



# International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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## **1 Timothy 6:11-21** **English Standard Version** **February 25, 2018**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, February 25, 2018**, is from **1 Timothy 6:11-21**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

**(1 Timothy 6:11) But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.**

Paul wrote to Timothy as a “man of God.” Though Timothy was a minister, Paul used “man of God” to include and apply to anyone who claimed to be a follower of Jesus Christ. In 1 Timothy 6:1-10, Paul wrote that all Christians should avoid becoming conceited, developing an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction, pursuing godliness as a means to financial gain, and loving money (a root of all kinds of evil). Rather, when tempted to follow the ways of the world, a Christian will flee from these temptations and replace them with the pursuit of Christian virtues.

**Righteousness** includes trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and obeying His teachings throughout the New Testament. Righteousness includes striving to maintain a right relationship with God and others based on the objective truth of the Bible. “For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” (Romans 1:17).

**Godliness** includes following the example of Jesus Christ. Paul commanded: “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Godliness involves taking time to prayerfully “contemplate the Lord’s glory,” which results in being “transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18). Faith in Jesus Christ and knowledge of the truth leads to godliness; therefore, we trust in Jesus Christ and study the Bible with the Holy Spirit’s help (Titus 1:1).

**Faith** includes trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and trusting God will fulfill all His promises in the Bible through Christ. Faith involves obeying God with the faith that God is with us and we can depend on Him to work out all things for our good (Romans 8:28). As Christians, we live by faith in Jesus Christ.

**Love** includes the **JOY** of putting **Jesus** first, **Others** second, and **Yourself** third. Jesus described His love for us and what He expected from us as His followers: “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:9-11). Jesus commanded us to love and Jesus lived in love as an example for us: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34). Selfishness and self-centeredness is the opposite of love. Paul wrote: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others” (Philippians 2:3-4). See also Paul’s explanation of love in 1 Corinthians 13.

**Endurance** includes “keeping on keeping on” while trusting and obeying Jesus with the Holy Spirit’s help as we face various trials, temptations, diseases, persecutions, spiritual enemies, and other afflictions that come

from living in a fallen world prior to the return of Jesus Christ. Prayerful Bible study increases our faith and spiritual endurance.

**Gentleness** is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that we should practice in all of our relationships (see Galatians 5:22 & 23). Our tongues can be used to show anger and impatience or to express lovingkindness and a willingness to be helpful. In many ways, Jesus showed gentleness to others as our example. Compared to what He could have said and done, Jesus spoke the truth with authority and gentleness to the scribes and Pharisees who wanted to kill him and even to Pilate. Paul wrote to the Colossians: “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Colossians 3:12).

**(1 Timothy 6:12) Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.**

Sharing the good news of God in Jesus Christ and expressing the necessity for people to repent of their sins and trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior to receive eternal life involves a fight against sinful inclinations and spiritual enemies. But Christians fight spiritually in the context of 1 Timothy 6:11, with Christians using all the qualities of Christian character that Paul listed and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Jesus fought by telling the truth about God the Father, Himself as the Son of God and the Way to eternal life through faith in Him. He told the truth about people’s situation as sinners and slaves to sin, among other truths. Paul wrote that to fight the good fight of faith we need to know our true enemies: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). We can win the victory with the help of the Holy Spirit using the truth of the Bible: “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4).

As Paul told Timothy, if we take hold of and remember the gift of eternal life that we have received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, then we can fight the good fight of the faith and leave the consequences in the Lord's hands. We can remember our confession of faith before the Church and the prayers that were said in our behalf. Since Timothy was commissioned (or ordained) by the Church as a minister, he had special responsibilities as a leader in the Church and representative of Jesus Christ.

**(1 Timothy 6:13) I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,**

Applying Paul's words to our own situation as Christians, we can fight the good fight with confidence because we are doing so "in the sight of God." We are not alone. God is with us and watching over us. God in Christ gives life to everything, and that includes us. We are in God's hands, and our eternal life is assured by God's grace through Jesus Christ. When Jesus spoke, He told the truth before Pilate, and though He suffered under Pontius Pilate, He rose from the dead and will raise us. We can have confidence in the promises of Christ should we face death for telling the truth about God and Jesus as Jesus did. In the light of these truths, Paul made a charge to Timothy that we can consider a charge to us.

**(1 Timothy 6:14) to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

The command includes fighting the good fight of the faith. The command involves speaking the truth in love and praying for divine help to defeat the "powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil." Jesus has given us a command to obey with a promise: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). If we die, as Stephen did from being stoned to death, Jesus will

stand up for us and that day we will be with Him in paradise. If we fight the good fight of faith, some may eventually believe and receive the gift of eternal life. Whereas others may perish: “They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:10). The Bible emphasizes that Christianity is true, that we speak the truth about Christianity, and that believers must love the truth. Finally, we have the assurance that Jesus Christ, our Lord, will come again and make all things new and right.

**(1 Timothy 6:15) which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,**

Paul reaffirmed that Jesus Christ will come again according to God the Father’s timing, and then Paul broke into spontaneous words of praise that declared the truth about God. God is blessed (or happy). God is the only Ruler, for all other “rulers” are under His authority and power. There may be kings around the world, but God is the King above all kings and their rule depends ultimately on God; their life and future moment-by-moment are in God’s Hands whether they know these facts or not: “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will” (Proverbs 21:1—KJV). There may be lords under kings, but God is the Lord over all kings and all lords.

