

1 Timothy

I. Introduction

- A. **1 Timothy 6:20-21** . . . O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"— [21] which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.
- B. It is my intention to use Paul's closing exhortations to Timothy to talk about three things: (1) Guarding what God has entrusted to us; (2) Our conversations, or what we talk about; (3) The effects of accepting the world's arguments that in some way alter or deny biblically Christian truth.
- C. Prayer

II. Three lessons to live by

- A. **First Lesson:** Guarding what God has entrusted to us: [20a] O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you.
 - 1. It is not clear from this statement or from the context exactly what Paul was exhorting Timothy to guard. What is clear is that Timothy was to guard what had been **entrusted** to him. Therefore, we are going to talk about guarding what God has entrusted to us.
 - a. As used here in **vs 20**, to **guard** is to protect something from danger, or to keep it safe. To guard in this way requires alertness, vigilance, knowledge of the enemy, and what to do should an attack occur.
 - b. In this context, to guard what has been **entrusted** to you is to keep safe what God has placed in your care to use in living a godly life and in carrying out your duties as a servant of God.
 - c. The important truth here is that what God has entrusted to you is not yours. It belongs to Him, but He has placed it in your possession to use according to His intentions and purposes.
 - d. Many years ago, John Chrysostom taught on this passage, and he said it so well that I am going to paraphrase what he said. "You are to protect the deposit, to preserve it intact and in its purest form. It was entrusted to you, not found by you; you received it, not created it; it is not an outcome of your own intelligence, but what you have been taught; you are not its originator, but a disciple; not the leader, but the follower. What

God has given you is to be used according to its intended use, not according to your will or wishes. Treat it as if it were gold, for your responsibility is twofold: keep it safe and use it for good.”

2. As I said near the beginning, it is not clear exactly what Paul was exhorting Timothy to guard. However, I have put together a short list of things that have been entrusted to us by God which we are wise to use as God intended them to be used while guarding them against misuse, corruption, or loss. As I mention each item on this list, try to picture how God intends you to use it, how you might misuse it, and what guarding it would require.
3. God has entrusted to you a:
 - a. Mind / ability to think, reason, and learn,
 - b. Physical body,
 - c. Conscience,
 - d. New nature,
 - e. The ability to build and nurture godly character,
 - f. Natural abilities,
 - g. Spiritual gifts,
 - h. The Holy Spirit dwelling within,
 - i. The gospel of salvation,
 - j. Truths to live by as found in the Word of God,
 - k. Money and possessions.
4. But what is it that we must guard against?
 - a. The wiles of the devil,
 - b. The world’s way of thinking and seeing things,
 - c. The world’s so-called knowledge that disagrees with or goes against God and the word of God,
 - d. Religious beliefs and practices within the church that disagree with or go against God and the word of God,
 - e. Our own self-justifications, or willful ignorance, or twisting of the truth, or our resistance to taking responsibility for our thoughts, words, and deeds that disagree with or go against God and the word of God.
5. Why is it important to guard what God has entrusted us? I believe there are two important reasons.
 - a. **First**, failure to properly use and properly guard these things results in them being damaged in ways that is hard to repair. It results in weaknesses that are hard to strengthen, and losses that are hard to regain. It leads to shallow relationships – with God and with those who are near and dear. It opens the door to

feeding selfishness and pride. And it makes it easy to justify the practice of sin.

- b. **Second**, we are not living the Christian life just for ourselves, but for our children and grand-children, our friends and neighbors, our co-workers and fellow believers, and for the future health of Christianity and the integrity of the Christian message.
 - c. The reality is, whatever weaknesses of character and spiritual immaturity we allow, whatever sins we overlook, in whatever ways we alter the truth found in God's word, and wherever we distrust God – not only affects us, it influences those who know us – including the next generation of potential Christians. And this influence either helps them move toward God in the best ways possible, or leads them into a weak and immature form of Christianity, or pushes them away from God altogether.
6. Therefore, such things as the glory of God, our relationship with God, our spiritual health, and the health of the Christianity we pass on to the next generation are significant reasons to guard what God has entrusted to us.

