

1Tim 24-06-26a

Greetings, it is Wednesday night here at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We're moving rapidly forward toward the conclusion of First Timothy. We are in chapter six, we're closing in on the final thoughts.

We're picking up in verse 11 and gathering an understanding of Paul's final exhortation to Timothy, having detailed some of the problems that afflict those who take leadership roles in the church and then run amok. He is exhorting Timothy in the positive direction to flee these things. And if we're fleeing one thing, we should be running toward another and not running aimlessly and randomly.

And so he has a detailed list of things that we should all be pursuing. And that's where we pick up tonight in verse 11 and 12. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of study and our fellowship.

We'll begin. Father, we are so grateful. It is such a wonderful thing that you have given us very explicit and clear guidance as to how you would have us live and represent the Lord Jesus as his body on this earth.

We don't have to guess, we don't have to wander, we don't have to look anywhere other than to the truth of your word and the presence and power of your Holy Spirit to explain it to us and to exhort and encourage us in it. We pray that as we look at this portion tonight, that we will find it helpful and meaningful in the specific circumstance each one of us faces so that we can redeem the time, we can grow in grace and knowledge of the and be equipped and prepared for every good work both now and in the ages to come. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Reading our passage beginning in verse 11, you, oh man of God, flee these things. Primarily, it is the desire for things that are earthly and human and material.

These ideas of desire is not just a bad, evil desire that should never exist. It is desire that is pointed in the wrong direction. And when you see in verse 10, the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness.

This is actually a word that is used often in a positive sense. This can be a healthy desire. And so you find it is important as with faith.

There's lots of different kinds of faith. And the merit of faith, we like to say, is in its object. You can have a wonderful, strong, healthy, dedicated faith, but if you have placed it in a faulty object, it doesn't end up conferring blessing or value or a wonderful future.

Trusting in the wrong things, cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm as a heart that departs from the Lord as the object of faith. Same thing here. This is not an evil lust in and of itself.

And that's why I don't think greediness is really a good translation in verse 10. You might scratch that out as I have in my Bible. The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their desire.

And this, I think, encourages us to look at all of our desires. We say, well, I'm not greedy. And we depart from the thought of the verse.

But we can stray from the faith in our desire. And we say, well, this is not an evil desire. I desire to be closer to my family.

I desire to provide for those who depend on me. I desire to achieve or to accomplish or to finish what I've started or to advance in some direction in a worthy cause. And what's wrong with that? In a vacuum, there's nothing wrong with that.

But if it detracts from, deflects from, distracts from our faith in God and we stray from the faith in the pursuit of this desire, this is why it is so important to cultivate moderation. It's fine to want to have a nice garden or to have a shiny car. I ran my truck after many weeks of accumulating mud and dust out here.

I ran it through the coin-operated car wash and it just gleams like a new coin. It's so pretty to look at. But I know guys who had a classic car and would spend hours while their family is inside or in the backyard doing other things.

They're out in the driveway buffing and polishing and using touch-up paint for tiny nicks and carefully removing bug juice from the front and the edges and the backs of the mirrors. And it can be that a desire that is harmless and not in any way evil in and of itself becomes that when it takes the place of our stewardship of time that ought to be in a positive direction. And so if it causes us to stray from the faith, and many times stray is like a stray dog.

It didn't intend to run away and get lost. It just got busy chasing something or following a sniffing trail and it looks up and around and says, wait a minute, I don't know where I am. It isn't intentional.

It is from lack of attention. So we have to watch our desires. And I don't think none of us would say, you know, I'm really probably the greediest person I know.

I just find myself being greedy all the time, but we can find ourselves desirous. I really want to get to a certain place in a certain area or a certain relationship or a certain pursuit. And I just wake up in the morning thinking about it.

I go to sleep at night, figuring how I'm going to pursue it tomorrow. And that can cause us to stray from the faith if we don't keep them in perspective. So that's verse 10, because what is the result? If we let ourselves be guided by desire that causes us to stray from the faith, we are going to be pierced through with many puncture wounds.

So we, as people of God, we can just put ourselves in Timothy's place here. You, O person of God. This is an interesting term, by the way, this idea, man of God.

