

1 Timothy

I. Introduction

A. **1 Timothy 6:1-5** . . . All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. [2] Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles. [3] If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, [4] he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, [5] and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

1. **Vs 1-2** are not just commands to Christian slaves, they are statements about the mindset, attitudes, and a way of life that we are called to have as Christians – a mindset, attitudes, and way of life that are seen as nonsense and irrational to the world around us.
2. **Vs 3-5** may seem like a derogatory attack on anyone who doesn't agree with an accurate understanding of God's word. Yet, in spite of its harsh words, it represents a truth that no one can escape. And that truth is: If you are not deliberately pursuing godliness, then the wrong thinking, sinful desires, and selfish interests that you allow to remain in your life will compel you to speak and behave in ways that are contrary to godliness.
3. Therefore, as we look at these two portions of scripture, consider how you can apply them in moving forward in living a godly life.

B. Pray

II. Christian mindset, attitudes, and behavior in the face of mistreatment

A. [2] Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved.

1. We looked at **vs 1** last Sunday which is why we are beginning with **vs 2** today. As I mentioned last Sunday, the relationship between a

- slave owner and the slave is not one of equality, but rather inequality. The role of the slave is not one of freely given service or appropriately compensated service, but one of forced service. Therefore, the relationship between a slave owner and a slave is rarely one of love and respect.
- a. This was probably also true when both the master and the slave were Christians – and attending the same church.
 - b. As we saw last Sunday, the motive for regarding one’s master or boss as worthy of all honor is to make God, the Christian life, and the Christian message look good – so that no one can have just cause to speak against them.
 - c. Here in **vs 2**, the Christian slave, or in our day, a Christian worker is not to think it is okay to talk back, argue with, slack off, or in any other way be disobedient or show disrespect to a boss, just because he is a fellow Christian.
 - d. Instead, our behavior is to manifest the kind of mindset, attitude, and love that we would show a dearly loved family member, for that is what a fellow believer is to be to us – a dearly loved member of the family of God.
2. The challenge we face is that when in a conflict or difficult relationship or an unwanted situation with another person, we are prone to believe that if the other person would change for the better (*and when I say for the better, I mean for the better as defined by what I believe is better – which is often influenced by what I think is better for me*), then all would be well.
- a. Though this is the most common response by people everywhere, it is not an honest or realistic response, which is why it is not to be the Christian’s response.
 - b. Our response is to be based on three facts:
 - (1) **First Fact:** The only person we can change for the better – is ourselves.
 - (2) **Second Fact:** When we take responsibility for our part in a dispute, conflict, or relationship damaging situation – no matter how small or minor, we are showing good faith toward working out the differences, toward being fair, toward seeking true peace, and toward affirming our love for the other person.
 - (3) **Third Fact:** Though God never wrongs us in any way or has any need to change for the better, we are to model our mindset, attitudes, and behavior after Him and His dealings

with us when we are dealing with those around us – even when they are being unloving, unfair, unkind, or doing anything else that damages our relationship with them.

3. Therefore, when your frustration level with another person is high, or you have been deeply hurt, or the misbehavior of the other person seems unending, it is probable you don't want to be reminded that as a Christian, the responsibility is on you to continue living according to the beliefs and values of a Christian, to continue behaving like a Christian, and to love as a Christian is to love – in spite of the other person's behavior.
 - a. I know that remaining godly in the face of mistreatment can be challenging. I know it seems unfair. And for many, it seems too hard – after all, we are only human. Besides, behaving as a Christian ought rarely changes the other person for the better.
 - b. So why would we, as Christians, do what is loving, right, and good when our spouse or adult child or neighbor or co-worker or boss is doing what is selfish, hurtful, frustrating, and wrong?
 - c. I believe the first and foremost answer is: because this is how God deals with us regardless of what we have done or are doing. And if we are grateful God deals with us this way, we ought to deal with others this same way.
 - d. Added to this is the fact that godliness makes the world better, even if no one notices or no one else changes.
 - e. And finally, doing what is loving and right changes me in ways that brings me into God's abundant life – a life of inward peace, joy, added blessings from God, and intimate fellowship with God.
4. Jesus addressed this matter of doing what is right regardless of what those around us do.
 - a. **Matthew 5:38-42**, “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ [39] But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. [40] If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. [41] Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. [42] Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. (*Do not let the unkindness, mistreatment, or evil deeds of others compel you to return evil for evil. Rather, respond to evil with love, kindness, patience, honesty, and respect.*)
 - b. **Matthew 5:43-48**, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ [44] But I say to you,

love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, [45] so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. [46] For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? [47] If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? [48] Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (*Being perfect like God means remaining committed to godliness in spite of the circumstances, and promoting the good of all in spite of the behavior of others.*)

B. [2b] Teach and preach (*or exhort*) these principles (*concerning a slave’s behavior toward his master and the reasons driving the behavior*).