B. Second Lesson: Our conversations, or what we talk about: [20b] avoiding worldly and empty chatter.

1. Some examples from **1 Timothy** of worldly, empty chatter are: fruitless discussion, talking about fables, gossip, talking about things not proper to mention, discussing or debating controversial questions for which there is no clear answer, and disputes about the meaning of certain words in relation to God's word, the second coming of Christ, and living the Christian life.
2. To make this applicable to us, I have three questions for you.
 - a. What do you commonly talk about when conversing with others?
 - b. Do you commonly talk about what you prefer to talk about?
 - c. Is it your intention to edify others when conversing with them?
3. It is my observation that most conversations have little edifying value to them. It is my experience that few people want to engage in meaningful conversation.
4. But what is meaningful conversation?
 - a. Meaningful conversations are both thoughtful and thought-provoking.
 - b. Meaningful conversations are beneficial for the intellectual, moral, relational, and spiritual health of those involved.

- c. Meaningful conversations promote values and beliefs that are in agreement with the values and beliefs God wants us to have.
 - d. Meaningful conversations build you up rather than leave you as you were or worse than you were before coming into the conversation.
 - e. And meaningful conversations lead to deeper, more meaningful relationships.
5. However, because so few people want to engage in meaningful conversation, we are often trapped in casual conversations whose value does not exceed that of giving us something to talk about.
- a. And yet, we ought to respond lovingly because these conversations may be with our spouse, children, neighbors, co-workers, and our fellow church members.
 - b. I do want to acknowledge that casual conversations help bring people together and build relationships. And this is a good thing.
 - c. However, casual conversations will not and cannot promote or produce deeper, more meaningful relationships.
 - d. And so I ask, what is your preferred form of conversation?
6. I want to acknowledge once again that meaningful conversation is not an easy thing to achieve on a regular basis, and in my experience it is rare to find someone who consistently wants to engage in meaningful conversation.
- a. And yet, based on the topic or direction of a casual conversation, you can listen for opportunities to ask a good question or make an observation in an effort to open the door to more meaningful talking.
 - b. However, I urge you not to take it personally if the other person does not respond as you hoped. It is simply their way of indicating what they are interested in.
7. Before moving on, I want to re-ask my three questions.
- a. What do you commonly talk about when conversing with others?
 - b. Do you commonly talk about what you prefer to talk about?
 - c. Is it your intention to edify others when conversing with them?

C. **Third Lesson:** The effects of accepting the world's arguments that in some way alter biblically Christian truth: [20c] and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"— [21] which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.

1. Without question, there are multiple arenas of influence pressing in on us which come from the world, from our family, from our social

- circles, from the media and internet, from the church, and from the word of God.
2. Discerning which ones to pay attention to and which ones to actively resist is not always easy – especially when dealing with influences that come from within the Christian community.
 - a. I am mentioning the need to beware of influences that come from the Christian community because the presence of bad and ungodly influences within the church has been a problem since the earliest days of Christianity.
 - b. And in my opinion, this problem is as bad or worse than ever.
 - (1) For example, the prevailing influence to believe worship is best when led by a worship band has turned what is intended to be a group expression of adoration and praise to God into a spectator activity for many in attendance.
 - (2) Another example of an ungodly influence that has been active within the Christian community is the belief that sinners who commit certain sins – such as the homosexual or adulterer – are to be treated as excessively evil, which includes treating them with hatred and hostility.
 3. The problem of bad and ungodly influences pressing in on Christians has been such a problem from the church’s earliest days that God addresses it in at least two portions of scripture.
 - a. **Romans 12:2**, “And do not be conformed to this world (*that is, don’t let the world mold you into its likeness – and I am going to add, don’t let any influences mold you into something that works against being molded into the likeness of Jesus Christ*), but be transformed (*changed from what you were to what God saved you to be*) by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove...that the will of God...is good and acceptable and perfect.”
 - b. **1 Corinthians 15:33**, “Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.”
 4. Question: Who and/or what influences your way of thinking, your view of the world, your response to politics, your understanding of God, your study of God’s word, and your effort or lack of effort to live a godly life?
 - a. These are important questions, for the answer either urges you toward God or away from God.
 - b. We see the truth of this in **vs 21** where Paul says that some Christians have allowed themselves to be swayed by worldly and

ungodly influences, and by the intellectualism of the day, and as a result have gone astray from the faith.

- c. To go astray from the faith is to give in to the ungodly influences of the world and the ungodly influences that come from within the church and as a result turn away from what you once believed.

III. Conclusion

- A. **I Timothy** ends with these words: **Grace be with you.** This is a statement of blessing. May it be the blessing we enjoy each day as we continue to live godly in Christ Jesus.