This is a kind of a, almost a technical designation. Here's a little pop quiz for you. Who can you think of in the Bible that is called man of God, explicitly called that is one of their descriptions in the scripture? Who can you think of? So-and-so, man of God.

Okay. Time's up. I'll help you out.

I would not have been able to answer all of these either. The first is Moses. Moses, the man of God.

He is called that in both Deuteronomy 33.1. Remember his Moses swan song in Deuteronomy 33. It's introduced, this is the blessing with which Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death. I suspect that this closing section of Deuteronomy was probably written by Joshua, by Yeshua.

But he is also called this in the Psalms. And in Psalm 90, the superscript of it also calls Moses, the man of God. David himself is called man of God in 2 Chronicles 8.14. According to the order of David, his father Solomon appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, Levites for their duties to praise and serve before the priests as the duty of each day required and the gatekeepers by their divisions at each gate for so David, the man of God had commanded.

You find Elijah is so called in 2 Kings 1.9. And the reason I'm bringing these up is not just to provide a list, but think about the individuals and about what God was able to accomplish in and through them. Moses, David, Elijah, being a person of God creates the potential to be used by God in mighty ways. It might not be for an entire nation as these individuals were, but we can be a wonderful blessing to those in our periphery.

God can work in us and through us to dispense his grace, his provision, his protection, his loving kindness, and to be the agent, to be the conduit through which the grace of God can flow in that way is to be a man of God, to be a person of God, equally so in this age for women. And you remember there are some unnamed prophets who are called a man of God when you get to 1 Samuel. In fact, this would be a great trivia question.

If I was making my own Bible trivia, there is an overlooked man of God. He's nameless, faceless, no history, no future, but there is a prophetic word delivered in the second chapter of 1 Samuel to Eli. Remember Eli is going to take on board little Samuel.

But I had forgotten this until I was researching the man of God topic. But in 1 Samuel 2.27, a man of God came to Eli. So a man of God is more often a prophet.

Moses is a prophet, David is a prophet, Elijah is a prophet. What is Eli? He's a priest, right? So the prophet comes to the priest. A man of God came to Eli and said to him,

Thus says the Lord, Did I not clearly reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? Who is Eli's father? Goes all the way back to Aaron and the house of Aaron's and Moses, their brothers.

But I had forgotten that there was a man of God in the area. And you wonder, well, why didn't God have Hannah deliver Samuel to the man of God instead of to Eli? Why does he grow up near the Ark of the Covenant and the priestly functions? Because is Samuel a priest or a prophet? He's a prophet. He's not a priest.

He's not a Levite. Yet he presides over sacrifices. Remember Saul gets in trouble because he didn't wait for Samuel to show up and do the sacrifice.

It's very interesting anticipation of the Lord Jesus, who is not a Levite either. And yet he is qualified to offer himself as the perfect sacrifice. And there are ways in which Samuel foreshadows in his leadership of Israel prior to the monarchy.

And he fulfills the functions without taking the title of both prophet, priest, and king. In any case, is it interesting that Paul addresses Timothy, you, oh man of God, flee these things. And in New Testament days, we find that all of us can, and I think this is an indication of the significance of our faithfulness.

When you say man of God, my goodness, these are the pantheon of great believers in the Old Testament. And yet in the New Testament, not just here, but you look at 1 John 2.20, where John in writing to his recipients, he says, you have an anointing from the Holy One. You have an anointing from the Holy One.

You have the Holy Spirit and you know all things. And Peter picks up this thought in 1 Peter 2.9, you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. So the upshot of this is that we can be man of God in this sense.

If you look in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 6.18, those who sin against their own body are in view and we are to flee idolatry, flee youthful lusts. In 1 Corinthians 6.18, flee sexual immorality. 2 Timothy 2.22, flee youthful lusts.

1 Corinthians 10.14, flee idolatry. Covetousness is idolatry. Covetousness is in view here, pursuing a desire instead of godliness.

So man of God, flee. If you want to be of service and usefulness to the Father, we have a decision to make. He's not going to use us in spite of ourselves.

