

The Good Fight of Faith

1 Tim 6:11-21

SS Lesson for 02/25/2018

Devotional Scripture: 1 Thess 3:1-13

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson teaches how and why Paul advised Timothy to fight **The Good Fight of Faith**. The **study's aim** is to highlight the importance of the body concept of the Church, showing that pastors are not expected to do everything. The **study's application** is to be encouraged to continue serving God by using our gifts and placing our confidence in His direction.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: 1 Tim 6:12

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

6:11. Paul began this concluding section of the epistle by turning directly to Timothy. The words **but you** are an emphatic contrast with “some people” of verse 10, who chase after riches. Timothy, as a **man of God**, was to do the opposite—to **flee from all this**, but chase instead after personal virtues that are of eternal value: **righteousness, godliness** (*eusebeian*; cf. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7-8; 6:3, 5-6; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 1:1), **faith, love, endurance** (*hypomonēn*, “steadfastness under adversity”), and **gentleness**. This list may be compared to both the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and the qualifications of elders (1 Tim. 3:1-3).

6:12. Fight the good fight is the language of athletic contests. In 1:18 the same English words translate Greek words that refer to a military conflict. Timothy was to give his best effort to this most worthwhile of struggles, the struggle to further **the faith**. This would involve the complete appropriation (cf. “take hold” in v. 19) at all times of the fact that he possessed eternal life. (Paul’s words, **Take hold of... eternal life** in no way suggest that Timothy could gain eternal life by his own efforts.) To Paul, Christ’s life is the possession of each Christian, not only throughout eternity, but now (cf. 2 Cor. 4:10-12). It is this new life in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) to which every Christian is **called** and which Christians confess by baptism (Rom. 6:4) and by word (Rom. 10:9-10). Timothy’s **good confession in the presence of many witnesses** could refer to his ordination but more likely speaks of his baptism.

6:13. Repeatedly in this letter Paul directly addressed Timothy with personal charges, the second strongest of which is found in 5:21. But here is Paul’s strongest, most solemn charge of all (**I charge you, parangellō**; cf. 1:3; 4:11; 5:7; 6:14) conjuring up images of perhaps a familiar baptismal formula triggered by the reference in verse 12. **While testifying before Pontius Pilate** is translated by some, “who testified in the time of Pontius Pilate.” If translated this way, the qualifying clause is designed to fix the Crucifixion in time, as in the Apostles’ Creed. Both translations are possible.

6:14. The content of Paul’s charge is that Timothy **keep this commandment without spot or blame**. The “commandment” is probably broader than any single law. It refers to the entire body of sound teaching Paul had been describing throughout the letter. Timothy, by his own godly life and by his faithful ministry, was to preserve this body of truth from stain or reproach **until the appearing** (cf. 2 Tim. 1:10; 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13) **of our Lord Jesus Christ**. Then and only then will the struggle (1 Tim. 6:12) be over.

6:15-16. Early in his ministry Paul was convinced that Christ would return soon. Now near the end of his ministry he showed both an awareness that Christ might not return before he died and a desire to encourage

Timothy to leave the timing of this great event up to the Lord. Hence Paul stressed that **God will bring about** Christ's appearing **in His** (or "its") **own time**. The section ends with an inspiring doxology to the **God** who is the cause and object of it all: the ultimate **Ruler** of the universe, **the King of kings and Lord of lords** (cf. Rev. 17:14; 19:16), the only eternal One, who dwells where no man can survive or approach or even see (cf. John 1:18). Such a Lord deserves an awesome reverence combined with complete humility (cf. Job 42:1-6). **To Him be honor and might forever. Amen** (cf. 1 Tim. 1:17).

6:17. Paul had dealt with those who did not possess wealth, but who deeply desired it (vv. 3-10). Now he addressed those who had it, and instructed them as to what their attitude should be toward it. They are **not to be arrogant** as if their wealth is deserved (1 Cor. 4:7-8; 1 Sam. 2:7). Nor must they **put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain** and transient. This is perhaps the greatest temptation to wealthy Christians, into which category most modern Western believers fit. Christians should **put their hope in God**, who is the Source of material things. Again material possessions are among those things God has given **for our enjoyment**.

