you man of God; and **Pursue** (present imperative = command to continuously make the volitional choice to press hard after, as the habit of your life) righteousness, **godliness...** " where "**pursue**" means to follow or press hard after with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain

(3) **Can be faked:** (2Ti 3:5- note) "holding to a form (morphosis - outward form) of **godliness**, although they have denied its power" (where "**denied**" is perfect tense = denied at some point in time in past with that denial & the results/effects of that denial persisting) How do you know? Watch their life. They have denied the transforming power of grace manifest by the true gospel What makes false teachers so dangerous? They may manifest a form of godliness and so appear to be Christians (Mt 7:15, 21, 22, 23-see **notes** Mt 7:15, 21, 22-23). Mark it down a profession of truth which is associated with an individual living in ungodliness is a spurious profession & that person is woefully deceived. Godly belief always produces a godly life. (Titus 1:1-note and compare Titus 1:16-note)

John MacArthur on **righteousness** and **godliness** - Those two virtues are central to a godly minister's power and usefulness. They form an essential part of what Spurgeon called "the minister's self-watch" (C. H. Spurgeon, borrow [Lectures to My Students](#)). The Puritan Richard Baxter had much to say on that topic, devoting an entire section of his classic work *The Reformed Pastor* to it. He warned, "Many a tailor goes in rags, that maketh costly clothes for others; and many a cook scarcely licks his fingers, when he hath dressed for others the most costly dishes" (See [The Reformed Pastor](#) [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1979], 54). The Puritan John Flavel pointedly observed, "Brethren, it is easier to declaim against a thousand sins of others, than to mortify one sin in ourselves" (cited in I. D. E. Thomas, *A Puritan Golden Treasury* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977], 191). John Owen added, "A minister may fill his pews, his communion roll, the mouths of the public, but what that minister is on his knees in secret before God Almighty, that he is and no more" (cited in Thomas, *A Puritan Golden Treasury*, 192). The nineteenth-century English pastor Charles Bridges wrote, For if we should study the Bible more as Ministers than as Christians—more to find matter for the instruction of our people, than food for the nourishment of our own souls, we neglect then to place ourselves at the feet of our Divine Teacher, our communion with Him is cut off, and we become mere formalists in our sacred profession.... We cannot live by feeding others; or heal ourselves by the mere employment of healing our people; and therefore by this course of official service, our familiarity with the awful realities of death and eternity may be rather like that of the grave-digger, the physician, and the soldier, than the man of God, viewing eternity with deep seriousness and concern and bringing to his people the profitable fruit of his contemplations. It has well been remarked—that 'when once a man begins to view religion not as of personal, but merely of professional importance, he has an obstacle in his course, with which a private Christian is unacquainted.' It is indeed difficult to determine, whether our familiar intercourse with the things of God is more our temptation or our advantage. (*The Christian Ministry* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1980], 163)

Faith (4102)(**pistis**) describes a firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness. Faith is not just a mental assent but a firm conviction, a surrender to that truth and a conduct emanating from or in accord with one's surrender. In sum, faith shows itself genuine by a changed life. As a working principle in life, the uses of faith are well illustrated in Hebrews 11.

"Faith is simply confident trust in God for everything. It involves loyalty to the Lord and unwavering confidence in His power, purpose, plan, provision, and promise. Faith is the atmosphere in which the man of God exists. He trusts God to keep and fulfill His Word." (MacArthur)

Faith is placed in a series of practical duties (see 1 Timothy 1:5, 14; 2:15; 4:12; 2 Timothy 1:13; 1 Timothy 1:19; 2:7; 3:9; 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; 3:10). Word Studies in the New Testament.

Maclaren writes that "Faith is the hand that grasps."

Cole explains that "Some commentators understand **"faith"** to mean "faithfulness," that dependability which is a fruit of the Spirit and should be present in every believer (Gal. 5:22). But it also can refer to the trust in God that consciously relies on Him in every situation of life. As Hebrews 11, the great chapter on faith, shows, men and women of faith believe the promises of God and live in light of them, even in the face of not receiving what is promised, because they trust that God will fulfill His sure word in heaven if not in this life (Heb. 11:13-16). Again, you need to pursue faith. You don't wake up some morning with vigorous faith any more than a guy with bulging muscles went to bed one night as a 98-pound weakling and woke up looking like Mr. America! How do you pursue faith? By trusting God in the frustrations, irritations, and trials that He sends your way. You deliberately humble yourself under God's sovereign hand and cast all your anxieties on Him through prayer, knowing that in spite of how it may seem, He does care for you (1Pe 5:6-7). Instead of learning to trust God with the little trials, many Christians grumble and chafe under them. They flatter themselves into thinking that if a major trial ever hits, they'll trust God then. But it's the small irritations that God uses to build our faith as we submit to Him and seek Him each day. We need to pursue faith in our daily circumstances. ([1 Timothy 6:11-12 Going the Distance](#))

AGAPE A LIFELONG PURSUIT NOT AN ARRIVAL!

Love ([26](#))(**agape**) describes unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and that God enables in His children (see note on fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22 **Agape** is not based on pleasant emotions or good feelings that might result from a physical attraction or a familial bond. **Agape** chooses as an act of self-sacrifice to serve the recipient. From all of the descriptions of **agape** love, it is clear that true **agape** love is a sure mark of salvation. "Agapē (love) is the love of volition and choice. It is unrestricted and unrestrained, encompassing love for God, other believers, and non-Christians." (MacArthur)

The fact that Paul charges Timothy to pursue love should be encouraging to all believers. Why do I say that? Well, we all know that love is the "badge" of our faith, the supreme fruit of the Gospel growing in our lives and yet we all know how difficult it is to love at times when we don't even like the definition of love in 1Corinthians 13:1-7, much less feel like practicing it! The point is that God-like love does not come naturally. It does not just effortlessly. Beloved, don't let anyone play the shame game or put you on a guilt trip that you are loving like Christ. Paul plainly says this love is a lifelong pursuit, and the implication is that in this short life, we will never attain love as perfectly or as much as we should. So keep on pursuing it and practicing it, relying not on self energy but Spirit enabling power to produce this beautiful supernatural fruit. Christ-like love is to be our lifelong a pursuit, not our "arrival" until we reach glory!

A LITTLE "R & R"

Just as we are called to walk by faith, and not by sight, by extension we must practice the pursuit of love by faith, which includes a **renunciation** ("**R**") of our own resources and a **reliance** ("**R**"), or dependence, on God's infinite resources.

Agape love does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Believers can easily fall into the trap of blindly following the world's demand that a lover **feel** positive toward the beloved. This is not **agape** love, but is a love based on impulse. **Impulsive love** characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason "I can't help it. I fell in love with another person!" Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God's **decisive love**, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind. There are many reasons a proper understanding of the truth of God's word (and of the world's lie) is critical and one of the foremost is Jesus' declaration that

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** (agape) for one another." (John 13:35).

PURSUE BEARING UP UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

Patience (5281) (**hupomone** from **hupo** = under + **meno** = stay, remain, abide) literally means abiding under. The root idea of **hupomone** is to remain under some discipline, subjecting one's self to something which demands the submission of one's will to something against which one naturally would rebel. It portrays a picture of steadfastly and unflinchingly bearing up under a heavy load and describes that quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial. The picture is that of steadfastness, constancy and endurance. It has in it a forward look, the ability to focus on what is beyond the current pressures (eg Jesus "Who for the joy set before Him **endured** [verb form hupomeno] the Cross despising the shame" see notes on Hebrews 12:2). "It does not describe a passive, fatalistic resignation, but a victorious, triumphant, unswerving loyalty to the Lord in the midst of trials (cf. James 1:2–4). It is the perseverance of the martyr, who will lay down his life if necessary for the cause of Christ." (MacArthur)

Steadfastness under adversity.