It isn't going to be an automatic, reflexive, instinctive change in us. We have to follow these commands to flee one thing and pursue something else. Flee these things above, particularly being distracted and deflected by our own desires.

And our desires, in a way, are like conscience. These last several weeks, we've looked at conscience and how we have a sense of rightness that tends to guide us. Well, we also tend to respect our own desires.

And we say, well, this must be legitimate because I want it. My oft-quoted reference to Debbie Boone in You Light Up My Life, it can't be wrong if it feels so right. One of the most atrocious lyrics ever to be put into a song.

It can often be wrong if it feels right. And we have to be suspicious of our desires and examine them and curtail them when they are leading us astray and causing us to stray from the faith. So flee these things, identify them as a danger.

We typically flee something that is a danger. We had a thunderstorm that swept in in the early morning hours here. And we have a very brave, large 100-pound dog here.

But Thunder, she doesn't cower. She doesn't cringe. But she will come over and lay on the floor as close to me as she can get.

And she figures there's safety in numbers. If something's going to happen, I want to be next to my people. And so I opened my eyes hearing the thunderclaps and saw Chloe right there next to me.

She was calm, but she was near. And she doesn't want to be out where anything can get her. She wants to be with the pack.

And to flee things that might be dangerous or pose a threat means to go toward something else. Chloe comes to me. We should move toward the Lord.

We should pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Now, righteousness. We talked about this a few weeks ago.

I just want to emphasize it because the misapprehension about this word, dikaiosune, is rife, especially in progressive Christianity. They want to go to Matthew chapter 5 and say, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. They want to change this to justice, and specifically social justice.

And I did a detailed study on this. I'm not going to share all the agonizing details with you, except to say that when you look at the Old Testament concepts of tzedek, t-s-e-d-e-q, that's Hebrew word for righteousness, justice is mishpat. There's an m in front of it, the maim, which means we've turned a verb into a noun.

And the verb is shafat. Shafat is to judge. And mishpat, mishafat, is what comes from what the judge does.

So that's the word for justice. You have tzedek for righteousness, mishpat for justice. And there's also a word for justice in the Old Testament that comes from dean.

Remember in Genesis 6, my spirits will not dean, dan, judge. And there's a derivative there as well. When the Septuagint uses Greek from near the time of Christ to translate the Old Testament, it routinely translates tzedek with dikaios and dikaiosune, which is what we have here.

And it translates justice, mishpat, with a different word. And it is the word for like righteousness comes from a verb. And so there is a distinction there.

Righteousness is what we have here. It doesn't say flee these things and pursue social justice. It's righteousness.

Now, justice, dealing fairly and looking out for the little guy and those who are oppressed and in distress in various ways is a part of righteousness. But to limit it and to circumscribe the justice portion, if you're personally righteous, aren't you going to be kind and looking out for those who are oppressed and have a need? That is one of many expressions of personal righteousness. But if you say, well, I want people to pay more attention to social justice, so I'm going to retranslate the word of God.

And every time I find righteousness, I'm going to change it to social justice. What you've done is carve out one part and leave these others undone. This is what Jesus accuses the Pharisees.

You're tithing your spices and you left off the greater part of the law. And by the way, one of those greater parts is justice. So righteousness and justice, justice is a subset, one component out of many comprising personal righteousness.

So don't let people limit this down. And well, you know, I gave some food to the poor the other day, so I'm righteous. If you're righteous, that may be something you had the opportunity to do and the privilege to do.

But your righteousness is going to permeate many, many areas of life and people who want to vindicate themselves on the basis of, but I do charity. I give once a month to this or that or the other good cause, let themselves off the hook for righteousness. So to pursue righteousness is the many orb'd, many faceted things that come from the word of God and the spirit of God.

That is the entire list of the fruit of the spirit. That is all of the one another's summed up in love one another. You can't love one another if you don't have personal righteousness.

So pursuing righteousness encompasses all of these things that we've seen in this first Timothy study in earlier chapters that comprise a healthy spiritual life pursue righteousness. And this is the title of the list. What is righteousness? Well, it includes godliness, which we've done a detailed study of faith, love.

