

8,28,26 1 Tim. 6:1-12, No Compromise!

In chapter six Paul continues his “practical advice” exhortations to Timothy. It’s always amazing to see how the Lord arranged the circumstances of the lives of those He chose to author the scriptures to ensure that each of them would be experiencing and learning specific things that would apply to all generations as well as to their own generation.

If you take that principle and apply it to each of us, it means that our whole lives have been sovereignly orchestrated to shape us into the person we’ve become so that we would have something specific and personal, based both on experience and learning, to give to the Body of Christ. Each of us would *become*, not just be *assigned*, the part we are intended to play in the building up of the body of Christ. Our contribution is based on life, not just on external instructions.

(1 Cor. 12:4-7, 15-18)

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all . . . If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

(Eph. 4:16) The whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

There are no “little people”; we are all essential, so the ‘practical advice’ we give others will be based on both our learning and our unique experiences, and will be as valuable as the measure of our own spiritual growth.

Paul’s life, under the Hand of the divine Potter, made Paul who he was and gave him what he offered to Timothy (and through his other epistles, to all of us). The

Lord made sure what Paul knew was written down, but it's wasn't dictated, it was the outcome of Paul's response to his experiences and revelations from the Holy Spirit had given him. The Lord wants all ministry, of all gifts and callings, to be based on a growing life not just expanded information.

From the Lord's viewpoint, all communication to others that will have eternal value must come from a person's life, not just their brain. The battle we all face is the battle of cooperating with the Lord as He forms a specific Life (the Life of Christ) in us and then expresses that Life through an infinite number of unique personalities which are shaped by our prayers, study and experiences.

As important as learning God's Word is, it's the *engrafting* of that Word into our souls through life experiences and applications that results in true spiritual ministry.

When we study Paul's letters, beginning with his early writings like 1 & 2 Thessalonians and Galatians to his later letters like his prison epistles, we can see Paul's own spiritual advancement in breadth and depth, and we can read about all what God took him through to bring Paul to that place spiritually. So, when Paul says that he was (quote) "set forth as a pattern" for all who would believe after him, we can get a pretty clear picture by looking at Paul's life of what it will take to move us from those who have very little to offer to the Church to someone who has a great deal to offer.

All of that just to say that what Paul instructs Timothy (and us) to take seriously as a way of life for a disciple of Christ, Paul didn't learn in a vacuum or in hiding away as a monk to study the parchments and contemplate infinity. In Paul (and in us, if we follow his pattern) the Word must become flesh by what the Lord takes us through. His goal for us is Christlikeness and His process is real-life experience based on what He reveals to us in His Word.

I know that this has taken some time to talk about, but I want to do all I can to move us away from thinking of the Bible as just a listing of Christian things we should do rather than a book that is living when its ministered to us by the Holy Spirit. We aren't used to learning in a way that is spiritual, so our tendency is to see

all of the instructions we receive from men like Paul as instructions or mannerisms of this new religion called Christianity.

In reality, no matter how good we may get at being obedient to what we read, that may give us nothing more than a “*form of godliness*” without the Life of God’s Son formed in us. But if our obedience is based on our relationship with the Spirit, on His leading, guidance, discipline, training and revelation to us, then not only will the behavior match the scriptures, but we, ourselves, will become embodiments of what those behaviors are meant to convey – the life of Jesus manifest through our mortal flesh. We will act like Christ because we think like Christ. The scriptures are God’s thoughts. Our mind must be renewed before our actions will consistently have their source in Christ.

Here's how Evan Hopkins describes it;

All spiritual privileges are conditional. The condition of experiencing the abundant life lies in becoming a partaker of the mind of him who died to sin (who died to the old creation), to be armed with that mind. This is not an isolated experience, a single act, it is a mind; That is, a spiritual understanding and mindset to be maintained, and become more and more deepened. We do not have to strain our energies in order to live, or increase our strength. The living Christ within us will put forth his own power and manifest his own life. But what we are required to do is voluntarily submit to die to us, not by direct efforts upon ourselves, but by our participation in the mind of Him who died unto the old creation, the Adamic race, and now lives fully unto God alone.

It's like a line I heard recently in the script of a movie I saw when one of the characters said, “He was kind, and not through effort; it was just part of who he was.”