1. Just as a reminder, **teaching** in a church setting is explaining a selected portion of God’s word in a detailed manner with the intent of helping those listening to better understand and apply that passage to their daily lives. **Preaching** takes a selected portion of God’s word and presents it in a way that confronts the listener with God’s truth for the purpose of inviting a specific response.
2. This exhortation in **vs 2** to teach and preach what the Bible says is directed at all of us who teach and preach – be it in the home – as a parent or Bible Study leader, in the neighborhood, the workplace, or the church.
3. In other words, we (*you and me*) are to talk to the people around us about these truths and principles concerning how to live a godly life in any situation, but especially in difficult situations. And this does not mean we are to force the conversation, but rather we ought to take advantage of conversations that open the door to doing this.

III. Failure to pursue godliness results in behavior contrary to godliness

A. [3] If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,

1. To advocate a different doctrine is to teach or to speak in favor of beliefs, understandings, and opinions that are different from or even contrary to God’s word in general, the teachings of Jesus Christ specifically, and the truths contained in God’s word concerning godliness and how to live a godly life.

2. Within Christianity, the word **doctrine** speaks of specific teachings, principles, positions, or beliefs gained from and supported by more than a single statement in God's word – though there may be an exception to this rule.
 3. The problem with doctrines based on a single verse or statement within a verse is that they often result in misleading representations of God and His word. Therefore, if someone's teaching does not make sense or seem reasonable in light of the context from which it is taken, and when tested against other scriptures dealing with the same or a similar topic, it should be treated as suspect.
 4. Paul affirms that Bible doctrines are to be sensible when he infers that false doctrines do not agree with **sound words** – that is, with a sensible and reasonable understanding of God's word.
 - a. However, a sensible and reasonable understanding of God's word is not to be determined by our personal idea of what is sensible, reasonable, and therefore orthodox. Rather, it is to be determined by what is faithful to the Bible as a whole, and what is faithful to Jesus' teaching and life, specifically.
 - b. Therefore, the accuracy of any doctrine espoused by anyone is to be determined by measuring it against the context from which it is derived, the rest of the Bible, and Jesus' teaching and way of life.
- B. From here, Paul describes the effects on a person's thinking, character, and behavior who does not agree with a sensible and reasonable understanding of God's word, and with the Bible's teaching on godliness.
1. The inescapable reality is, if you are not deliberately pursuing godliness, then the wrong thinking, sinful desires, and selfish interests that you allow to remain in your life will compel you to speak and behave in ways that are contrary to godliness.
 2. For example: [4a] such a person is conceited and understands nothing ... (*pride, bad character, wrong use of intellect*)
 - a. Such a person thinks he is smart, even wiser than God. He thinks he knows what is best for himself and others. Yet, he has it all wrong because he is foolish and unwise and self-deceived.
 3. [4b] such a person has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words ... (*character flaws, unhealthy interests*)
 - a. In this case, a morbid interest is an unwholesome, or irrational, or spiritually unhealthy interest in controversial questions and disputes about words.

- b. Controversial questions are questions that have no clear Biblical answer, yet they provide hours of debate and arguing for those who think they know the answers and want to prove how right they are to those around them.
 - c. Disputes about words is similar to debating controversial questions, but without the questions.
4. [4c] When people in the church are like the person described in the first part of vs 4 (*prideful, feeding and being motivated by ungodly character traits, and pursuing foolish and spiritually unhealthy interests*) it leads to envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, [5] and constant friction ...
- a. These are things that feed pride, damage relationships, waste valuable time, and deters a healthy pursuit of godliness – whether by an individual Christian or the church as a whole.
 - b. So let me affirm what I said earlier: if you are not deliberately pursuing godliness, then the wrong thinking, sinful desires, and selfish interests that you allow to remain in your life will compel you to speak and behave in ways that are contrary to godliness.
5. Paul concludes vs 5 by pointing out these kinds of people and activities are found in the church because –
- a. For some, their mind is depraved, that is, polluted with selfish, foolish, worldly thinking,
 - b. They treat what isn't true as if it is true. In other words, their teaching and opinions are built on unprovable claims – which is why they resort to arguing, and abusive language, and angry fighting in order to convince others to agree with them.
 - c. And they think Christianity and the Bible can be used for the sake of personal gain. And what is it they hope to gain? The feeding of their ego, being seen as important, gaining a following, becoming the only or at least one of the top leaders in the church, and increasing their income.
 - d. Sadly, they blind themselves to the fact that what they are doing is foolish, misleading, destructive to their character, and damaging to the unity of the believers.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Without question, there are Bible passages, doctrines, and teaching worth discussing in an effort to better understand them and learn how to apply them. And there are differing teachings and practices among the varied denominations that are worthy of discussion and debate.

- B. However, when any such discussion becomes a means for us to feed our ego, or gain a following, or be seen as someone who should be in a leadership position – we have stopped seeking to understand God’s word, confirm it’s truth, and learn how to better apply God’s word to our daily living, **and started** doing further damage to our character and our spiritual health by feeding our pride, encouraging disunity in the church, and leading people astray, all for selfish gain.
- C. The reality is, if you are not deliberately pursuing godliness, then the wrong thinking, sinful desires, and selfish interests that you allow to remain in your life will compel you to speak and behave in ways that are contrary to godliness.