You know what faith is. Merit of faith is in the object as we've already seen. But what would you expect given our many studies of the triad of Christian virtues, if he says faith, love, what would you expect the next one to be? Hope, right? But instead, you have patience.

This is hupo mone. Hypo, hupo means under and meno is to remain. You remain under.

A burden settles on you. You've got a load on your shoulders and you remain. You continue to carry it.

Well, what is the upshot here? This idea is that hope and patience are very closely linked. Faith, love and endurance belong together. You can put in the margin here Titus 2.2 where Paul says, talking to Titus about how to counsel and guide and lead the older men in his congregation.

Older men should be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, and in patience. Solid. And these three are often found together.

So Titus 2.2 is one place. Second Timothy 3.10, you have carefully followed my doctrine, my manner of life, my purpose, my faith, my patience, my love, my perseverance. Faith and love to be meaningful, to be effectual, to let them have their full orb'd sway and effect in our lives requires patience.

The trial of your faith produces patience. Let patience have its perfect work in you that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. Our faith, our love, if they are sporadic, if it's like an engine that's sputtering and spitting and never really catching and running, without patience, our faith and love are greatly diminished.

First Thessalonians 1.3. The three passages to put next to this verse in the margin of your Bible, Titus 2.2, Second Timothy 3.10, and this one, First Thessalonians 1.3. Paul is writing to Thessalonica and he says, I remember without ceasing your work of faith, your labor of love, and your patience of hope. This is the tie back to our triad of Christian virtues. Faith is associated with work.

James does this beautifully. Faith without works is dead, being fruitless, being dead. So Paul says in First Thessalonians 1.3, I remember without ceasing your work of faith, your labor of love.

This is a different kind of work. You have ergos and you have various words for efforting. Work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope.

Hope and patience, they're inextricably linked. One of the ways we become patient and maintain our patience is through hope. I can endure because I'm waiting for something at the end of this time of trial, this time of having a heavy burden that requires endurance.

So be sure and put First Thessalonians 1.3 there. Our triad of Christian virtues, you remember this in Colossians 1.4 and 5, writing to the saints at Colossae, Paul says, we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, your love for all the saints, and because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven. And here you have the objects of these attributes given.

So your faith is directed to Christ. Your love is toward the saints in this case, and your hope is that which is laid up in heaven, which you heard of in the word of truth of the gospel. First Corinthians 13.13, Paul tells the Corinthians, now abide faith, hope, and love these three, but the greatest of these is love, because love is the measure by which you know if you've got the others.

Endurance is the fruit of hope as we saw in First Thessalonians 1.3. And whether we are enduring hardship of our own making or persecution from the outside, we ask from God the grace to bear up under adversities and to remain steadfast. In First Thessalonians 5.14, Paul says, we urge you brothers, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, exercise patience toward everyone. Patience.

Some are disorderly, and we have to be patient as we admonish. You know, you're creating a disruption, you're causing division, you're creating a detriment to the fellowship here. Encourage the faint-hearted.

Look up, brother, our redemption draweth nigh. Help the weak. And many times helping the weak requires patience.

So in all of these, Paul says, exercise patience toward everyone. In Second Thessalonians 1.4, Paul says, we on our part boast of you in the churches of God, of your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions under which you are holding up. It gladdens the Apostle's heart.

He praises God and gives thanksgiving to God for these believers who are enduring and maintaining their faith in persecution and affliction. Same thing in Second Thessalonians 3.5. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ. The love of God and the endurance of Christ.

And this is motivation to persist, to endure. And of course, the love we've already seen replete in First Timothy. First Timothy 1.5, the goal of the commandment, love.

In verse 14 of chapter one, the grace of our Lord is exceedingly abundant with faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus. First Timothy 2.15, the woman will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with self-control. Holiness and self-control, it's another description of endurance.

4.12, let no one despise your youth. Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Second Timothy 1.7, God has not given us a spirit of

fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Second Timothy 1.13, hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me in faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus. You begin to detect a pattern here, don't you? Faith and love, so many other things attach. Endurance, holding fast, hope, patience.

