

What Advice Would You Give To Your Younger Self?

1 Timothy 6:3-21

What advice would you give yourself in your 20s?

Paul gave Timothy advice that could help all of us.

What Does The Bible Say?

17 Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud... (1

Timothy 6:17a NLT)

Why is pride so destructive?

It puts us on a pedestal.

The Bible talks about three kinds of pride:

Racial pride (Luke 3:8)

Spiritual pride (Luke 18:9)

Pride of riches (1 Timothy 6)

Here is a test to see if pride has begun to root in your heart:

Do you quickly find fault in others?

Do you have a harsh spirit?

We care too much about what others think.

We become defensive when someone criticizes us.

We are desperate for attention.

We look down on specific groups of people.

How Can You Obey?

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23–24 NLT)

Confession is good for the soul.

What Does The Bible Say?

17 Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18 Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. 19 By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life. (1 Timothy 6:17–19 NLT)

Paul did not tell those rich in this world to divest themselves of their wealth but not to place their hope in it.

... and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. (1 Timothy 6:17b NLT)

Don't trust your worldly possessions.

19 “Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. 21 Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. (Matthew 6:19–21 NLT)

How Can You Obey?

Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. (1 Timothy 6:17c NLT)

Enjoy what God gives you.

18 Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. 19 By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life. (1 Timothy 6:18–19 NLT)

Employ what God gives you.

Be generous in giving to the ministry.

What Does The Bible Say?

20 Timothy, guard what God has entrusted to you. Avoid godless, foolish discussions with those who oppose you with their so-called knowledge. 21 Some people have wandered from the faith by following such foolishness. May God's grace be with you all. (1 Timothy 6:20–21 NLT)

Guard what you know.

Avoid foolish ideas about God and life.

Do you want to speak, or do you want to be heard?

How Can You Obey?

Examine your attitude.

Examine how you use your money.

Examine your doctrine.

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Explore:

While there were many characteristics for which Paul could condemn the false teachers, here he condemned them for their greed. Alongside their false doctrines came a desire for material gain that was unspiritual and unhealthy for the church. The apostle instructed Timothy to teach sound doctrine, and to watch out for false teachers and their destructive teaching and greed.

Believers Are Content With Godliness and Guard Against Greed (1 Timothy 6:3-16)

In chapter 6, Paul returned to the subject of false teachers he had first introduced in chapter 1. He gave Timothy some clues for identifying false teachers as well as some of their personal characteristics. In verse 3, as a doctor would diagnose a sick patient, Paul assessed the condition of these false teachers. The apostle addressed three specific issues. First, they were guilty of teaching a different and false gospel. In this case, the apostle didn't mention a specific teaching. History shows us that false teachings will abound in every generation and will continue to be passed along. Second, these teachings did not agree with the sound teachings of Jesus. This is always the standard by which church leaders can evaluate teachings. If it does not line up with Jesus' teachings or if it contradicts His teachings, it must be rejected. Finally, they refused to submit to teaching that would lead to godliness. The teachings of Scripture always support healthy, godly living.

Verses 4 and 5 expose the motivation for these false teachers. They were conceited or puffed up with arrogance, leading to a lack of understanding. These individuals also had an unhealthy obsession with controversies and dissension. The reality is that when an individual craves controversy and arguing, he or she is spiritually unhealthy. Paul also revealed the natural effects of such cravings. These effects include envy, a contentious disruption of relationships or strife, malicious talk or slander toward others, evil suspicions, and constant friction with others. These are the byproducts of those who have a corrupt mind and do not understand the truth. Their ultimate motive is usually their own selfish gain. In other words, while they were divisive, splitting hairs, and causing controversy, their primary goal was to call attention to themselves, to advance their own personal cause and their own material gain. They may have promoted themselves as “godly,” seeking to draw in people who would

support them and their teaching financially. Sadly, this same type of motivation exists today and must be addressed.

This led Paul into some observations regarding right and wrong attitudes toward material things. We develop the right attitude when we realize God never intended true happiness to come through material possessions. After all, godliness does not guarantee financial gain, but it brings a greater spiritual gain or profit when accompanied by contentment with what one has (verse 6). The term contentment refers to an inner sufficiency that comes with being satisfied with what we have in Christ. It keeps us at peace in spite of what is happening around us. It is this same concept that Paul wrote about near the end of his life in Philippians 4:11. Paul understood the value of contentment coming from the heart and not from his financial situation, whether good or bad.

The fact that we bring nothing in and take nothing out of this world teaches us this lesson (verse 7). The Old Testament hero Job grasped this idea and expressed the same sentiment in Job 1:21. In light of this principle, Christians ought to be satisfied if they have the essentials of life, such as food and clothing (verse 8).