6:18-19. Yet Christians must not merely consume material possessions selfishly. Possessions are to be shared with those who have less. Thus Timothy was to charge the well-off **to do good, to be rich**, not ultimately in money, but **in good deeds**. The wealthy should make every effort **to be generous and willing to share** what they have. If they do this **they will lay up treasure for themselves** in heaven. This undoubtedly refers to the sayings of Jesus (cf. Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 12:33-34; 18:22) wherein the transient is exchanged for the eternal. Such eternal treasure becomes **a firm foundation for** the future, recalling in a mixed metaphor perhaps another of the Lord's teachings (cf. Matt. 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49). Wealthy Christians should invest their riches for eternity. "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose" (Jim Elliot). Paradoxically it is in this giving away of the possessions which the world considers the key to the good life that a Christian **may take hold of** (cf. 1 Tim. 6:12) **the life that is truly life**. The alluring but vain and plastic substitutes for life, supplied by an unhealthy attachment to material things, pale into worthlessness when compared with that life which is found in Jesus Christ (cf. Matt. 16:24-26), who is Himself the Life (John 14:6) and whom to know is life everlasting (John 17:3).

6:20-21. One final time Paul exhorted **Timothy** to **guard** (cf. *phylaxōn*, "keep," in 5:21) the "deposit" or "trust" Paul had passed on to him (*parathēkēn*, used elsewhere only in 2 Tim. 1:12, 14), a reference to the body of Christian truth which in some way was under attack in Ephesus. Paul was concerned that Timothy give himself wholly to the truth and reject even the subtle inroads of error. Thus Timothy must **turn away from godless chatter** (lit., "profane empty utterances"; cf. 2 Tim. 2:16), and from **opposing ideas** (*antitheseis*, "counter-assertions") **of what is falsely called knowledge**. Such knowledge was the supposed key to the mystery religions which were already aborning and which would mature into a full-fledged Gnosticism during the next century. Their influence was already being felt in Ephesus, so much so that Paul could say that some had gotten so caught up in professing their esoteric *gnōsis* that they **wandered from the faith** (lit., "concerning the faith missed the aim"; cf. 1 Tim. 1:6; 2 Tim. 2:18). This does not suggest that true believers lose their salvation but that some believers turn to false doctrines, from the content of their faith. With these exhortations Paul seemed to have come full circle, back to his concerns in 1 Timothy 1:3-6. Paul closed his letter with the simple benediction, **Grace be with you**. "You" is in the plural, however, no doubt indicating Paul's awareness that this letter would be read widely in the churches (cf. Col. 4:18; 2 Tim. 4:22; Titus 3:15).

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

"Want to quit?" The question came from my instructor. She was standing in front of me, watching. "We can reschedule this." Surrounding us were other students in my martial arts class. They too were watching. Would I give up, or would I finish what I had started? That night was not an ordinary karate class. Several students were testing for their next belt, including me. As part of the test, our instructor asked us to help others who were testing. Among them was a more advanced student, and part of his test was a certain type of defense. Other students had to attack him so that our sensei could see whether the testee could defend. When my turn came, I ran up to him and proceeded to grab his arm. Before I could blink, I was thrown through the air. I landed with a thud as pain exploded in my side. I would have scratches and bruised bones for weeks. Lying on the mat, I knew it would have been easy to stop. I was in pain. I knew that should I quit, though, I might not make a challenge again for months. I wanted to get that next belt. So I stood up and said, "No, I'll keep going." Even though I was hurting, I poured everything into it. I not only finished my test, but I also did it well. In this week's text, we are entreated to "fight the good fight of faith." Paul goes on to say that we should be diligent to keep our Lord's commands and to make every effort to live

