

# Weekly Devotional

## [ Pass It On ]

A Study in 1st and 2nd Timothy



June 6 - 10, 2011

# Study Questions

Please note: Because of the nature of the sermons (being that they are topical, combining portions of both of Paul's letters to Timothy at times), the devos will not always tie in directly. We will, though, be reading through all of 1 and 2 Timothy.

## 1 Timothy 4-6

1. What are some of the reasons people abandon the faith?
2. What specific actions can you schedule into your daily routine to nurture your godliness?
3. From what you see in 1 Timothy, describe the lifestyle that God wanted Timothy to have?
4. Why is thanksgiving so important?
5. In reading chapter 5, try to "read between the lines." What foundational principles would you say are the source of Paul's teaching?
6. Looking at 1 Timothy, what do you learn about "godliness, wealth, fighting the good fight, and the desires and ways of false teachers?"



# Monday

## Read 1 Timothy 4



The enemy will do anything to stop people from entering into the Kingdom of God. If he cannot stop us from knowing the love of God, he will try to entice us to allow that love to grow cold, to doubt God, to encourage us to become so overworked so that we grow weary or so fanatical that others pay no attention to us. The enemy's attacks can be:

- Direct—taking the form of persecution;
- Accusatory—coming in the form of criticism that seeks to divide or remind us of a past sin or weakness, causing debilitation to us;
- Exploitation—enticing us to take a truth to such a narrow extreme that it becomes hard-line bigotry or on the opposite side, becoming emotionally dependent or indulging in activities in unhealthy ways;
- Counterfeit—trying to get us to believe something that looks like the truth but really is not;
- A temptation—and he knows our weaknesses better than we do; or
- In the form of demon possession.

The best way to counter these attacks is not to dwell on what the enemy might be doing, but instead to seek to be “an example for believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity” (v. 11). Sometimes the best way to control weeds in a lawn is to “overseed” with good seed. So also the best way to counter Satan’s attacks is to overseed with the things of God. Granted, it is important that we are able to recognize the enemy’s attacks, but the surest way of this happening is by keeping ourselves in the love of God (realizing the lengths He will go to provide for you and be in relationship with you), being strong in Jesus (recognizing He has forgiven you, and that there is nothing you can do to earn or lose your salvation), being filled with the Spirit (living in His power and not depending on your own abilities), being active in service and witness, by seeking to put right all broken relationships, taking everything to God in prayer and practicing a life of praise.

False teachings lead to false hopes. Continued discussions can lead to being paralyzed. Where is Satan able to bring defeat into your life? How might you overseed with the things of God?

Pray for those feeling defeated and discouraged.

# Tuesday

Read 1 Timothy 5:1-16; 1 John 3:16-18



Jesus called us to love one another, saying that men will know that we are His disciples by our love (John 13). This phrase has often been abused. We are called to love, to lay down our lives for another, and to help with material needs. But this is not an excuse for irresponsibility or ingratitude. Loving another person does not let any of us off the hook. Jesus died for our sin, but He also calls us to go and sin no more. He loves us the way we are, but He loves us too much to leave us as we are. He calls us to something more.

In Paul's day the State did not have a welfare program like our government has today. Women especially were vulnerable after their husbands died. Paul walks the proverbial fine line in this passage. We are called to take responsibility for our families and ourselves. It is only as a last resort that the church is to step in, but the church is called to step in. This is really a problem today when the needs can be so great and expectations unrealistically high. Helping someone does not necessarily mean we do what they expect. It means providing food, clothes, shelter, and companionship, but not necessarily keeping a home from going into foreclosure.

The answers are not easy. But we are called not to join an organization or to be a part of an institution; we are called to be a family. Families do not always get along, but they do stand by one another and help. With today's stress on the nuclear family, with divorce being what it is, with families living so far apart, with our ability to change churches and towns; we often make excuses for not loving or "being real" with our biological families let alone those we sit next to in the pew. Just because church membership is not stressed today does not mean that we are not responsible for helping other believers in Christ. We need to learn to respect each other as parents and siblings, lending a helping hand where we can, loving and respectfully correcting one another. The church is not an institution; it is the gathering together of brothers and sisters. How are we doing? How are you doing?

Pray for those in need.



# Wednesday

Read 1 Timothy 5:17-25; Galatians 6:1-10

Paul's letter to the Galatians was written 10-15 years before his letters to Timothy. The message though had not changed. Dealing with sin is challenging. When does one publicly rebuke another? When does one rebuke another in a one-on-one confrontation? When does one leave the issue with God?

Today's world of litigation does not make fulfilling the teachings of this passage any easier. Not to mention the fact that rather than being held accountable for our actions, many of us just move to another church or location if we are confronted about our disobedience of the Word. Often we ask the "elders" to do that which we ourselves are unwilling to do, saying: "Why doesn't the 'church' do something?" The real question is why do we not individually do something?