And so **hupomone** does not describe a grim resignation or a passive "grin and bear" attitude but a triumphant facing of difficult circumstances knowing that even out of evil God guarantees good. It is courageous gallantry which accepts suffering and hardship and turns them into grace and glory.

Barclay says: **Hupomone** is victorious endurance, masculine constancy under trial. "It is unswerving constancy to faith and piety in spite of adversity and suffering." Hupomone is the virtue which does not so much accept the experiences of life as it conquers these experiences. Hupomone is the virtue which in spite of all things overcomes the world. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

Hendriksen says: It is the grace to bear up under adversities; for example, persecution. It amounts to steadfastness no matter what may be the cost, in the full assurance of future victory. (Borrow [Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles](#))

In short, **hupomone** is steadfastness in the face of difficult circumstances or afflictions. Preaching the Gospel would bring opposition to Timothy and he would need both **patience** and **gentleness** in his behavior toward his opponents.

In Luke 8:15+ **hupomone** characterizes true believers, being pictured as an active force that bears spiritual fruit. Over and over in the NT, we see that salvation is by faith alone, but that faith which is true, saving faith, is faith that is associated with good works (fruit). Why is there such a repeated emphasis in the NT? Clearly God desires that all men be saved. He does not want them to think they are saved when they are not. Thus He repeatedly associates an observable "commodity" as a product of their faith, so that they can see and have assurance that their faith is real. Sadly, a number of commentators with evangelical leanings disparage any attempt to link faith with works, accusing such attempts as perversions of salvation by faith alone. Nothing could be further from the truth. And nothing has a greater potential to deceive a soul into thinking they are saved when they are not. This is an eternal life or death issue and both parties cannot be correct.

In Mark 13:13+ (Mt 24:13) Jesus Himself associates **perseverance** with **salvation**. He is not saying that one's perseveration in any way gains or merits salvation. Quite to the contrary, He is saying that the one who perseveres to the end does so precisely because he is truly saved. The fact that he was enabled (supernaturally) to endure to the end is clear evidence of genuine salvation (cp Acts 14:22+).

TDNT - It is given by God (Rom. 15:5) and is closely related to faith and love (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:10). Tit. 2:2 has the triad faith, love, and (hoping) steadfastness. If hope focuses on the future, the steadfastness of hope is its expression in the present time of affliction. It has the promise that those who die with Christ, if they endure, shall also reign with him (2 Tim. 2:11..12). (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#))

TDNT add this helpful note on **hupomone** - Paul sketches the main features of hypomoné as a Christian attitude. It does not derive from bravery or insensitivity but from faith and hope (Rom. 8:25). It displays endurance in the present aeon of wickedness and injustice (Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 3:7). Actively it produces good works (Rom. 2:7), passively it endures under suffering (2 Th. 1:4; cf. 1 Pet. 2:20). Unlike Greek ethics, which regards the passive suffering of evil as shameful, Christians know that they are called to suffer (Acts 14:22), and they show their faith by persevering all the same (cf. 2 Tim. 2:10). Affliction produces endurance, and endurance character (Rom. 5:34). This endurance, which differs from God's forbearance, since God is subject to no external pressure, is never a complaining or despondent endurance. It is given by God (Rom. 15:5) and is closely related to faith and love (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:10). Tit. 2:2 has the triad faith, love, and (hoping) steadfastness. If hope focuses on the future, the steadfastness of hope is its expression in the present time of affliction. It has the promise that those who die with Christ, if they endure, shall also reign with him (2 Tim. 2:11..12). (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#))

William S. Plumer writes that...

This patience is the fruit of God's Spirit. Paul prayed that his Colossian converts "might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness." Col. 1:10,

11. Every good gift comes from heaven. Human nature is impatient, self-willed, restless, turbulent. Men must be taught of God, or they never will know anything to purpose. Accustomed as men are, to some kinds or degrees of inconvenience, conscious as they ought to be that they deserve far worse than ever befalls them—yet all this is to no purpose until God by his Spirit gives them affections and principles which are quite above the measure and strength of nature.

That this grace enters into the essentials of Christian character, is certain from the fact that it is twice so catalogued. In 1 Tim. 6:11, Paul exhorts Timothy to "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." And in Galatians 5:22, 23, he says the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." He who dares erase from either catalogue a single word, takes great liberties with sacred things, and brings his soul into jeopardy. It is also obvious from the very nature of holiness, and from the nature of heavenly things. Would not a fiery, impatient spirit, be every way as unlovely and as unfit for the society above, as the spirit of revenge, of pride, or of covetousness?

If we have an impatient temper, occasions and temptations will not be lacking to elicit it. The world is full of evil-doers and evil-doings, of evil-speakers and evil-speeches, of evil-surmisers and evil-surmisings. " ([Vital Godliness - Patience](#) - If you are an impatient individual this would be a good treatise to read!)

Gentleness (4239) (**praupathia**) describes composure or a calm disposition, mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness." **Michaelis** in TDNT says that **praupathia** "is not so much "meekness" as "composure" in face of wrongs. (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#))

Gilbrant - A related term of the adjective praupathēs, "gentle," praupathia (also spelled praupatheia) means "gentle, mild friendliness" (cf. Bauder, "Humility," Colin Brown, 2:256). Its only New Testament occurrence is in some texts of 1 Timothy 6:11 where praupathia closes a list of virtues after which Timothy (and any "man of God") should strive (cf. prautēs [4099]). Elsewhere the simple noun prautēs is used to express essentially the same idea. Gentleness describes a feature of Christ's character and hence also belongs to the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23).

Steven Cole adds that "The word doesn't mean meekness in the sense of weakness. Timid Timothy wouldn't need to pursue that quality, since he seemed to have plenty of it! Rather, it means strength under control. The root word was used of Alexander's horse, a mighty and powerful animal, but completely broken, responsive to its master's commands. As the very next word shows, a gentle man must fight. But he doesn't fight for his own way, out of self-will, but for God's way in submission to God's will. ([1 Timothy 6:11-12 Going the Distance](#))

Guthrie says: The concluding virtue, meekness, denotes 'gentleness of feeling,' a rarer quality than patience, but a precious target for the man of God.

MacArthur on **gentleness** - Although consumed with the greatest of causes, the man of God recognizes that in himself he makes no contribution to its success, and is marked by considerate humility. His is the attitude expressed by John Bunyan in The Pilgrim's Progress:

He that is down needs fear no fall,
He that is low no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

The [Greek Textus Receptus](#) (source of KJV) has the related word (4240) **prautes** which in ancient Greece was sometimes used of a feigned, hypocritical concern for others that is motivated by self-interest. But in the New Testament it is always used of genuine consideration for others.