That may not make sense at first, but it will after we have spent sufficient time personally in Romans 7 to realize our complete inability to imitate the Bible and have learned that God’s intent was never that we would master that imitation, but instead that we would replace faith in ourselves with dependence on the Lord

alone to provide what we need to undertake any act of obedience. “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). That has to become more than one of our favorite verses; it has to become the object of our prayers until it’s the way we think and live; and that takes time and it takes a revealing of its meaning to us from God’s Spirit.

The normal Christian approach to all this is to either lower the standards to a reasonable level so we can, to some extent meet them, or to just say, “nobody’s perfect” and settle for less than what the Lord wants.

But Paul’s approach, the Spirit’s approach, is to take whatever time is needed to break our self-confidence through failure and suffering to the point where we are inwardly convinced that we can’t meet God’s standards. He doesn’t expect us to; it’s why Christ came to indwell us by His Spirit. His death as the Last Adam removed all that represents human effort. His resurrection followed by His indwelling presence is His solution to our problem.

But like everything else we’ve seen tonight, that’s an issue of genuine spiritual understanding established in us by life-experiences and the revelation of the Spirit designed to take us to a place mentally and spiritually that we would never have known *how* to go to ourselves. We walk by faith, not by sight, trusting the Lord to work in us to will and do of His good pleasure. We’re trusting Him to do this even when (*especially* when) what He’s doing makes no sense to us at all. That’s what “not by sight” is talking about. We give up all self-expectation and replace it with complete dependency on Christ. Our walk is now based on faith in Someone other than ourselves.

We’ve never lived that way before, so we don’t fully understand it; and we won’t be living that way now until we’ve been taken there over the decades of our lives, because for many, it can take a long time to see ourselves as incapable and to see Christ as willing to be our Life. He, not us, is the Way, Truth and Life and until we learn to “. . . look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith”, we will never be free from the guilt and despair that result from a life of self-effort to do what only Christ can do. The entire dispensation of the Law was designed to expose man’s inability to keep the Law of God (Rom. 3:20), which is why Paul calls it a “ministry of

death”. And why in Matt. 11:28-29 Christ said, “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls....”

Christ came to fulfill and then remove the burden of the Law, the burden of religion, and replace it with Grace – the *gift* of righteousness and the formation of His life within us.

Ok, back to Timothy. Let’s look at the next section of advice that someone who has the mind of Christ gives to us; he starts with the employer/employee relationship. What does it look like when it’s the thoughts and values of Christ which are governing the thoughts and values of the Christian?

(1 Tim. 6:1-2) Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

So, again, be careful of your grid when you hear these verses. Is your goal to decide what “worthy of all honor” means and then commit to that, or is it to understand what *the Lord* means by that and trust in His indwelling strength to see this become part of who you are as a person?

One grid is the Christian religion; the other is a prayerful pursuit of an exchanged life, with self-denial on one side and a mindset of faith and expectation in Christ on the other. Religion gives you a surface obedience; a faith-based relationship with Christ gives you the reality of an expression of a new creation identity and Life.

First, since we are talking about “bondservants” (in other words “slaves”), I’ll give you a brief historical context for what Paul wrote;

Many of the early Christians were bondmen. Conditions of society that prevailed at that time were such that there were more slaves in the Roman Empire than there were free men. Even when the gospel began to be

disseminated widely throughout the Empire we do not read of any movement on the part of Christian leaders seeking to overturn the institution of slavery, and that for a very good reason. Political circumstances and economic conditions were such in that ancient, pagan world that those in bondage as slaves to Christian masters were in a far better position than they could possibly have been if they had been freed and turned out to fend for themselves. But gradually throughout the centuries that followed as the nations received the gospel, the slaves *were* freed. Slavery was an accepted economic condition when Paul wrote to Timothy, and many of the early Christians were under bondage. So, when the Apostle speaks of “servants” here, it is not hired servants as such that he has in mind, but as “servants under the yoke.”

So, to make application to our century, I’m using the employer/employee relationship. A Christian employee should give an honest day’s work for the pay he gets. And if he works for a Christian employer, he shouldn’t try to find a way to take advantage of that relationship to exploit him in some way.

