

Summary

This sermon focuses on the concept of pursuing God while fleeing from harmful things, using the pastor's marriage as an analogy. Just as he continues to pursue his wife after 35 years of marriage, Christians must continue pursuing God after salvation - it's not the finish line but the starting line. The message centers on 1 Timothy 6:11, which calls believers to flee certain things while actively pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness.

The pastor emphasizes that believers must see themselves as men and women of God, not allowing shame or past mistakes to define their identity. He warns against fleeing from false doctrine, prideful teachers, controversial teachings that don't lead to godliness, and the love of money. The key is not just running away from harmful things, but running toward God and the character traits He desires. As we pursue God like a treasure worth everything, our relationship with Him grows stronger, just as pursuing one's spouse strengthens a marriage.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today grateful for Your love and the opportunity to gather together to study Your Word. We ask that You open our hearts and minds to receive what You want to teach us today. Help us to see ourselves as You see us - as Your beloved sons and daughters. Remove any barriers of pride, shame, or distraction that might prevent us from hearing Your voice clearly. Holy Spirit, guide our discussion and help us to be honest and vulnerable with one another as we grow together. We surrender this time to You and ask for Your blessing upon our group. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one hobby or interest that you've pursued consistently over the years, and what keeps you motivated to continue with it?

Key Verses

1. 1 Timothy 6:11
2. 1 Timothy 6:9-10
3. Proverbs 16:18
4. James 4:6
5. 2 Timothy 4:3
6. Galatians 5:6
7. 1 Corinthians 11:1

Questions

1. The pastor says that accepting Jesus is the starting line, not the finish line. How does this perspective change the way we view our Christian walk?
2. What does it mean to see yourself as a 'man or woman of God,' and what might prevent us from embracing this identity?
3. The sermon mentions fleeing from doctrine that doesn't agree with Jesus' words. How can we discern between sound teaching and teaching that leads us away from godliness?
4. Why do you think Paul specifically warns against teachers who are 'puffed up with conceit'? How can we guard against pride in our own spiritual lives?
5. The pastor discusses the danger of chasing after sensational or controversial teaching. How can we maintain a healthy appetite for God's Word without falling into this trap?
6. What's the difference between having money and loving money? How can we use financial blessings in a way that honors God?
7. The sermon states that 'faith works through love.' Can you think of a practical example of how this plays out in daily life?
8. How can we practically 'pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness' in our current circumstances?

Life Application

This week, identify one specific thing you need to 'flee' from that may be hindering your relationship with God, and one specific character trait from 1 Timothy 6:11 (righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, or gentleness) that you will actively pursue. Create a practical plan for how you will flee the harmful thing and pursue the godly trait, and share your commitment with someone who can help hold you accountable.

Key Takeaways

1. Salvation is the starting line, not the finish line - we must continue pursuing God throughout our lives
2. Our identity as men and women of God should not be undermined by past mistakes or current struggles
3. We must flee from false doctrine, prideful teaching, controversial teachings that don't lead to godliness, and the love of money
4. True Christian living involves both fleeing harmful things and actively pursuing godly character traits
5. Faith works through love - strong faith is expressed by doing things for other people
6. God is the ultimate treasure worth pursuing, and as we pursue Him, our relationship with Him grows stronger

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for this time of fellowship and learning together. We are grateful that You see us as Your beloved children, men and women of God, regardless of our past or present struggles. Help us to have the courage to flee from the things that would harm our relationship with You, and give us the strength and wisdom to actively pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness. May our lives be a testimony of Your goodness and grace. As we go from this place, help us to live in such a way that we are worthy of being imitated, always pointing others to You. We commit to pursuing You as our ultimate treasure, knowing that as we do, our love for You will grow stronger. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.