Prautes denotes the humble and gentle attitude which expresses itself, in particular, in a patient submissiveness to offense, free from malice and desire for revenge... controlled strength, the ability to bear reproaches and slights without bitterness and resentment; the ability to provide a soothing influence on someone who is in a state of anger, bitterness and resentment against life... the word indicates an obedient submissiveness to God and His will, with unwavering faith and enduring patience displaying itself in a gentle attitude and kind acts toward others, and this often in the face of opposition. It is the restrained and obedient powers of the personality brought into subjection and submission to God's will by the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:23+)... the opposite of arrogance... the word stands in contrast to the term orge (wrath, anger as a state of mind)... It denotes the humble and gentle attitude which expresses itself, in particular, in a patient submissiveness to offense, a freedom from malice and desire for revenge... mildness, patient trust in the midst of difficult circumstances. (2Cor 10:1+) (Compiled from the [The new linguistic and exegetical key to the Greek New](#)

[Testament](#) - borrow - often has helpful insights on the Greek)

Barclay says: It is one of these untranslatable words. It describes the spirit which never blazes into anger for its own wrongs, but which can be purely and devastatingly angry for the wrongs of others. It describes the spirit which knows how to forgive and yet knows how to wage the battle of righteousness. It describes the spirit which walks at once in humility and yet in pride of its high calling from God. It describes the virtue by which a man at one and the same time remembers the shame of being a sinner and the glory of being a son of God. It describes the virtue by which at all times a man is enabled rightly to treat his fellow men, and rightly to regard himself.

Prautes was used in secular Greek writings to describe a soothing wind, a healing medicine, and a colt that had been broken. In each instance, there is power for a wind can become a storm, too much medicine can kill and a horse can break loose. Thus **prautes** describes **power under control**.

Prautes is an interesting word. Aristotle defined it as the correct mean between being too angry and being never angry at all. It is the quality of the man whose anger is so controlled that he is always angry at the right time and never at the wrong time. It describes the man who is never angry at any personal wrong he may receive, but who is capable of righteous anger when he sees others wronged.

The meek person does not have to fly off the handle because he has everything under control. A perfect picture is found in our Lord Jesus Christ. Quoting from the Septuagint (LXX = Greek of the Hebrew Old Testament) rendering of Zechariah 9:9, which predicts the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Matthew uses the adjective form of **prautes** (praus) to describe Jesus as

"gentle (praus) and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden" (Mt 21:5).

In a gracious appeal to His followers, Jesus used the same adjective of Himself, saying,

Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am **gentle** (praus in NAS; praos in KJV) and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls" (Mt 11:29).

James uses **prautes** in his discussion of a teachable spirit instructing his readers to

Therefore (to "achieve the righteousness of God" and manifest ourselves as "the firstfruits among His creatures") putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in **humility (prautes)** receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. (James. 1:21-note)

Trench describes the related Greek word **praotēs** which is also translated meekness (and in fact is the word used in the Textus Receptus from which the KJV derives) - It is that temper of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting... This meekness, however, being first of all a meekness before God, is also such in the face of men, even of evil men, out of a sense that these, with the insults and injuries which they may inflict, are permitted and employed by Him for the chastening and purifying of His elect.

Trench adds that **prautes** "is closely linked with humility, and follows directly upon it (Eph 4:2-note; Col 3:12-note) because it is only the humble heart which is also the meek; and which, as such, does not fight against God, and more or less struggle and contend with Him. This meekness, however, being first of all meekness before God, is also such in the face of men, even of evil men, out of a sense that these, with the insults and injuries which they may inflict, are permitted and employed by Him for the chastening and purifying of His elect. This was the root of David's (meekness) when Shimei cursed and flung stones at him—the consideration that the Lord had bidden him (2Sa 16:11), that it was just for him to suffer these things, however unjustly the other might inflict them; and out of like convictions all true Christian (meekness) must spring. He that is meek indeed will know himself a sinner among sinners... and this knowledge of his own sin will teach him to endure meekly the provocations with which they may provoke him, and not withdraw himself from the burdens which their sin may impose (Ibid)

Matthew Henry in his lengthy discussion of **meekness** writes that "The occasions and provocations of anger often set our meekness at a distance from us, and we have it to seek when we have most need of it; but we must follow after it, and not be taken off from the pursuit by any diversion whatever. While others are ingenious and industrious enough in following after malice and revenge, projecting and prosecuting angry designs, you be wise and diligent to preserve the peace both within doors and without. Following meekness bespeaks a sincere desire and a serious endeavor to get the mastery of our passion, and to check, govern, and moderate all the motions of it. Though we cannot fully attain this mastery, yet we must follow after it, and aim at it. Follow meekness, that is, as much as it is in you, live peacefully with all men, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit: we can only make one side of the bargain; if others will quarrel, yet let us be peaceful; if others will strike fire, that is their fault; let us not be as tinder to it. (Excerpt from [A Discourse on Meekness and Quietness of Spirit](#))

J R Miller - Gentleness is a beautiful quality. It is essential to all true character. Nobody admires ungentleness in either man or

woman. When a man is harsh, cold, unfeeling, unkind, and crude and rough in his manner—no one speaks of his fine disposition. When a woman is loud-voiced, dictatorial, petulant, given to speaking bitter words and doing unkindly things—no person is ever heard saying of her, "What a lovely disposition she has!" She may have many excellent qualities, and may do much good—but her ungentleness mars the beauty of her character. No man is truly great, who is not gentle. "Your gentleness has made me great." Psalm 18:35. Courage and strength and truth and justness and righteousness are essential elements in a manly character; but if all these be in a man and gentleness be lacking—the life is sadly flawed.

[Guy King](#) says: Some people seem to imagine that meekness is weakness. We can only suggest that they try it for a week. That will soon cure them of the delusion. Meekness is, in reality, the response to that challenge of the Lord Jesus, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me", Luke 9:23+: "deny himself" (ED: TRY TO DO THAT IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH! NO, DEPEND ON THE SPIRIT'S ENABLEMENT!), say "No" to his self, cross himself out. It is as Paul has it in Galatians 2:20+, "Not I but Christ". It is the obliteration of self; the subservience of self to others, and especially to Him. Self can be one of our greatest problems--self-righteousness, self-confidence, self-will, self-seeking, self-importance, even self-pity. Meekness is the opposite of all that, the absence of all that. Yes, it is so often the case that the Christian's main trouble is not so much sin, as self (ED: TRUE BUT THEY ARE CO-CONSPIRATORS!). The old grammar that we learnt at school said, First Person, I; Second Person, Thou; Third Person, He. The new grammar that we are set to learn, when we enter the School of Christ, is--First Person, He; Second Person, Thou (others); Third Person, I.

[Higher Ground](#)

I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day;
Still praying as I'm onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground

IT TAKES WORK!

But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself rather to godliness. 1 Timothy 4:7

The apostle referred to godliness more in 1 Timothy than in any other epistle (see 1 Timothy 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11). This highly prized Christian quality, referred to as a "mystery" (1Ti 3:16), may be defined as a good and holy life growing out of a deep reverence for God.

But how does it come about in our lives? Are we to pray for godliness and then sit back and wait for God to pour it suddenly into us? No, that's not how we become godly. It takes effort on our part! 1 Timothy 4:7 says we are to train (exercise) ourselves to be godly. Think of it like this: Suppose a young gymnast wanted to compete in the Olympic Games. How would she reach her goal? First, she would have to be totally committed to that goal. Then, she would have to make tremendous sacrifices of her time. She would have to spend hours every day doing conditioning exercises and practicing her routines. She would work under the skilled eye of a coach who could point out the smallest flaws and correct her technique. She would also follow a strict diet.