Another author, Donald Guthrie, adds something that shows how difficult this exhortation was than we might think at first glance, because the historical setting also added this problem;

In communities where the church included numerous slaves together with some of their masters, the relationship between them was a pressing problem. Slaves enjoyed equality of status *within* the Church, but a decided social inferiority *outside* the Church, an irreconcilable antithesis which found its only solution in the ultimate abolition of slavery. But since it was not the time for overturning this deeply rooted system, interim Christian rules were indispensable.

Barclay takes it even further;

The Christian slave was in a peculiarly difficult position. If he was the slave of a heathen master, he might very easily make it clear that he regarded his master as bound for hell and himself as the heir of salvation. His Christianity

might well give him a feeling of intolerant superiority which would create an impossible situation. On the other hand, if his master was a Christian, the slave could be tempted to take advantage of the new relationship and to trade upon it. He might use the new relationship as an excuse for producing inefficient work and then expecting to escape all punishment. He might think that the fact that both he and his master were Christians entitled him to all kinds of special consideration and special allowances. He might use the fact of his own and his master's Christianity to be lazy and an inefficient servant who was exempt from discipline.

It's always a good idea to see why Paul in his letters would focus on some things over others, and sometimes a knowledge of the culture at a given time in history can help make sense of that.

The bottom-line seems to be that whether the Christian is the slave-owner or the slave, both individuals should raise their minds above earthly thoughts and make sure neither is doing anything that would bring dishonor to the Name of Christ. Their testimony is more important than any schemes or manipulations they might be tempted to consider.

If a teachable, growing believer (like Timothy) reads what Paul wrote, it will ring true to him inwardly and also possibly send a wave of gentle gratitude through him because it's always encouraging to get another glimpse at both the rightness and goodness of the mind of Christ in action.

But for the religionist, those insights aren't his first thoughts. He's more likely to be trying to meet these expectations with the least effort possible. He sees them as "commandments" he has to obey rather than insights into the goodness of God and the eventual nature he, himself, will share with God.

For the growing believer, this is good news. Not only is God gracious and honorable, the Christian will be too, since he is being conformed to Christ's image.

Whatever grid we approach the scriptures with will determine whether the Bible is encouraging or frustrating. Is it a book that paints a glorious picture of the nature

of God and our destiny as conformed to His image, or is it primary a book filled with rules and regulations and with what feels like impossible expectations?

Now, here's our next section (vs's 3-5)

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

The last part of vs. 5 says, "From such (people) withdraw yourself." First, we know from 1 Cor. 5:9-13 that Paul is *not* talking about "withdrawing" from unbelievers;

I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

In our passage in Timothy Paul is staying consistent with his warnings and exhortations of how we are to function in the Church. Any "withdrawing" we are to do is related to other Christians, not unbelievers, which is why Paul closes that admonition with ". . . put away *from yourselves* the evil person."

Then the question becomes, who does this apply to? None of us are perfect and we can't "put away" or "withdraw from" our brothers and sisters in Christ unless the reason we do this is based on Paul's identifiers, not on our own personality or on difficult social interactions.

So, let's look at the specifics of what Paul considers "fellowship breakers".

The first is in vs. 3; Those who teach doctrines other than that which Paul taught; doctrines revealed to Paul by the Holy Spirit that define the Age we're living in. I'm sure you can see that trying to list all the contrary doctrines in existence today would take hours if not months to fully identify and explain. So, what I would do is simply recommend that each of us become well-acquainted with the essentials of the Christian faith and have the courage needed to be unmovable in our stand against everything that seeks to undermine what we know to be teaching that cannot be compromised.

I did a study in July of 2025 called, "The Essentials of Our Faith" which addressed this, but again, it was an overview rather than an attempt to cite everything that's floating around in our generation. My thought was that if we can be clear on what matters most to the Lord (and to the apostles like Paul) we should be able to spot the counterfeits. If you send me an email requesting that study, I can send it to you.

Also, in vs. 3 Paul uses the phrase, "... the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ... doctrine which accords with godliness." What is "godliness"? If we aren't sure what that means it will be hard to identify which doctrines will give us that and which won't.