righteously until Christ returns (1 Tim. 6:13-14). Paul's entreaty here is not merely a call for perseverance. Yes, we are called to be diligent in our faith walk. Believers do need to persevere. But Paul was touching on something deeper here. You see, it is not enough to merely keep fighting. We have to think about the quality of what we do. Why? My grandfather used to say, "If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well." We were put here to glorify God and further His kingdom. How we live our lives affects not only us but also those around us. If we are content to drift through life in a mediocre way, we are not fulfilling our calling as believers as we should. It is easy to lose track of this in the daily rhythms of life. We float through our existence, forgetting what is eternal when confronted with the urgency of the day. That is why the Scriptures remind us to keep our eyes on Jesus (cf. Heb. 12:2). We are to keep our focus on what is really important and not get caught up in the temporary. As we consider this, we will understand how important it is to stay motivated. How we live out our faith may alter someone else's eternal destiny. Are you fighting the good fight today? Are you giving it everything you have, or are you simply trying to get through each day? If all you are doing each day is going through the motions, then perhaps you have lost your motivation. God does not call us to be mediocre people. He calls us to a passionate, fulfilled life in His Son (John 10:10). He wants us to participate in something greater than we could have dreamed. We can only do that, however, if we are fighting the good fight. Are you fighting the good fight of faith?

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

In the 1990s, evangelical leaders such as Carl F. H. Henry (1913-2003) began talking about something called the "culture war." Faithful church members were pictured as battling secular forces bent on destroying Christian influence. The battlegrounds for the culture war were seen to be places such as public schools, marriage license bureaus, and courtrooms. These battles were often overtly political. In Paul's day, no one would have taken such an outlook. Christians were a tiny minority of the population of the Roman world and had little voice or influence in culture as a whole. The "fight of faith" was not the church against the secular world. Rather, it was the battle waged within the life of each believer. The question for each Christian was, "Will I remain faithful until the end?" (compare Revelation 2:10). In today's lesson, Paul addresses this topic with Timothy, his son in the faith. The culture may have changed over the centuries since then, but our internal fight of faith is not much different. We too must remain faithful and endure.

The relationship between Paul and Timothy began on Paul's second missionary journey. Paul found young Timothy in Lystra (Acts 16:1) and recruited him as a missionary associate. Timothy became trusted and competent in that regard. He is mentioned seven times in the book of Acts and seventeen times in the letters of Paul, making him one of the most important church leaders in the New Testament. Six of Paul's epistles list Timothy in the opening greeting, which is a tribute to Timothy's influence. Paul wrote two letters to Timothy while Timothy was ministering to the church in Ephesus. He had been left there by Paul to deal with some false teachers (see 1 Timothy 1:3). First and Second Timothy are among the last of Paul's letters, being written in the mid-60s AD, some 15 years after Paul and Timothy first joined forces. Timothy is perhaps 30-35 years old by this time, still a young man in Paul's eyes; but he is given responsibility for a highly influential church. Timothy had credibility because of his association with Paul, but that went only so far. Timothy needed to show to the Ephesians that he was wise and capable in his own right. He would have been instructing and correcting men and women older than he. That is why it was so important that he demonstrate a consistent and faithful life, one above reproach in every aspect (see 1 Timothy 4:15, 16). He was called to set an example to all the Ephesian Christians despite his relative youth (4:12). Paul knew this would be difficult, so he advised Timothy to be a "good soldier" for Jesus Christ, willing to endure great hardship (2 Timothy 2:3).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Helpful Instructions (1 Tim 6:11-16)

11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

13 I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing,

15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

What to pursue (11)

Pursue righteousness by thirsting for it (Matt 5:6)

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Pursue godliness through training (1 Tim 4:7-8)

7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Pursue the deep truths of the faith (1 Tim 3:9)

9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

Pursue love because it is commanded (1 John 3:23)

23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

Pursue patience because Jesus' coming is near (James 5:7-8)

7 Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

Pursue gentleness out of love (Eph 4:2)

2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

How to live (12)

Live righteously until the day of the Lord comes (2 Peter 3:10-12)

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. 11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

Live righteously because Jesus sacrificed Himself (1 Peter 2:24)

24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

Live righteously through God's Divine power (2 Peter 1:3)

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

Live righteously through obedience (Rom 6:16)

16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Live righteously to obtain the goal of our hope (Gal 5:5)

5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.

Live righteously because there is a crown awaiting us (2 Tim 4:8)

8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

How to stay blameless (13-14)

Blameless because God chose us (Eph 1:4)

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love

Blameless because of the gift of discernment (Phil 1:9-11)

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God.