The answer to that question is often: "Well, who am I to...?" We are all so aware of our own shortcomings that we do not want to presume to be "judgmental" towards someone else. Not to mention the fact that our culture today places a high value on "accepting people as they are." Public rebukes today can lead to misunderstandings, backfiring and actually hurting the witness of the church.

As is often the case, we either end up being overly legalistic and harsh, or we take sin too lightly, making excuses for our actions. In this passage, Paul is not calling us to judge the world or to hold non-Christians accountable; he is calling us to hold each other (Christians) accountable. When we do hold someone accountable, though, we must first do a personal heart check. Why does this splinter in my brother or sister's eye stand out to me? Do I really have their well-being in mind? Am I playing God, or being used by God? Next, when we do go to someone to point out an action or attitude that needs correction, we must make sure that we do so in love. And finally, we need to make sure that we are willing to walk with them through the hard work of making a change.

Is there a sin in your life that needs to be dealt with? Is there a someone God is calling you to approach and have a honest conversation with? Pray for those dealing with addictions.

# Thursday

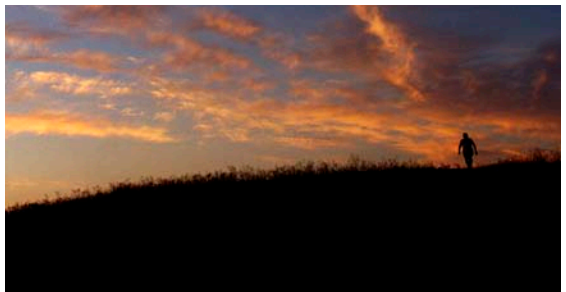
## Read 1 Timothy 6

Where do you find yourself in today's passage? Are you content? Do you find yourself engaged in endless conversations? Do you learn but never put into practice what you learn? Do you question sound teaching in order to keep from applying it to your life? Do you love money? Are you tempted to walk on that slippery slope of making excuses for dishonesty in financial areas? Are you honest with God as it concerns how you spend your money? Do you prayerfully open your checkbook up to His evaluation? Are you really more concerned about storing up treasures in heaven or treasures in this life? Why are you a Christ-follower—in order for Him to make this life better, or to live in gratitude to Him for what He has done for you and wants to do through you to save others?

Even though culturally some of the present issues have changed (i.e., slavery), the heart issues have not. There are many who would rather not hear sound instruction. Often we get into discussions in our small groups that deal with interpretations rather than application. Often when a teaching hits too close to home, we discount it rather than allowing the Spirit to change us, (For example, how many of us make excuses for people living together before they get married, or for couples who don't get married but live together in order to not have to give up a dead spouse's social security?)

Remember we are not saved by our good works or by leading a sinless life, but we are called to increasingly reflect Jesus. When we set the bar too low or when we start grading behavior on a curve, we might be saved, but others discount our witness and remain trapped in their sin. Many today settle for less than the best because we have found excuses for sin. We divorce our spouse rather than deal with our individual issues. We continue to indulge in a variety of ways rather than realizing that our indulgences will never fulfill us. When your neighbor looks at you, what do they see? Do they see people strikingly different because of your relationship with Jesus, or people who look very much like they do? Are your life's goals really all that different, and if so, in what ways?

Pray for those who are struggling financially.



# Friday

## Read 1 Timothy 6



Last summer the third Lausanne Conference on World Evangelism was held. This gathering of Christian world leaders meets periodically to discuss ways to take the love of Jesus to the world. At the first conference the leaders present discussed the growing gap between the rich and the poor. They developed a statement challenging us to live more simply. The statement read: “We resolve to renounce waste and oppose extravagance in personal living, clothing and housing, travel and church buildings. We also accept the distinction between necessities and luxuries, creative hobbies and empty status symbols, modesty and vanity, occasional celebrations and normal routine, and between the service of God and slavery to fashion. Where to draw the line requires conscientious thought and decision by us, together with members of our family.” These individuals understood this: That everything comes from God. That money cannot buy salvation. That riches do not last and money never satisfies.

With money, though, comes responsibility. We are to use what God has given us to care for those with less. We are not to show favoritism. We are to be content with what God has given us. Some baby steps we can take towards being better stewards are: Ask God to clarify your desires and remove inappropriate ones. Thank God for what he has provided. Claim God’s promises of provision in order to be more open to share. Determine what other spiritual needs God might be meeting in your life by not meeting physical needs. Look each day for opportunities to rely on Christ’s power and love. Remind yourself that God is in complete control and who He is.

Remember our desire for wealth is insatiable. Promises of wealth are illusory. The presence of wealth promotes anxiety, selfishness, self-centeredness, dissatisfaction, arrogance, uncertainty, and restless greed. On the other hand, trusting in God and living with an open hand to the needy leads to peace, service, satisfaction, humility, and contentment.

How are you doing? Does money control you? Where is your security in money? In money, relationships, or God?

Pray for the church services this weekend.



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