So it is with godliness. If we want to become more godly, we must commit ourselves to it. We must see ourselves as "in training," exercising strenuously and vigorously. Through prayer and yieldedness we put ourselves under the guidance of our "coach," the Holy Spirit (ED: SEE ["Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible"](#)) We must discipline ourselves to read, study, and obey God's Word. Just praying for godliness won't do. We must realize that it takes work! --D.C.Egner. ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Every day more like my Savior,
Every day my will resign,
Till at last Christ reigns supremely
In this grateful heart of mine.
--Brandt

No pain - no gain.

WHAT KIND OF MAN ARE YOU?

But you, O man of God, . . . pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. --1 Tim. 6:11

President George Bush has spoken of his desire for a "kinder, gentler nation," but some people are not getting the message. According to a survey by the Roper polling organization, many American men are failing to become kinder and gentler. At least that's the opinion of the women who were questioned.

When polls were taken in 1970, 67 percent of American women said that men were "basically kind, gentle, and thoughtful." But by 1990 the percentage, had dropped to 51 percent.

No matter how much or how little we may trust surveys, we can learn an important lesson from this negative perception about men in the U.S. It should remind us all-- especially men--to be concerned about the kind of people we are. And if we call ourselves followers of Jesus Christ, we have an added incentive to live as we should.

Jesus exemplified the way a real man should act--with great kindness, gentleness, and thoughtfulness. He was compassionate toward the sick (Mark 1:40-42), gentle to the spiritually needy (Matt. 11:28-30), kind to children (Mark 10:13-16) self-sacrificing to the spiritually lost (Mark 10:45), and thoughtful of the needs of others (John 19:25-27). What kind of man are you? --J.D.B. ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

A PERSONAL POLL

1. Whom do you know who is kind and gentle?
2. In what ways are you kind and gentle?
3. What can you do to become more like Christ?

NOTHING IS SO STRONG AS GENTLENESS, NOTHING SO GENTLE AS STRENGTH. --St. Francis

Don't Rust Out - On June 15, 1957, a brand-new car was buried in a concrete vault under the courthouse lawn in Tulsa. In June 2007, the car was unearthed as the city celebrated Oklahoma's 100th year of statehood. Writing in the Tulsa World, Randy Krehbiel said: "Now we know what 50 years in a hole does to a Plymouth Belvedere." Water seeping into the vault had turned the once shiny car into a rusted monument to the past. A hot-rod expert hired to start the engine pronounced it "hopeless."

Spiritual inactivity corrodes the soul like moisture acting on metal. Paul urged Timothy, his young protégé, to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (1 Tim. 6:11). This command had no expiration date attached to it. The spiritual disciplines require continued attention throughout our lives. If rest becomes our goal, then rust is right behind.

Oswald Chambers said:

"The intellect works with the greatest intensity when it works continuously; the more you do, the more you can do. We must work hard to keep in trim for God. Clean off the rust and keep bright by use."

Our capabilities may vary with age, but **pursuing the righteous life to which God has called us should never end** Don't rust out!

For Further Study: For practical advice on how to keep spiritually active as we age, you may wish to read [Finishing Well](#)

Spiritual inactivity corrodes the soul.

CAUGHT IN A FATAL GRIP

But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness. 1 Timothy 6:11

The Christian must always be on guard lest worldly things bring about his spiritual defeat. Many "foolish and hurtful lusts" can ruin a believer's testimony and hinder his growth in grace.

I have read of a kind of eagle that will attack a seal as it swims in the water. The bird swoops down and fixes its claws into the mammal's flesh, then pulls its victim ashore and kills it. But sometimes the seal proves much too strong for the eagle. With a mighty lunge, it heads for the deep waters, drawing the helpless bird with it. In spite of the eagle's shriek of horror and its desperate struggle to let go of its prey, disaster comes.

In much the same way the child of God can become so engrossed with the activities of this world (ED: OR ENTICED/ENSNARED BY SOME SECRET SIN) that he is dragged down to spiritual ruin. This is not to say that when a believer gets out of God's will he no longer has eternal life. But his fruitfulness in Christ's service and his usefulness to the Lord who bought him is nullified. This was the case with Demas who forsook the apostle Paul, "having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10+). (ED: BUT THERE IS A QUESTION WHETHER DEMAS WAS A TRUE BELIEVER - PAUL DOES NOT TELL US HE REPENTED AND RETURNED. WE WILL SEE IN HEAVEN!)

The things of earth pose no threat to us if we do not grasp them or hold them close. Our Scripture for today gives a twofold plan of safety: "flee" and "follow." We must flee sinful allurements and "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience,

meekness." If you sense in your life an increasing entanglement with worldly lusts, heed Paul's advice. Don't let a fatal grip bring about your downfall. --P.R.V. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It may be you say, "I'll have Christ and the world,"
But this you will find cannot be;
A friend of the world is a foe unto God,
And these two can never agree.

The closer you live to the world, the more power it has over you.

WHEN IT'S SMART TO RUN

But thou, O man of God, flee these things. 1 Timothy 6:11

In Proverbs 30 the writer refers to the Palestinian "badger" or "conie." This small animal, resembling a guinea pig, is able to survive in rocky terrain by fleeing at the slightest provocation. It never strays far from home, and swiftly darts into its hole at the first sign of danger. But no one blames this little creature for doing that. Since it's not equipped to defend itself against predators, any attempt to fight would be fatal. To run is the only sensible thing to do.

We as Christians should also choose flight instead of fight whenever it will keep us from temptation to sin. Here are some biblical exhortations:

- "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18);
- "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" (1 Cor. 10:14);
- "Flee also youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22);
- "But thou, O man of God, flee these things" (1 Tim. 6:11).

Since this last admonition follows warnings against pride, quarreling, greed, and discontent, it is obvious that the apostle Paul was advising young Timothy to run away from any occasion that would cause him to become ensnared by these evils. It follows that a person with a weakness for drink should not go to a tavern for a coke. Nor should we deliberately place ourselves in a situation conducive to sexual sin. True, some temptations cannot be avoided. And when they do come to us, the Lord will give us special help. But He doesn't want us to court them with the idea that we are strong enough to defeat them. That's presumptuous. It's always smart to run away from sin. --H.V.L. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

'Tis wise to flee when tempted,
A fool is one who'd stay;
For those who toy with evil
Soon learn it doesn't pay.
--D.J.D.

To avoid forbidden fruit, stay out of the devil's orchard.

The Strait Way to Heaven William Dyer

Twenty precious directions for your souls

1. First, Loathe sin—and leave sin.

"He who covers his sins shall not prosper—but whoever confesses and forsakes them, shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13.

There must be a falling out with our sins—before there be a falling off from our sins.

There must be a loathing of sin in our affections.

Oh, is it not a thousand times better to part with sin—though ever so sweet—than to part with God, and Christ, and heaven? One of them, you must part with! One sin will damn a soul out of Christ—but no sin can damn a soul in Christ!

Sin is the evil of evils! Sin is worse than the devil—for it was sin which made the devil to be a devil.

Oh! the love of sin, and the lack of grace—will ruin and destroy our souls forever. It is better not to be—than to be an unrepentant sinner!

Oh, therefore kill sin—that sin may not kill you.

Mourn for sin—and flee from sin.

Do not commit new sins—but repent for old sins!

"Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices!" Ezekiel 36:31.