Blameless because of doing everything without complaining or arguing (Phil 2:14-15)

14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe

Blameless because God strengthening our hearts (1 Thess 3:13)

13 May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Blameless because of being entrusted with God's work (Titus 1:7)

7 Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless — not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

Whom to honor (15-16)

Honor God with our body (1 Cor 6:20)

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Honor God because He is worthy of honor (Rev 4:11)

11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Honor God with our finances (Prov 3:9)

9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;

Honor God with our heart (Matt 15:8)

8 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Honor God by honoring Jesus (John 5:22-23)

22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

Important Commands (1 Tim 6:17-21)

17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,

19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

20 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge--

21 by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.

Trust the living God (17)

Trust God and don't worry (Matt 6:25-27)

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

Trust God by seeking His kingdom first (Luke 12:29-31)

29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Trust God because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7)

7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Trust God to provide overflowing hope (Rom 15:13)

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Trust God by being convinced of His ability (2 Tim 1:12)

12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

Be willing to share (18-19)

Share by giving to those in need (Rom 12:13)

13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Share with instructor the good things in God's word (Gal 6:6)

6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

Share by working to be able to give to others (Eph 4:28)

28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Share because God is pleased with His people who share (Heb 13:16)

16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Share by supporting the weak (Acts 20:35)

35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Share to help others in the Church (Acts 2:44-46)

44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

Guard the important truths (20-21)

Guard the truth through standing firm (Eph 6:14)

14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

Guard the truth in faith (2 Cor 1:24)

24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

Guard the truth by resisting the yoke of slavery (Gal 5:1)

5 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Guard the truth in Jesus (1 Thess 3:8)

8 For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.

Guard the truth using the grace and power of God (1 Peter 5:10)

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Guard the truth committing to the work of God (1 Cor 15:58)

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Gaining A Proper Perspective Toward Prosperity

As he prepares to conclude this letter Paul turns for one last time to the false teachers:

3 If someone spreads false teachings and does not agree with sound words (that is, those of our Lord Jesus Christ) and with the teaching that accords with godliness, 4 he is conceited and understands nothing, but has an unhealthy interest in controversies and verbal disputes. This gives rise to envy, dissension, slanders, evil suspicions, 5 and constant bickering by people corrupted in their minds and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a way of making a profit (1 Timothy 6:3-5).

In some ways Paul is simply recapping what he has already indicated about the false teachers in Ephesus. Their teachings do not square with sound doctrine, nor do they lead to godly living. Such teachers are arrogant, but in truth they understand nothing. They have a preference for things that are controversial, and this leads to all kinds of conflict and strife. The new element, which Paul intends to explore further, is found in the last words of verse 5:

“ . . . who suppose that godliness is a way of making a profit.”

In short, false teachers are often in it for the money. No wonder Paul contrasted his financial practices with the false teachers who would arise in Ephesus:

33 I have desired no one's silver or gold or clothing. 34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine provided for my needs and the needs of those who were with me. 35 By all these things, I have shown you that by working in this way we must help the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:33-35).

Paul closes his letter to Timothy by focusing on a proper Christian perspective of prosperity. The false teachers believed that godliness was the means to making a profit. Paul differs from this twisted view of ministry and godliness. Paul does grant that godliness is "**profitable**" when prosperity is rightly understood (6:6). Godliness that is combined with contentment is very profitable, even if not in a monetary way. Since we didn't bring material prosperity with us at our birth, and we can't take it with us when we die, we should not be obsessed with it. We should be content when our daily needs are met (see Philippians 4:10-13).

Paul wants to be very clear on this matter of prosperity. Godliness does not guarantee material wealth, but neither is it sinful to possess material wealth. It is not being rich that is evil, but being obsessed with a desire to accumulate wealth. This is a sin that can be committed by the poor, if they are obsessed with becoming rich. Those who desperately desire to be rich may succumb to temptations to cut corners in order to get there. So then, it is the love of money which Paul condemns, and not the mere possession of wealth:

For the love of money is the root of all evils. Some people in reaching for it have strayed from the faith and stabbed themselves with many pains (1 Timothy 6:10).

