

Flee, Fight and Take Hold of Eternal Life

- 1 Timothy 6:3-19

Suggested Questions from the Text

These questions are designed to help you consider the text as you read.

1 Timothy 6:3-11 – Flee from These Things

- 'The love of money leads to loss' - how can we be tempted by false teaching promoting greed and material gain?
- How can we fall into the trap of routine and comfort – falling back rather than fighting forward?

1 Timothy 6:12-16 – Take Hold of Eternal Life

- How does our view of eternal life and purpose affect our attitudes to our gifts – time, talent and treasure?
- 'Eternal life exists to be enjoyed now' – how can we keep the promise of eternal life active in our thinking?

1 Timothy 6:17-19 – Not to be Arrogant or Set Hope on the Uncertainty of Wealth

- How does the truth that everything (time, talents, treasure) is provided by God give freedom for generosity?
- How you will respond to this instruction? What will you pledge (christcentral.church/pledge-19)?

Sermon Overview (Flee, Fight and Take Hold of Eternal Life)

Stewardship is not just about money. The term stewardship comes from the recognition that God is the creator of all life, that he is the maker of all things and that all things belong to him. He is the owner, the provider of all things. That makes us merely stewards - with a responsibility to manage what we have been given on behalf of the owner. To steward not just our money - our treasure - but also our time and our talents, all given to us by God, to be used in worship of him. Over the past few months and years we have been confronted by challenges – most recently a church plant, where a number of our faithful givers moved to Fareham – yet God has provided for our needs and we have seen our regular income increase to more than it was before we planted. The Church, and God Himself, do not need your treasure, time or talents – but as stewards we are each called to manage wisely that which God has given to us.

Fight to Flee for the Sake of Your Faith

Timothy is instructed to flee in order to fight the good fight of faith (v11) – and so it is important we look at what we are to flee. Verses 3-5 describe the false teachings and behaviour of which Paul is speaking – particularly with the motive of material gain and greed. We need to flee from these things – not running for the sake of running, but an active, purposeful run to pursue God and His righteousness.

The love of money leads to loss. Paul contrasts this false doctrine of greed by saying godliness with contentment is great gain (v6). We often believe the lie that if we are not gaining, we are staying the same – but this is not the case. Everything in existence is moving in the direction of chaos and disorder. It's the same with our faith. Godliness with contentment is great gain - the alternative isn't everything stays the same, we can get by, we just won't have the gain. If your faith isn't getting stronger as you live out our life, it's getting weaker.

It takes a fight to flee from this trap. Are you still fighting, or have you got comfortable with all your material possessions around you? This world is going to tell you that happiness in this life is found in what you accumulate. It's a constant narrative running in the back of all our minds - a narrative you need to fight against.

Reach Out and Grab the Life to Which You Have Been Called

So you're fighting against materialism, fighting against the human tendency toward greed, you're pursuing godliness and right living free from the love of money, and Paul still tells Timothy to take hold of the eternal life to which he was called (v12). It's not enough to be running after godliness, to live right with regard your financial priorities - or anything else for that matter. We need to live every moment of our lives doggedly clinging on to the fact that this life here on earth is not what life is ultimately all about.

Eternal life exists to be enjoyed now. Live your life here in preparation for there. How tragic it would be to waste the time we have now in seeking after things that will not endure. Why spend our God given time, talents and treasure on eternally insignificant endeavours? When we live with eternity in mind, we value our relationship with God above all other things, we nurture it, we invest in it, we live to honour God and glorify him above all other things.

Be Careful Your Riches Don't Rob Your Reward

If it was a problem for the rich in first century Asia to set their hope in their wealth, how much more so is that a temptation in today's society, with everything made for our convenience for our pleasure and enjoyment. Yet Paul warns Timothy to tell us there is a way we are to use the riches we possess if we want to be able to take hold of eternal life, if we want treasure, a reward, in the coming age.

Paul doesn't command the rich just to give a percentage of their income - he instructs them to do what is good in light of all God has given them. This frees us from law and liberates us to radical generosity. It's not all about money - be generous with your time, with your talents, and your treasure – everything God has given to you.