As I researched this term, I discovered that it's not as simple as I originally thought it would be. I thought that if I found out what the word meant in the original language and looked over a lexical expansion of it, it would be easy to explain. My assumption was inaccurate, so bear with me, it's a very important word (obviously) but it's not easy to fully explain. So, I'll use a couple of authors that I felt did a good job in their attempt to make something complex understandable. First, from Barclay;

Godliness, (eusebeia in the original) is one of the great and almost untranslatable Greek words. It describes reverence both towards God and man. It describes that attitude of mind which respects man and honors God. It can be defined as "reverence towards the one and only God, and the kind of life that he would wish us to lead." A Greek scholar, Xenophon, describes a godly man in the following terms: "So pious and devoutly religious that he

would take no step apart from the will of heaven; so just and upright that he never did even a trifling injury to any living soul; so self-controlled, so temperate, that he never at any time chose the sweeter in place of the bitter; so sensible and wise and prudent that in distinguishing the better from the worse he never erred".

Godliness brings the sanctifying presence of God into all the experiences of life. It keeps the believer from becoming hard and defiant toward opponents or succumbing to the temptation of a mere stoical endurance. The godly person lives above the petty things of life, the passions and pressures that control the lives of others. The godly man or woman seeks to do the will of God (Rom. 12:2) and, as they do, they seek the welfare of others, making the kind of decisions that are right and noble, not taking the "easy" path simply to avoid either pain or trial, and doing what is right because it is right and because it is the will of God.

And Dr. Wayne Barber adds this;

Remember that Worship is NOT a feeling! As we act upon the Truth we have learned in the Word, the Spirit begins to develop His character within us and the spiritual knowledge (gnosis) becomes so practical that God begins to address every need of your life. You begin to find yourself experiencing self-control in areas you never thought possible and you can bear up under things that before were seemingly impossible circumstances. Godliness comes out of this quality of obedient faith and one result is the ability to worship well. Jesus "worshiped" His Father when He said, ". . . not My will, but Thine be done." The essence of *real* worship is when we say "No" to our flesh and "Yes" to God. Paul explains worship in Rom. 12:1;

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, [which is] your (lit.) *spiritual service of worship*.

Worship is offering a sacrifice to God on the Altar of the Cross. Worship is not a feeling you get when someone sings a wonderful song at church.

Worship is a verb, a response to what God has done in my life; “Not my will but thine be done” is the essence of genuine worship. This is what leads to a life characterized by “godliness”. There is a pseudo-godliness Paul warns us to avoid describing those in the last days who are “. . . holding to a form of godliness”, although they have denied its power. What is the power of real godliness? It's the power to lay my life down in order for Christ to be glorified in me.

Second is what Paul called “useless wrangling” – men sitting in pipe-smoke filled rooms discussing irrelevant theories and theological speculations as well as the meaning and application of words and phrases that only engage the pride of the intellectual mind and have no basis or relevancy to the mind of the Spirit.

I like Barnes’ approach to this;

They are first described as "puffed up," ("inflated egos") men filled with a lot of hot air. In light of their arrogance, it is no surprise that false teachers speak "out arrogant words of vanity." These men are deceived and are blinded by their excessive pride! They are so deceived that they think they know spiritual things but they have no comprehension of spiritual truth. They are spiritual "know nothings!" and their wisdom is "earthly".

And Barclay adds;

His first characteristic is conceit. His first aim is self-display. His desire is not to display Christ, but to display himself. There are still preachers and teachers who are more concerned to gain a following for themselves than for Jesus Christ.

Besides being able to recognize elementary doctrines (that seem to be promoted these days as being deep and profound), true spiritual discernment coupled with growing doctrinal understanding, can also sense the spirit *behind* the message.

Spiritual discernment is the ability to see what’s underneath the surface. As long as we are “children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine” and have immature and untrained spiritual senses, we will never be able to know, with any degree of confidence, who or what to avoid or withdraw from. If something sounds good

and uses all the right words, and is emotionally inspiring, we'll either run with it or at least hesitate to go Berean on it.

Paul saw these things as dangerous and extremely important; our generation sees them as simply differences of opinion and we should avoid any degree of over-examination that might result in offending someone.