The wrong attitude toward material things is a burning, enslaving desire to have them. All kinds of wickedness come from people's desires to be rich, even to the point that some wander from the faith (verses 9-10). Paul referred to these ensuing dangers not only as temptation, but also as a snare or a trap that could lead to unhealthy desires resulting in ruin and destruction. God's people, on the other hand, must focus on living godly lives, content with what God supplies. They must realize that true spiritual gain is found in pursuing godliness and contentment rather than riches and possessions.

Paul gave an underlying principle in verse 10. The love of money is a root or source of all kinds of evil. It is the act of coveting that best summarizes and encapsulates the “love of money.” This type of craving, according to the apostle, had caused some to deny the faith and bring on themselves much pain and sorrow. God’s people should focus on remaining content with God’s provisions for them.

There are much higher and nobler things for people to seek after than material wealth. Unlike those who long for more and more money and possessions, God’s people are to pursue the things and ways of God. Verse 11 begins with a negative admonition—avoid or shun the selfish attitudes portrayed in the previous verses. There is also a positive admonition, however. Timothy, as a follower of Christ, was to chase after or pursue godly virtues that have eternal value. This includes godliness or practical holiness and conduct, faith or faithfulness, sacrificial love that seeks to give and not gain, patience or endurance through the

challenges of life, and meekness (or gentleness), which is simply defined as power under control. We must learn to flee from wrong things, earnestly pursuing and following the right things, and keep active in the contest of faith until our great and glorious Lord Jesus comes again and victory is finally declared.

In verse 12, the apostle used the language of athletic contests or warfare to encourage the young pastor. Timothy was to fight the good fight or, more literally, keep on fighting. The term described a person who was straining and giving his best to advance and promote the faith. This is how Paul described his own life in 2 Timothy 4:7. It must be remembered that this “fight” is not among believers or with unbelievers, as the false teachers would engage in, but was instead between the follower of Christ and the spiritual forces of darkness. In fact, Timothy was admonished by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:24-25 to be kind and gentle even in his dealings with unbelievers.

Timothy was also instructed to take hold of or be concerned with the eternal life he had experienced and was called to proclaim to others. Timothy already possessed this eternal life, a fact that was confirmed at his conversion and his ensuing baptism in the presence of many witnesses.

Repeatedly in this letter the aged apostle challenged the young pastor. Verse 13 provides the strongest of these admonitions as Paul referenced the crucifixion of Jesus and the Lord's testimony before Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:11; John 18:33-37). The charge to Timothy was to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the return of Jesus Christ. The term commandment probably referred to the encapsulated body of teachings of the doctrine of Christ as Lord and Savior. It might also refer to the specific charges and instructions Paul had given him. The idea of being found spotless and blameless is a common concept given by both Paul and Peter in their New Testament writings (Colossians 1:21-23; 2 Peter 3:14-18).

This section ends with an inspiring doxology to God, a practice that was common for the apostle (verses 15-16). This particular doxology may have been a well-known expression or possibly an early Christian hymn from which Paul was quoting. God is the cause and object of all things, the ultimate Ruler of the universe, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and the only eternal One. Knowing these things to be true, we worship Him.

Explore:

Believers Are Generous, Trusting in God Rather Than Riches (1 Timothy 6:17-21)

The apostle had previously dealt with those who deeply desired riches, often to the point of their own demise. In spite of the warnings given about material wealth, however, Paul did not mean rich people cannot be saved or are out of God's will.

However, Christians who are rich by the world's standards must

be careful to maintain an attitude of humility in the Christian fellowship (verse 17). They were not to be arrogant as if their wealth was deserved, and they were not to set their hopes on money as if this were the source of security and true satisfaction. Instead, they were to set their hope on God, the one who provided all that was needed for true contentment and enjoyment.

Wealthy believers are to use their wealth for the benefit of those in need and for the advancement of God's kingdom, knowing their ultimate reward in Heaven is much better than material comforts on this earth (verses 18-19). The laying up or storing up of treasure (verse 19) certainly alluded to the teachings of Jesus regarding this very subject (See Matthew 6:19-21). There is a stark contrast between the individual whose life is propped up by and dependent on material resources, and the believer who understands the beauty of resources used in a way that is honoring to God and becomes a blessing to others.

In all of this Timothy (and all believers) was to continue to guard against false teachers and their false doctrines (verses 20-21). He would accomplish this by guarding the deposit entrusted to him, namely the gospel, and by avoiding irreverent babbling and contradictions of false knowledge. Falsehood was abounding throughout Ephesus and the world in which Timothy was living. As he “guarded” the truth, he would prevent others from swaying from the truth and embracing false knowledge that could not save.