**(1 Timothy 6:16) who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.**

Paul continues to tell the truth about God. Praise involves proclaiming the truth about God. Telling the truth about Jesus to other people includes praising Jesus. God is immortal or eternal in and of himself. God needs nothing and no one outside of himself to remain immortal; whereas, all life and the eternal life of believers depends wholly on God. God is light, so bright that we cannot see or look upon Him. So bright that we cannot see

how to approach Him. God is brighter than the sun that would blind us if we looked long upon it with the naked eye. We can only see God by seeing Jesus, the light of the world: “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). And Jesus said that those who follow Him are also the light of the world, because they can make it possible for people to see Jesus and come to Jesus and glorify God the Father (see Matthew 5:14-16). Finally, though many in this world seek honor and might, true and lasting honor and might belong to God alone: His honor and might are not fleeting, but forever and ever.

**(1 Timothy 6:17) As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.**

Paul wrote earlier: “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Timothy 6:10). Paul did not say being rich was evil, but just as being poor can lead to many temptations, so can being rich. In the Book of Proverbs, we read: “Two things I ask of you, LORD; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God” (Proverbs 30:7-9). Almost every year we hear about someone who has come to a sorry end because they put their hope in wealth and not in God. Whether rich or poor, God wants us to enjoy the world He has created for us; but even more than enjoying God’s good creation, we can always enjoy our relationship with God in Jesus Christ and never be sorry for the time we have spent with the Lord in the study of His Word.

**(1 Timothy 6:18) They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,**

Paul commanded Timothy to specifically command those in the church who were rich to use their wealth with compassion for others. Those who are rich can use their wealth in ways that can make a difference. They can pray for the Lord Jesus to show them ways they can use their wealth to meet the needs of others, even as the poor are praying for the Lord to meet their needs. How wonderful when the Lord leads the rich to answer the prayers of the poor. In the Book of Acts, Tabitha was rich in good deeds, in helping the poor, and clothing the widows in the church in Joppa (see Acts 9:36 & 39). Jesus had good reasons to answer the prayers of those Tabitha helped, of those who loved her, by raising her from the dead through Peter (see Acts 9:40). Those who love God more than money will look for ways to be generous and share with others, especially the good news of Jesus.

**(1 Timothy 6:19) thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.**

Those who are rich or poor need to maintain an eternal perspective. Through faith in Jesus Christ and following the Lord's leading, both rich and poor can lay up treasure for themselves by doing good deeds as the Lord enables them. Jesus told one who was rich: "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). The wealthy ruler chose neither to help the poor nor follow Jesus. Notice: whether we are rich or poor, Paul looked beyond our receiving treasure in heaven to the coming age when Jesus returns as He promised and believers reign with Him over the new heaven and earth. Whether rich or poor, if we follow Jesus Christ using the power and the gifts He gives us, we will lay up treasure as a firm foundation for Jesus using us more effectively when He returns, or we return with Him from heaven (whichever comes first). The life that is truly life is not financial gain and the things of this world, but following and serving Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (see John 14:6).

**(1 Timothy 6:20) O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,”**

Every believer receives gifts from God, often called talents. God entrusts these gifts or talents to us to use and care for and not abuse by neglect, misuse, or in other ways. These gifts are treasures we receive from God to use on earth for our benefit and the benefit of others as we share them. Paul warned that we can be turned away from using our gifts effectively if we turn to godless chatter; that is, speech that is contrary to the example and teachings of Jesus Christ (not just profanity). Some people turn away from following Jesus Christ to fighting others in the church; they will use the Bible to invent false ideas based on a false philosophy or a false psychology or both and then argue with anyone who will listen to them about these ideas. Believers can be tempted to turn from what the Lord wants them to do with their gifts to focusing on arguing with and putting down others with their so-called “knowledge.” Paul wrote to the Colossians, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ” (Colossians 2:8). And to the Corinthians, Paul wrote: “I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Corinthians 1:10). By keeping our focus on following Jesus Christ and obeying His commands according to the Scriptures with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will avoid many errors and be united in mind and thought with those who follow and obey Jesus Christ.

**(1 Timothy 6:21) for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you.**

People can profess to believe and promote the ideas of someone they consider famous in the church or in church history, whether they have rightly understood their teachings or not. They can then use these ideas to

put down other sincere Christians who perhaps follow some other famous person in the church or church history. Paul tried to correct this problem in the Church in Corinth, but it still exists today: “Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, ‘Do not go beyond what is written.’ Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other” (1 Corinthians 4:6). Too many people have gone beyond what the Bible clearly teaches and have departed from the faith and have misled others. Surely, all Christians need the grace of God, which enables us to avoid many problems and stay true to the Bible.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. According to Paul, what are the six virtues that Christians should pursue?
2. Choose two of the virtues Paul named that you deem the most important and give a reason for your choices.
3. Why can we fight the good fight of faith with confidence?
4. How did Paul describe God?
5. Where should all believers, including rich believers, place their hope? What does Paul command the rich believers to do?