Oh, poor soul—have you not served the flesh and the devil long enough? Yes! Have you not had enough of sin? Is sin so good to you—or is it so profitable for you? Oh, what a place will you be shortly in—of joy or torment! Oh, what a sight will you shortly see—in heaven or hell! Oh, what thoughts will shortly fill your hearts—with unspeakable delight or horror! What work will you be employed in: to praise the Lord with saints and angels, or to cry out in unquenchable fire with devils! Oh, therefore, die unto sin, confess it, mourn for it, and be ashamed of it; hate and loathe it, and flee from it as from a deadly serpent; and though your sins are more than you can number—yet they are not more than God can pardon! "If we confess our sins—he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

2. Put off the old man—and put on the new man.

"You have put off the old man with his deeds—and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him who created him," Col. 3:9, 10.

"Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Ephesians 4:24.

"For, in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision—but a new creature," Galatians 6:15. "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby," 1 Peter 2:2.

"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are past away, behold all things are become new!" 2 Corinthians 5:17.

The "new man" is not what he was before; he has **new understanding, a new will, new desires, new love, new delights, new thoughts, new words, new company, and a new life.**

Oh, dear friends, be new creatures—that you may be glorious creatures. We can call nothing in heaven ours, until Christ is ours. Without regeneration, there is no salvation, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless you are converted, and become as little children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Truly, truly, I say unto you: Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." You have heard much of God, Christ, and heaven, with your ears—but this will not bring you to heaven, unless you have much of God, Christ, and heaven in your hearts! Y

You must be able to say,

"I was once a slave of Satan—but now am a son (ED: and slave) of God!

Once I was dead—but now I am alive!

Once I was darkness—but now I am light in the Lord!

Once I was a child of wrath, an heir of hell—but now I am an heir of heaven!

Once I was under the spirit of bondage—but now I am under the spirit of adoption.

A true believer lives:

IN the Lord, 1 Thess. 1:1.

ON the Lord, Romans 1:17, Luke 20:8.

FROM the Lord, John 6:57.

TO the Lord, Romans 14:8.

WITH the Lord, 2 Corinthians 13:4.

3. Make your peace—with the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6, Psalm 2:12, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him!" Oh, do not lift your hands against his Son—but kiss the Son! Let:

his will be your rule;
his Spirit be your guide;
his precepts be your practices;
his decrees be your delights;
his chosen ones be your choicest companions.

Submit to his gospel and government. Oh, sirs! make your peace with God. There is a fourfold peace:

First, There is an external peace—that is, peace with men.

Secondly, There is a supernal peace—that is, peace with God.

Thirdly, There is an internal peace—that is, a peace with conscience.

Fourthly, There is an eternal peace—and that is, peace in heaven.

Psalm 37:37, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright—for the end of that man is peace."

If you have peace with God—then the world and the devil cannot hurt you. Believers have God for their guide and gain. He who meddles with the saints of God, assaults God himself! Zech. 2:8, "He who touches you, touches the apple of his eye." He who lifts up his hand against them, lifts up his hand against God! Though they have many enemies—yet they have one friend who has more strength than all their enemies. A ragged saint is dearer to God, than a glittering emperor who lacks grace. Oh, make your peace with the Prince of Peace, that in this life you may have the assurance of eternal life, and that eternal death may not be your portion in the next life!

4. Make piety your main business—and not a by-business.

"Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure," 2 Peter 1:10.

"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling," Philippians 2:12.

"But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness!" Matthew 6:33.

Oh! why is the glory of this poor world so much regarded—but because the glory of heaven is so little minded. Oh! what is an earthly kingdom—in comparison of the heavenly kingdom? The angels themselves, though they are glorious spirits—yet they are ministering spirits.

Do not most men of the world make light of God, and of Christ, and the Spirit, and heaven, and their precious souls?

"The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them!" Matthew 22:2-6.

Wretched worldlings make religion a by-business; they will hear, read, and pray, when they have nothing else to do. Oh, that such men did but know what everlasting glory and everlasting torments are! Would they then do—as they now do? Oh, that they did but know the worth of their souls, and their need of a Savior; the shortness of their time, and the greatness of their work! Would they then neglect God and their own souls as they do?

Oh, friends, let me beseech you to whom I write, to make piety your main business! Make hearing, reading, praying, believing, and doing, your main business!

"Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you!" John 6:27.

5. Do nothing in this world—but what you can answer for in the eternal world.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad," 2 Corinthians 5:10.

"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel," Romans 2:16.

"God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained," Acts 17:31.

"For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil," Ecclesiastes 12:14.

Oh! for the Lord's sake, my dear brethren, let nothing be done by you in this world—but what may be answered for in the eternal world! Many men do that in this world—which they cannot answer for in the eternal world. Now they despise God, blaspheme God, rebel against God, go a-whoring from God, and persecute the beloved people of God.

Instead of protecting the saints—they imprison the saints!

They are more for crushing them—than comforting them!

Instead of visiting them—they vilify them!

And instead of affecting them—they afflict them!

"They eat them up as they eat bread," Psalm 14:4, and will not allow them to worship the true God, in spirit and in truth—but despise mock, persecute, banish and kill them! Hebrews 11. They:

- Threaten them, Acts 4:29.
- Accuse them, Acts 24:5.
- Slander them, Matthew 5:11.
- Curse them, Matthew 5:44.
- Beat them, Acts 5:40.
- Imprison them, Acts 4:3.
- Plunder them, Hebrews 10:34.
- Murder them, Romans 8:36.

All this, poor innocent Christians suffer—while swearing, cursing, whoring, robbing, blasphemy, drunkenness, gluttony, and all manner of debauchery; yes, murder itself—walks unpunished in the streets! And only he who departs from evil—is a prey! What wonder then, if these ungodly ones shall one day hide themselves in dens and holes, and "cry to the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of him who sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" Revelation 6:15, 16. Oh, what will persecutors do, when "the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power!" 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. Will not they be confounded and speechless, and have never a word to say for themselves; as that man who did not have a wedding garment on? Matthew 22:12.

But, oh, beloved, let that "grace that has appeared unto all men—teach us to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, that we may live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," (Titus 2:12)

following the Lamb,

resisting Satan,

shunning sin and

separating from the world.

6. The Word of God is the Christian's rule—and the Spirit of God is the Christian's guide. (ED: AND POWER)

"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word—it is because there is no light in them," Isaiah 8:20.

"We have a more sure word of prophecy, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place," 2 Peter 2:19.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," 2 Timothy 3:16.

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes—he will guide you into all truth." John 16:13.

Most people walk by false rules:

1. Some walk by popular opinions.
2. Some walk by worldly customs.
3. Some walk by providence.
4. Some walk by conscience.

5. Some walk by their own reason.
6. Some walk by other men's examples.
7. Some walk by their own lusts.

But, oh! my dear friends, let me beseech you to walk by none of these false rules—but keep close to the Word and Spirit of God.

The Scripture is a rule outside of us, to show as where we must go; the Spirit is a guide inside of us, **toenable** us to walk according to the direction of that Word. The Word of God is a compass, by which we must direct our course; the Spirit is the great pilot, who steers us in this course.

We have no eyes to see the Word—until the Spirit enlightens them.

We have no ears to hear the Word—until the Spirit opens them.

We have no hearts to obey the Word—until the Spirit bows and inclines them.

By the Word of God—we know the mind of the Spirit of God. And by the efficacy of the Spirit—we feel the power of the Word. The Word of God shows us the way; and the Spirit of God leads us in that way which the Word points out. The Spirit of God is able to expound the Word of God, and to make it plain to our understanding. The Holy Spirit is the Christian's interpreter; he gives the Scriptures, and he alone can reveal unto us the sense and meaning of the Scriptures. The Word is God's counsel, to reveal the path in which we are to walk; the Spirit is God's Counselor—who teaches us to walk in that path. The Word is a looking-glass, which shows us our duty. If God had not put his Spirit into our hearts, as well as his Word into our heads—we would never have arrived at the fair haven of peace.