Explore:

The topic of money or riches was a common theme of the Lord Jesus. In the book of Matthew, the Lord talked about money 109 times. In the book of Mark, He talked about it 57 times; in the book of Luke He talked about it 94 times; and in the book of John He talked about it 88 times. And, interestingly, according

to one study, the Lord talked about money five times more than He talked about any other subject in the Bible. Beyond what Jesus Himself said, this same topic surfaces in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Consider what the Bible says about material possessions and wealth from the following passages.

- In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus warned about the folly of laying up treasures on earth as compared to laying up treasures in Heaven. He went on to assert in verse 24 that a person cannot serve both God and money.

- In the parable of the soils in Matthew 13:22, Jesus explained that the deceitfulness of riches is like thorns that choke the word and make one unfruitful.

- Matthew 19:24 quotes the Lord teaching that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven.
- In Luke 12:15, there is a strong admonition for the believer to guard his heart and mind against covetousness.
- Proverbs 15:16 contains Solomon's assessment, from experience, that having a little alongside the fear of the Lord is better than having great treasure along with the potential trouble that it can bring.

Explore:

Since Ephesians gives no hint of his release from prison, as do Philippians (1:19–26) and Philemon (v. 22), it is reasonable to think that he wrote it in the early part of his stay, or about AD 60. This would have been when Paul was kept under guard in rental quarters (Acts 28:30). Following his release he traveled, wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was arrested again, wrote 2 Timothy, and was martyred in Rome.

Harold W. Hoehner, “Ephesians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 614.

Explore:

Timothy was the son of a Greek father and Jewish mother (Acts 16:1). No mention is made of his father being a Christian, but his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were both known for

their sincere faith (2 Tim. 1:5). Timothy was no doubt living at Lystra when Paul visited that city on his first missionary journey (cf. Acts 14:6; 16:1). Whether or not Paul led Timothy to Christ cannot be known with certainty. At any rate Timothy already knew and believed the Old Testament Scriptures, thanks to his mother and grandmother (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15), and Paul took him on as a promising protégé. Paul thus became like a spiritual father to the young man, referring to him as “my true son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2) and “my dear son” (2 Tim. 1:2; cf. Phil. 2:22).

Timothy’s promise for the ministry was recognized early (1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:5). Thus Paul took him on as a companion and he became one of the apostle’s most trustworthy fellow-laborers (cf. Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 16:10; Phil. 2:19–22; 1 Thes. 3:2). He also became Paul’s faithful representative and messenger (Acts 19:22; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 1:19; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thes. 3:2, 6). Six of Paul’s epistles include Timothy in the salutations (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thes. 1:1; 2 Thes.

1:1; Phile. 1; see the chart, “Paul’s Introduction to His Epistles” at Rom. 1:1). Timothy had become so dear to Paul that in the apostle’s last message was a touching appeal for Timothy to join him in his final days of imprisonment (2 Tim. 1:4; 4:9, 21).

After being released from his first Roman imprisonment Paul, with Timothy by his side, evidently revisited some of the churches in Asia, including Ephesus. On his departure from Ephesus, Paul left Timothy behind to provide leadership to the congregation. Then after an interval Paul wrote Timothy a letter, 1 Timothy, urging him on in that ministry.

Timothy may have been by nature somewhat passive, timid, retiring, and easily intimidated (cf. 2 Tim. 1:7). Thus Paul repeatedly spurred him into action (1 Tim. 1:3; 4:11; 5:7; 6:2; 2 Tim. 3:14; 4:2, 5). He was to let nothing, including his relative youth (1 Tim. 4:12) stand in the way of his performance of duty (2 Tim. 2:1–7; 4:5). Like a good soldier he was to “fight the

good fight” (1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12), aggressively protecting and propagating the gospel, using the full range of his gifts (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 729–730.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

1. Believers Are Content With Godliness and Guard Against Greed.
2. Believers Are Generous, Trusting in God Rather Than Riches.

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the

Bible: Likely written around AD 62-64, the apostle Paul wrote to the young leader Timothy to instruct him on how to lead the church at Ephesus. This section of the letter gave instruction on how to deal with false teachers and what to pray for.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not

mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ-followers. When they do, Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 5

What is the difference between a Christian missionary and a western missionary?

Question 2 of 5

What are some examples of greed, selfishness, and materialism in our culture?

Question 3 of 5

Why is pride so destructive?

Question 4 of 5

How can we be generous in giving to the ministry?

Question 5 of 5

How do you know if your doctrine is correct?