The next thing Paul lists is the need to avoid anyone who sees "godliness as a means of gain". In Paul's time (as well as in ours) some believed that to be a successful Christian implies being a rich Christian. It's like giving an appeal to come to Christ so that you can have God's help getting wealthy. I'll re-read something I shared the first part of last month to show what this looks like in our generation. Some of you might have heard of Tim Tebow, but he's only one of the most recent, there are dozens of "health and wealth" gospel proponents out there today, probably more than ever. Here's the promo that Tebow's group (called "Life Surge") uses;

Life Surge is a one-day, live and in-person experience where thousands of local Christians gather to be inspired, trained, and equipped to leave an impact on God's Kingdom. At Life Surge, you'll learn why and how to create and multiply financial resources for Kingdom impact. Our purpose is to know God and make Him Known and we have a vision to see God's Kingdom Surge worldwide. We're not only passionate about this vision, but we're also committed to making it a reality through live events, ongoing education, and hands-on training. . . this is a movement, not a concept; a transformation, not a trend. For more than 25 years, we've helped thousands of investors build long-term wealth . . .

In Matt. 8:20 Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Jesus wouldn't have been a successful Christian by today's standards.

Besides being an idolatrous slander against God's Name and gospel, the thing that bothers me most about "godliness as a means of gain" movements is the way they could affect poverty-stricken Christians around the world if those Christians view

themselves and measure their Christianity by the “Health and Wealth” standards of the Western world.

In vs’s 6-10 Paul contrasts the false with the true when it comes to godliness;

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

I see this as Paul’s reminder to all of us to not forget that we are not of this world. The world system; it’s culture; it’s mindset – all of these things went into the ground when Christ was buried and the resurrection initiated a different and completely *new* “system, culture and mindset” which has nothing in common with the inward driving forces of this world.

And of course, since the context is Timothy, the warning is to believers to understand experientially, not just intellectually, that when we were joined to Christ, we shared His cross (a death to the old creation) and His resurrection (a new life in a new creation). That’s why we pick up our cross daily and it’s why God must consistently apply the true meaning of the Cross to us in order to progressively detach us from the world we left to make room for the experience and understanding of the world we have now entered through our second birth.

In vs’s 11-12 Paul gets kind of intense with Timothy;

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

In other words, Paul’s plea to Timothy would be something like “. . . what I’m saying is more important than you may realize now, but trust me, the importance of what I’m telling you can’t be exaggerated.”

Godliness, the manifest life of Christ in us, is the opposite of both the religious and anti-religious life of this world system. The most dangerous thing a Christian can do is pass by the island of the sirens with their ears uncovered.

The world's appeal, especially in terms of the attractiveness of its "form of godliness" as an appeal to the Christian, is irresistible without the spiritual growth needed to "fight the good fight of faith" – to recognize, to discern, the danger and be able to "flee these things" and lay hold on the *only* life that has eternal value.

As Sparks put it;

There is one comprehensive and all-embodying truth which, if it really gained the complete mastery of our hearts and dominated our whole consciousness, capturing our will, our hearts, and our minds, would revolutionize everything, just as the new covenant represents a revolution from the old covenant. The great truth which embodies everything is this: that God has determined that nothing which is not Christ shall remain, and He is working toward that end, on the one hand to rid this universe, and to rid our souls, of everything that is not Christ; on the other hand, to fill this universe with that which is Christ. That means that God does not accept or recognize anything whatever that is not Christ. Then again, it means that God puts His seal upon what is at least a measure of Christ. It is a tremendous thing when that really does come to our hearts with the force and the power which it represents. It explains everything of God's dealings with us. It gives us the key to our problems. It sets us at once upon the highway of God's own purpose.

Paul is telling us that the Cross allows us to turn our backs to the world system and to everything, even things within the Church, that represent the mind of that system, religious or otherwise, and set our faces like flint to pursue the mind of Christ. I remember that one of Keith Green's albums was simply titled, "No Compromise"! It's a "fight of faith" to do this, but the rewards in this life and in the life to come, make it more than worth the effort to refuse to compromise with anything that limits or contradicts what the Lord desires for us.

So, the main warning Paul is giving in the section of Timothy we looked at tonight is on how vital it is that we never compromise regardless of what the consequences may be.