The Scriptures reveal the very heart of God. God Almighty has, in the sacred Scriptures, as it were, manifested himself, unfolded all his counsel to the creatures, as far as is necessary to be known for their direction and guidance to everlasting life.

7. Be faithful—and fruitful.

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain!" 1 Corinthians 15:58.

"Every tree which does not bear good fruit—is hewn down and cast into the fire!" Matthew 3:10

Christians must be fruitful—and not slothful. See that you bring forth good fruit—and much fruit. What are these fruit?

Firstly, Sincerity, which is not a single grace—but the soul of graces, "Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts," Psalm 51:6.

Secondly, Humility is a grace most prevailing with God for the obtaining of all graces, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and humble in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls," Matthew 11:29.

Thirdly, Prudence. The patient Christian is the best for waiting—but the prudent Christian is the best for working, "Be wise as serpents—and harmless as doves," Matthew 10:16.

We must have innocence with our wisdom—or else our wisdom is but craftiness.

And we must have wisdom with our innocence—or else our innocence is but weakness.

We must have the harmlessness of doves, that we may not wrong others; and must have the prudence of the serpent, that others may not abuse and take advantage of us. Not to wrong the truth by silence—here is the innocence of doves; not to betray ourselves by rashness—here is the wisdom of the serpent.

Fourthly, Patience. "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus," Revelation 14:12. The way to bring the world under us, is to be patient under its frowns. Be faithful in your promises, and in your purposes. Be faithful to the ways of God, and cause of God. Oh! do not begin with the Lamb—and end with the beast; "but be faithful unto death—and I will give you a crown of life," Revelation 2:10.

Keep your lights burning, and lamps shining, your loins girded, your consciences awakened, your garments unstained, and your spiritual armor constantly on, and closely girt!

Fifthly, Self-denial, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me," Matthew 16:24.

8. Beware of believing the world's report—of the people of God.

Those who have a good conscience, have not always a good name. The people of God in this life are called by the wicked: troublers, seditious, rebellious, and what not. This is an old device of that old serpent—to impute the troubles of of the country upon God's Elijahs, "When Ahab saw Elijah, he said to him—Is that you, you troubler of Israel?" 1 Kings 18:17.

Jeremiah, for speaking against their sins and wickedness, and denouncing God's judgments against them—is judged worthy of death. "But when Jeremiah had finished his message, saying everything the Lord had told him to say, the priests and prophets and all the people at the Temple mobbed him. 'Kill him!' they shouted." Jeremiah 26:8.

Just so in Jeremiah 38:4, "These officials went to the king and said, "Sir, this man must die! That kind of talk will undermine the morale of the few fighting men we have left, as well as that of all the people, too. This man is a traitor!"

Just so with Amos: for speaking against the abominations of the king's court, Amos is charged with treason against the king's person! Amos 7:10-13, "But when Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, heard what Amos was saying, he rushed a message to King Jeroboam: "Amos is hatching a plot against you right here on your very doorstep! What he is saying is intolerable. It will lead to rebellion all across the land." Then Amaziah sent orders to Amos: "Get out of here, you seer! Go on back to the land of Judah and do your preaching there!"

So Paul and Silas, for preaching up the kingly power of Jesus Christ, are accused by the envious Jews, and crude multitude, as turning the world upside down, and breaking the decrees of Caesar. Yes, Christ himself had this laid to his charge. Mark what the Jews say of him, "And they began to accuse him, saying, We have found this fellow perverting the nations, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying, that he himself is Christ a King," Luke 23:2. And for this have the servants of God in all ages been accused and persecuted, killed, and stoned, Matthew 23:37. Now, if the Lord and Master was called an enemy to Caesar, no wonder if those of his household be called so. Our integrity will not secure us from infamy! The choicest of professors have had black marks in the world's calendar. It is usual for those who live in treason and rebellion against the King of heaven—to slander his servants with treason and rebellion against the kings of the earth!

But, my dear brethren, take heed of this; for as the death of the saints is precious, so the names of the saints are precious in God's account. The world will father a hundred lies upon the Lord's people! "Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake," Matthew 5:11. 1 Peter 4:14. Wicked men hate those most—whom God loves most! But God will roll away the reproaches of his people; he will cause their innocence and righteousness to break forth as the sun at noon-day, and their names shall be in everlasting remembrance. Yes, at that great day, God will clear their innocence before men and angels, and all the world.

9. Keep in with God—when men are out with you.

"But it is good for me to draw near to God." Psalm 73:28, "He who dwells under the shadow of the Most High—no plague shall come near him." "He shall give his angels charge over you," Psalm 91:10, 11, "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior!" Habakkuk 3:18. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and the righteous runs into it, and are safe." James 4:8. "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." This is a great comfort to the people of God, though they be as lilies among thorns, and as sheep among wolves, that they have a God to go to! "Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors about you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is over and past," Isaiah 26:20.

Let the world frown, and friends forsake you—God can sweeten all your enjoyments. Keep in God's way—and you will be sure of God's protection; you keep God's precepts—and God will keep you. Do what God commands, and avoid what God forbids—and then you need not fear what man can do unto you. If you would have God to take care of you—you must cast your care upon God; wait on him, and walk with him, obey his precepts, and believe his promises.

Oh! beloved, let wicked men fall out with us, and hate us, and reproach us, as much as they will, they cannot hurt us, if we keep in with God. Therefore, my beloved, above all things get communion with God, and keep communion with God. All saints shall enjoy a heaven when they leave the earth; some saints enjoy a heaven while they are on the earth. Communion with God will yield you two heavens, a heaven upon earth, and a heaven after death! He enjoys nothing—who does not enjoy communion with God.

10. Live above the love of life—and the fear of death.

"For whoever will save his life shall lose it; and whoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it," Matthew 16:25. "If any man comes to me, and hates not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yes, and his own life also—he cannot be my disciple," Luke 14:26.

He who loves Christ more than his life—will be sure to save and keep both. He who goes out of God's way to avoid dangers, shall certainly meet with danger.

"You are not your own, for you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's," 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

My dear friends, let us live above sufferings and fears—though we cannot live without sufferings. "In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," John 16:33. He who loves Christ above life—will let life go rather than Christ.

Consider, my beloved, Christ and the cloud of witnesses and martyrs that are gone before, and passed over through all these floods, and safely arrived to shore, are now in heaven with God, and Christ—where there is fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore, "You will show me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy, and at your right hand are pleasures for evermore," Psalm 16:11. Oh! the joy that they enjoy! Oh! the rivers of consolation that flow from God! "They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Revelation 7:15-17.

Who are those who shall have all this honor, and glory, and joy, and blessedness in heaven? For this see verse 14, "These are those who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The sweetness of the crown which believers shall receive—will make them amends for the bitterness of the cross which they have carried!

11. Desire better hearts—more than better times.

"O, Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your vain thoughts lodge within you?" Jeremiah 4:14. "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander," Matthew 15:19. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9.

Oh! beloved, instead of reforming ourselves—we are complaining of wicked men! We complain of their wickedness—more than our apostasy! We complain of their injuries against us—more than our injuries against God. We have been a long time in sinning—and we had need be a long time in repenting. But the times had not been so bad—had we not been so bad; the times would soon be better—if we were but better.