Timothy is urged not to become caught up in the pursuit of wealth, but rather to pursue godliness:

11 But you, as a person dedicated to God, keep away from all that. Instead pursue righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness. 12 Compete well for the faith and lay hold of that eternal life you were called for and made your good confession for in the presence of many witnesses. 13 I charge you before God who gives life to all things and Christ Jesus who made his good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 to obey this command without fault or failure until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ 15 —whose appearing the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, will reveal at the right time. 16 He alone possesses immortality and lives in unapproachable light, whom no human has ever seen or is able to see. To him be honor and eternal power! Amen (1 Timothy 6:11-16).

In other words, Timothy is challenged to engage himself in the pursuit of true (spiritual and eternal) riches, rather than the mere earthly appearance of wealth. To sum it up, true riches are obtained only in the pursuit of Jesus Christ and in the joy of knowing Him intimately.

There is one who pretends to be rich and yet has nothing;

another pretends to be poor and yet possesses great wealth (Proverbs 13:7).

A faithful person will have an abundance of blessings,

but the one who hastens to gain riches will not go unpunished (Proverbs 28:20).

While it is not wrong to be wealthy, there are certain temptations that the wealthy encounter. Paul therefore gives Timothy some good words of exhortation to convey to those who are rich in this world's goods:

17 Command those who are rich in this world's goods not to be haughty or to set their hope on riches, which are uncertain, but on God who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. 18 Tell them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, to be generous givers, sharing with others. 19 In this way they will save up a treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the future and so lay hold of what is truly life (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

Those who are rich in worldly goods need to beware of the arrogance that often accompanies wealth:

A rich person is wise in his own eyes,

but a discerning poor person can evaluate him properly (Proverbs 28:11).

The rich are likewise tempted to place their trust in their wealth, rather than in God:

The wealth of a rich person is like a strong city,

but the poor are brought to ruin by their poverty (Proverbs 10:15).

The wealth of a rich person is like a strong city,

and it is like a high wall in his imagination (Proverbs 18:11).

Paul directs Timothy to instruct those who are rich to trust in God, and not in their wealth. He further urges Timothy to teach the rich to invest their worldly goods wisely by being rich in good deeds, and thereby laying up treasure in heaven. Paul closes his letter with one final word of exhortation related to the false teaching which has surfaced in Ephesus:

20 O Timothy, protect what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and absurdities of so-called “knowledge.” 21 By professing it, some have strayed from the faith. Grace be with you all (1 Timothy 6:20-21).

Timothy is to guard the truth, the sound doctrine that has been entrusted to him. At the same time he is to avoid the empty words of the false teachers, which they mislabel as “**knowledge**.” Some have already gone astray by embracing this “**knowledge**.” With this last word of exhortation and admonition, Paul commends Timothy, his spiritual son, and the saints in Ephesus to the grace of God.

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/50-1-timothy-believing-and-behaving-household-god>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

A friend of mine who was connected to big-time sports told me of a well-known former basketball player who was completely broke. This man had made over \$150 million in his career. He was not only broke, but was a broken person. His trust had been in his own abilities and his wealth, and now he had neither. Let’s admit that the church and its members need money to operate. We are naïve to think otherwise, but money must not control everything. The “good fight of the faith” can often be a battle against personal greed and selfishness. Do we trust in money more than God? Or are we blameless in this area? Will we trust that God will provide the opportunities and money we need? These are some of the most crucial questions we can ask ourselves, especially if we are in positions of leadership in our congregations. We must be both careful with the money with which we are entrusted and thankful to God for his provision. When we do this, we are fighting the good fight with a winning strategy.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. Life in Christ brings conflict with the world (1 Tim. 6:11-12)
2. As Christians, we will be pressured; but as we obey and remain faithful, God is glorified and attacks ultimately fail (vss. 13-14)
3. God chooses what He reveals about Himself, and He does so in His own time and for His own purpose (vss. 15-16)
4. God provides material wealth as a tool for His people, not as a means for selfish indulgence (vss. 17-18)
5. When we share our wealth with others, we invest in God’s kingdom and trust Him for our needs (vs. 19)
6. Focus on knowing and following God, and avoid pointless debates (vss. 20-21)