



First Timothy

Guard God's Gift

Avoid Chatter and Squabbles

I Timothy 6:20, 21

Lesson Thirty-Six

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum



First Timothy

A Study of the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to His Son in the Faith

Guard God's Gift—I Timothy 6:20, 21

Today's lesson has a short Scripture. It is only two verses. But what a powerful message we find in these few words. Paul is wrapping up his letter to Timothy. He seems to be summarizing all that he has said in these few words. And, if we look back at all we have studied in this letter, we will see that he comes close to doing just that. Read I Timothy 6:20, 21.

It would be good to point out that when Paul began these final words, he used Timothy's name. That name has meaning, beyond just what he called his son in the ministry. Timothy is made up of two words. The first means honor. The second is the word *theos*. That is the word for god. For the Christian it meant God the creator, the Father of Jesus, the Lord of all. So, Timothy's name literally meant *honor God*. And if we read what follows the name, we see how well it fits Paul's purpose here.

Because, Paul told Timothy to "guard what has been entrusted to your care." When Paul used the word entrusted, Timothy probably thought of something deposited...like you deposit money in the bank. Or maybe you "entrust" your car or bicycle to a friend. What we expect of the bank or our friend is that they are going to keep our deposit safe, and use it the way we trusted them to use it. If you deposit money in a checking account, you expect to be able to write checks on it and for the money to be available to cover the amount of the check. If we trust our bicycle to a friend, we expect that friend to use it to maybe take himself or herself to the grocery store to get food, or even to ride it carefully for some fun.

What had Timothy been entrusted with and by whom? We can go back to the first chapter where Paul told Timothy that he was (1) to challenge the false teachers. At the end of that chapter, Paul told Timothy that (2) he had faith and a good conscience. Timothy had been given good (3) instruction as a teacher of the church in chapters three, four, five and six. Paul had taught Timothy many things, like (4) the way to deal with false teachers, at the beginning of chapter four. He told Timothy in that chapter (5) not to have anything to do with "godless myths and old wives tails." He reminded Timothy, in chapter four that Timothy (6) had a spiritual gift and that he was to (7) watch his life and his beliefs as he used that gift.

In chapter six, Paul reminded Timothy that (8) he had been called in God's sight. So, we see that when Paul said that Timothy was to guard what had been "entrusted" to his care, he was summarizing a whole list of things. God and Paul trusted Timothy with many things, now Paul, recognizing the great value of all that had been given to Timothy, uses the word "guard."

Does that mean that someone might try to steal these things from Timothy? No. It means that they were of great value, and that Timothy was to use them well, just as God had trusted him to do. The word here definitely doesn't mean hide what God had given Timothy, or build a fence around it.

Guard here means use them well. It might be like telling your friend to guard your car when you expected her to use it well and for the purpose you had agreed that she would use it. The car is of value to you. You want it cared for and used for the right purposes. That is exactly



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what Paul is telling Timothy to do here. God had given Timothy all this responsibility and opportunity. Paul said, respect it, and use it for what God intended.

Then Paul told Timothy to “avoid talk-show religion and the practiced confusion of the so-called experts. People caught up in a lot of talk can miss the whole point of faith.” That is the way *The Message* translates the last part of verse twenty and the first part of verse twenty-two. What Paul is telling Timothy to avoid is what some would call “pseudo-intellectualism.” That is false “smarts.” Some people get to know a little and then assume, or want you to assume, that they know a lot. They learn some big words, or technical words, and use them to impress people when they really don’t know much of what they are talking about.

Another way of looking at this idea of “what is falsely called knowledge” is to see it as getting so wrapped up in *knowing* that you don’t do anything. There are two ways Christians go wrong. First, clever arguments. We can spend so much time creating “sayings” or “sound bites” that we miss the opportunity to dig into the “meat of the Word.” Paul was frustrated with the church at Corinth, because he was forced to continue to feed them with milk...like infants. These are people who won’t grow up. (I Corinthians 3:2) Christianity isn’t a sound bite religion. All some people get are sayings like “What would Jesus do?” or “Praise the Lord.” or “Get into the Word.” That is not Christianity, that is what Paul was talking about here. It is religious talk that leads nowhere. It is a religion of clichés.

Second, some Christians never get enough knowledge. Some people spend all their time studying about God, even about Scripture, but they never get enough to do anything about what they know. That is like the mechanic who goes to automobile repair school all the time. He never takes what he has learned and fixes cars. What that kind of endless study often leads to is argument about who is right, and the students of the Word spend all their time quarreling with one another and never get around to sharing the Good News with those who need to hear.

Paul says that either way, “sound bite” religion or quarreling about who’s right leads people away from the very faith they claim to have. How sad. It’s like a group of doctors who are well equipped to heal the sick, spending all their time thinking up cute ways to describe diseases and studying so that they can argue about the best treatments. They do no one any good, and get far away from their oath to heal the sick.

Paul ends with a prayer that the wonderful grace of God will be with Timothy and the church at Ephesus. What greater prayer could there be?

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

Lesson Goal: To encourage students not to sit around all the time, studying the Bible, but after studying carefully, get out and tell others about the God of the Bible who sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world.

Scripture Memory: “Grace be with you.” I Timothy 6:21b



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Student Worksheet—Following Through

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>What does the name Timothy mean?

>What does the word “entrusted” mean?

>What eight things did Paul say God had entrusted to Timothy?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

>What are two ways Christians go wrong?

- 1.
- 2.

For Memory: “Grace be with you.” I Timothy 6:21b

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.