Alas! beloved, we have sinned such sins as unrighteous men could not sin! We have sinned against the clearest light, and dearest love! The better God has been to us—the worse we have been to him! He has loaded us with his mercies—and we have wearied him with our sins. Oh! Let us blame ourselves more, and the times less! Let us turn unto the Lord—that he may turn unto us in love and mercy! Let our hearts go out to him—that his heart may come unto us. Oh! beg and cry for better hearts, that you may serve God better! Beg for broken hearts, for sincere hearts; for it is the heart that God looks at, and calls for. Proverbs 23:26, "My son, give me your heart." Our hearts are always out of tune to serve God—but never out of tune to serve sin; for if we had ever so good times, and not good hearts, it would rather hurt us than bless us.

12. Grow downward in humility—and inward in sincerity.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints," Ephesians 3:8. "Whoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he who humbles himself, shall be exalted," Matthew 23:12. "Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) affections of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering," Col. 3:12. "Be clothed with humility; for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time," 1 Peter 5:5, 6.

Be low in your own eyes, and keep a low esteem of yourselves; abhor pride, and flee from it; be inwardly sincere, as well as outwardly humble; do not look heaven-ward by your profession, and hell-ward by your conversation, "He who lives in sin, is dead in sin," Ephesians 2:1. "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," Ephesians 6:24. Let your hearts be upright with God, and walk as those that have God for their portion; knowing there are many eyes upon you: the eye of God, the eye of Christ, the eye of angels, the eye of saints, the eye of the world, and the devil's eye upon you too! Therefore walk wisely, and sincerely; be like the king's daughter, all glorious within, Psalm 44:13, "She is all glorious within," though within is not all her glory, "her clothing is of wrought gold."

Do you think yourselves good, because others think so? Alas! the best men's confidence of us are poor evidences of heaven; the best testimony is that within us, and above us. See therefore that you grow in grace, and delight in holiness, bring forth much fruit, and live still as before the living God. Take heed of hypocrisy; make it your daily business to walk with God; be much in the exercise of humility; humility will exceedingly adorn your profession. Do not place religion in a few good words, when the substance is

neglected; but live as you would die; live today as if you were to die tomorrow.

13. Do good—to those who are good.

"Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share." 1 Timothy 6:18. "He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" Micah 6:8. "Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share," 1 Timothy 6:18, "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased," Hebrews 13:16, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world," James 1:27.

Oh! beloved, what an opportunity have you now to do good! Are there not many of Christ's ministers now in need, and members in need? And are there not some in prison for the gospel. "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering," Hebrews 13:3.

There are many men who have a great deal of this world's wealth, and riches, and goods in their hands, and in their houses—but have no grace in their hearts! And therefore they do no good with the goods of this world. They live so unfaithful, that their lives are scarcely worth a prayer, and their deaths scarcely worth a tear. Men may as well go to hell for not doing good—as for doing evil. He who bears no good fruit, is fuel for hell—just as much as he who bears bad fruit. You may not be outwardly bad—and yet not be inwardly good. You may be as far from grace as from vice! The rich glutton was in hell's torments, not for persecuting Lazarus—but for not relieving Lazarus. "I was hungry—and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink," Matthew 25:42.

"'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the Lord. 'Curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to help the Lord, to help the Lord against the mighty.'" Judges 5:23. It is one of the greatest mercies in the world—for God to give a man a heart to do good with that good which he has given him.

Oh! beloved, be always doing good—and hating evil. Look not only where you may get good for yourself—but where you may do good to others. Labor to be helpful to the souls of others, and supply the needs of others.

14. Choose suffering—before sinning.

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time." Hebrews 11:24-25. "You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions!" Hebrews 10:34.

Just so, the three Hebrew children chose burning in the fiery furnace—before bowing to the golden image! "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." Daniel 3:16-18

Just so, Daniel chose suffering before sinning. "Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." Daniel 6:10

And it is said of those in Hebrews 11, "Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated." Hebrews 11:35-37

Oh! beloved, there is more evil in the least sin against Christ—than in the greatest suffering for Christ! "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." 2 Corinthians 4:17

1. Our sufferings for Christ are but light.
2. Our sufferings for Christ are short—but for a moment.
3. Christ stands by us in our sufferings.
4. Our sufferings are ordered by the Father.

5. Our sufferings shall not hurt our souls.

6. God gives us the best of comforts in the worst of times. We have most consolation from God—when we have most tribulation from men! As our sufferings do abound—so our consolations do abound. When the burden is heaviest upon the back—then the peace of conscience is sweetest and greatest within. Therefore, my dear brethren, keep yourselves out of the filthy puddle of this world, and from the evil of this world—and if you must sin or suffer—choose suffering before sinning.

15. Do not think the worse of godliness, because it is frowned upon; nor the better of ungodliness, because it is smiled upon.

"For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come!" 1 Timothy 4:8. "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ!" Philippians 3:8. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; but rather reprove them!" Ephesians 5:11. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Romans 6:23.

Oh! friends, think not the worse of holiness because it is reproached, and scorned, and persecuted by wicked men and devils; nor the better of wickedness, because wicked men love it, and follow it, and say, "It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty?" Malachi 3:14. But there is a time coming, when ungodly men would give all they had—for that holiness that they now despise. But they shall be as far from obtaining it—as they are now from desiring it.

Let us therefore love holiness—and hate wickedness; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Hebrews 12:14. Holiness is the only way to happiness. We must not dress ourselves for the heavenly world—by the looking-glass of this vile world.

"You shall not follow the multitude to do evil," Exodus 23:2. "For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things!" Philippians 3:18-19. The children of God must be harmless in their actings—and blameless in their walkings.

16. Prize the Word of God by the worth of it—that you may never come to prize the Word of God by the want of it!

"How sweet are your Words unto my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Psalm 119:103. "They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb!" Psalm 19:10. "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily food!" Job 23:12. "Oh, how do I love your law! I meditate on it all day long!" Psalm 119:97. "Truly, I love your commands more than gold, even the finest gold!" Psalm 119:127. "Your law is more valuable to me than millions in gold and silver!" Psalm 119:72. "As new born babes—desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby!" 1 Peter 2:2. "Let the Word of God dwell richly in you;" not only with you—but in you, Col. 3:16.

Oh! let us, with Job, esteem the Word of God above our necessary food! Job 23:12; and with David, above our gold and silver! The delight of a saint in God's Word, over-tops all his creature delights. Wicked men can delight in the creatures of God—but not in the Word of God. They can delight in the gifts of God—but not in the God of gifts. Oh! let us love the Word, let us prize the Word! It is the sun of the spiritual world, as the sun is the light of the natural world. Without the sun—the world is but a chaos, and a dungeon full of darkness! Just so, the Word of God is the light of the spiritual world, without which a man is in eternal night.

Take away the Scriptures, and there will be no certain rule to direct men what is to be done, or what is to be believed. In Scripture, all false ways are here unveiled, all sins are here forbidden, all holiness is here commanded; here you may see every action and motion of our lives: as a step to life—or a step to death; as a step heaven-ward—or a step hell-ward. The Word is the savor of life unto life, unto those who believe. Oh! therefore prize and obey the Word.

1. It is a plain word.
2. It is an consistent word.
3. It is a sure word.
4. It is a powerful word.

Oh, beloved! let us read the Word, and abide in the Word, "If you continue in the Word—then you are my disciples indeed." John 8:31.