Second Timothy 2.22, flee youthful lusts, pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. A very parallel passage to ours. It sounds like ours, but this is Second Timothy 2.22, flee youthful desires, but pursue righteousness, pursue faith, pursue love, pursue peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

What's the goal of our instruction? Love from a pure heart, good conscience, genuine faith. Very consistent message. Second Timothy 3.10, you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, perseverance.

Second Timothy 3.10, same idea. This is the credo. These are given to Timothy in both of these letters to exhort and pass on and impress on us.

All of us need these. This is our focus. This is our measure.

This is our mission. You can measure how we are doing in terms of a healthy Christian life by looking for these attributes. To examine ourselves and see if we are in the faith means to look for these.

It is so easy to do what progressive Christianity has inadvertently, I think, and unconsciously fallen into, which is the same trap that has ever been the case. My efforts and what I do and what I accomplish, this ought to please the Lord. It goes back as far as Cain bringing his tossed salad as a sacrifice.

There is a designated way to please God, and it isn't growing vegetables and cultivating them and weeding them and taking pride in them and watering them and then bringing them forth and saying, look, Lord, here's the fruit of my labors. It is to sacrifice a lamb and say, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. I was thinking about the lamb.

This is our closing thought before the break. There's been a lot of noise in the air in recent years that the lamb in Revelation, Jesus is the lamb as it had been slain, and that this is a clue that Revelation basically shouldn't be taken seriously, that it's not really the wrath of God because this is not the land of the tribe of Judah coming and tearing things with his fangs and shredding them with his claws and wreaking vengeance and judgment on the world. It's a lamb, and you're supposed to get the joke that he's harmless.

He's there. He's just calling you away from the self-destructiveness of sin, and you bring your judgment on yourself, and he's not perpetrating any of the things that come from

when he breaks the seals. But think about this.

Why did God choose a lamb to be the sacrifice for Passover? The morning and evening sacrifice, two of these a day were sacrificed in Israel. Morning and evening, it is a lamb. Why? What does a lamb represent? They are the sweetest, cutest, cuddliest-looking little woolly animals.

You can go down here to Shepherd's Cross just a few miles away, and they've got sheep and they've got lambs, and those lambs are heart-rendingly cute. And to take a lamb and to slaughter it is to take away, in a very poignant and effective picture, the future. It's not a sheep that has lived and, well, okay, you've had two or three years here.

We've got other sacrifices that do that. You can bring a ram or you can bring a bullock as a sacrifice. But sacrificing the lamb, it is cut off well before it has come to represent its maturity and produce its wool and do the things that it's going to do as an adult.

Early in its career, it is cut off and cut short. And the injustice and the tragedy of that is in view with it not being able to fulfill its destiny as an adult sheep, if you will, because sin has interrupted that process. And God purposely chose the lamb in those particular sacrifices to emphasize that there is a normal progression of that animal that is cut short, and it is strictly because of the sin of someone else.

The lamb didn't sin. It is sacrificing its life and its blood on behalf of someone else who has sinned. And the Lord Jesus Christ, as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, in the words of John the Baptist, is in view.

So when you have the wrath of the lamb in revelation, be aware. That is where the injustice and the tragedy of willful sin is brought full circle. And God's condemnation and indignation and wrath are going to be poured out.

The vials of God's judgment, the seals that are breaking, the thunders that are cracking, the trumpets that are blowing in revelation are about the lamb and about mankind's rejection of God's provision of salvation through him. And the wrath of the lamb isn't supposed to be sort of a tongue in cheek inside joke that he's really harmless. It is a pointed reference to the tragic injustice of our sin and what is required to overcome it on God's part.

And he is rightfully angry, and he is rightfully going to rain down a series of judgments on the world to rectify that wrong and to pass judgment and vengeance. Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord.

I will repay. I'm not going to stand back and let you just hurt yourself by your sin. This is the progressive view of judgment.

Well, a little side note there as we go to the break. When we come back, we'll pick up

here looking at these essential elements that should define us. And this is the measure we should use to know whether or not we are living an active and healthy and fruitful Christian life.