17. Beware of the whore of Babylon's golden goblet, and sweet wine!

"The woman wore purple and scarlet clothing and beautiful jewelry made of gold and precious gems and pearls. She held in her hand a golden goblet full of obscenities and the impurities of her immorality." Revelation 17:4. "Then the dragon tried to drown the woman with a flood of water that flowed from its mouth!" Revelation 12:15. Let me beseech you to beware of this, and keep yourselves from this! Be like the virgin spouse of Christ—who follows him wherever he goes.

My dear friends, keep yourselves from four things:

First, Beware of **false TEACHERS**.

The devil has his ministers as well as Christ, "Beware of false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves!" Matthew 7:15. Yes, they are ferocious wolves, they can never have enough! They are false shepherds who look only for their own gain! "They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain!" Isaiah 56:11.

Oh! false teachers do not feed the flock—but fleece the flock! They do not convert—but pervert! They do not purify—but poison! They do not edify for salvation—but destroy for damnation! Instead of curing souls—they kill souls!

Just so long as they pilfer the people's money, they care not though the devil has their souls! They are neither rightly called, nor rightly qualified, nor rightly ordained, "These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them!" Jeremiah 13:10. They are dogs and wolves combining together to massacre the flock of Christ. Oh! therefore keep yourselves from Babylon's merchants, who make merchandise of the souls of men, Revelation 18:13. Oh! the sins of teachers—are the teachers of sins!

Secondly, Beware of **false DOCTRINE**.

"There were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways!" 2 Peter 2:1-2. "Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings!" Hebrews 13:9.

I beseech you also in the Lord, my brethren, that you do not carnally comply with, nor superstitiously conform to the inventions of men; but "stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made you free!" Galatians 5:1.

Thirdly, Beware of **false WORSHIP**.

"If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb!" Revelation 14:9-10.

"You Samaritans worship what you do not know. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:22-24.

As there are some in the world who worship a false god—so there be others who worship the true God—with false worship! Those who worship the beast—worship the devil! Oh! Do not meddle with false worship, with vain worship, and superstitious worship! Worship God as he teaches us to worship him. Our work is to depend on Christ's work; our outward working is to depend on God's inward workings.

Fourthly, Beware of **false OPINIONS**.

Let your hearts be upright, your judgments sound, and your lives holy. Love the truth, and obey the truth, and hold fast the truth.

Now, beloved, let me beseech you for God's sake, and for Christ's sake, and for your souls' sake, keep yourselves from false teachers, from false doctrine, from false worship, from false opinions. If you will be tasting and sipping of Babylon's golden goblet—you must resolve to receive Babylon's plagues!

18. Be one with everyone—who is one with Christ.

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." Ephesians 4:3. "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father—loves his children, too." 1 John 5:1. "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." 1 John 4:20.

Oh! consider what a dishonor it is to the gospel, that those that profess themselves sons of the same God, members of the same Christ, temples of the same Spirit, heirs of the same glory—should be jarring one with another! It is strange and unnatural, that those who are saints in profession, should be devils in practice one to another; that God's diamonds, should cut one another! For wolves to devour the lambs is no wonder—but for lambs to devour one another, is astonishing, and monstrous!

Oh! Many professors, instead of loving one another—hate one another! Oh, how unlike are we to that God—whom we profess to be our God! He is full of love, full of goodness, and full of mercy and patience. Oh! but Christians cannot bear and forbear one with another. Oh! do not wicked men warm themselves at the sparks of our divisions, and say, "It is as we would have it!"

Oh! beloved, has not God made his wrath to smoke against us—for the divisions and heart-burnings that have been among us! Oh! that you would lay this to heart, and throw away discord and divisions, and heart-burnings, and labor for a oneness in love and affection, with everyone who is one with Christ. Oh, labor for a healing spirit.

You cannot love God—if you do not love the people of God, "If any man says he loves God, and hates his brother—he is a liar!" "Let brotherly love continue," Hebrews 13:1. "Those who feared the Lord, spoke often one to another," Malachi 3:16. Christ's doves flock together. There are many who cannot love a man—unless he is of their opinions. They cannot love a member of their church, though he is a member of Christ. Every man has a good opinion—of his own opinion! But, alas! beloved, it is not this opinion, nor that opinion; nor this way, nor that way, which will bring a man to heaven, without faith in Christ; and he that has faith in Christ, has a right to all the ordinances of Christ, and promises of Christ, and privileges of Christ. Therefore let me beseech you, to love every godly man—regardless of his minor differences from you. "All the believers were one in heart and mind!" Acts 4:32.

19. Love Christ with a love stronger than life—because he loved us with a love stronger than death!

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save sinners," 1 Timothy 1:15.

Christ's love to us was stronger than death. He died for love! He laid down his life—to save our lives! He loves us—as the Father loves him, John 15:9, "As the Father has loved me—so have I loved you!" Oh, the Scripture has exceeding high expressions of his affection to us. Now, beloved, he died for us, and suffered for us, and set his heart upon us to love us and to delight in us; how ought we then to love him in return! "You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind," Matthew 22:37. "Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth!" Psalm 73:25. "Unto you who believe—He is precious!" 1 Peter 2:7.

Oh! let your hearts be full of love and affection to Christ! Love will breed courage, and cast out slavish fear before God, and carnal fear before men! God can keep us from the torments of men—but men cannot keep us from the torments of God! While we stand by God, God has promised to stand by us; therefore be not afraid of any authority that stands in opposition to the authority of Christ! None can promise better than Christ can; none can threaten us worse than Christ can. Can anyone threaten us with a worse thing—than eternal hell? Can any one promise us a better thing—than eternal heaven? Heaven will be the portion of those who love him; and hell will be the portion of those who hate him.

Oh! my dear brethren, let us love him with a love stronger than death! So did Paul and the rest of the apostles, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Romans 8:35, "Love is stronger than death; many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it!" Song 8:6-7.

20. Be every day as serious in your preparations for death—as if it were your last day.

"All the days of my appointed time will I wait—until my change comes," Job 14:14. "You fool! This night your soul shall be required of you!" Luke 12:20. "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away," James 4:14. "You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it." Psalm 39:5-6.

As no saint knows when that final time and hour shall be—so no wicked man knows when it shall be. To live without the fear of death—is to die living. To labor not to die—is to labor in vain. Men are afraid to die in such and such sins—but not afraid to live in such and such sins. Oh! the hell of horrors and terrors—which attends those souls who have their greatest work to do, when they come to die! Therefore as you would be happy at death, and everlastingly blessed after death—prepare yourselves for death.

Did Christ die for us—that we might live with him? And shall not we desire to die—and be with him? A believer's dying day—is his crowning day! "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. They will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them," Revelation 14:13.

Oh! I beseech you, my brethren, every day spend some time in preparation for, and meditation on:

- death,
- judgment,
- hell,

- heaven,
- eternity.

Eternity is a sum that can never be numbered, a line that can never be measured! Eternity is a condition of everlasting sorrow, or everlasting joy.

Oh! think on this, and prepare for this every day, before the night of death comes!

Oh! think on this, and prepare for this every day, before the night of death comes!

And thus, my beloved, I have given you these twenty precious directions for your souls. I shall leave this book with you as a legacy of my dearest love. My desire in all this—is your happiness here, and your blessedness hereafter.

My earnest and humble desire of you is, that you would mind this book and my former treatises; not only read them—but reform your lives by them.

Oh! do your duty, live in your duty, and love your duty—that you may be made fit to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. This is, and shall be, the earnest and constant prayer of one who esteems it a most glorious privilege—to be of the number of those who "follows the Lamb wherever he goes!"