

April 12/13, 2025

The Great Gain of Godliness *God's Design for the Church in 1 Timothy*

1 Timothy 6:3-21
Pastor Ryan Harmon

If this morning, you had to make a choice between either being rich or being godly, which one would you choose? Now there's no cheating, okay? It's a hypothetical question. I know it's true that you can be both rich and godly. I affirm that is true. But for this hypothetical question, this little game, you've got to choose one. Would you choose to be rich and all that comes with that, or would you choose a life marked by godliness and all that comes with that? The ability to get more stuff or the capacity to be content with what you currently have? I believe our answer to that question, the answer that lies maybe underneath what we know we're supposed to say, reveals a lot about our actual beliefs, what we truly believe about wealth, about riches, about money, and what we truly believe about godliness. Is godliness worth it? Is it worthy of our passionate pursuit? That's what we want to consider together this morning.

So, open your Bibles up with me to 1 Timothy, Chapter 6. We're going to be concluding our study in this short little book this morning. Last week, Bryan finished in verse 2. He went into chapter 6, verse 2, and that's going to be precisely where we pick it up this morning, as we consider Paul's closing words to his young mentee, his young protege, Timothy. So at the end of verse 2, Paul says, **"Teach and preach these principles."**

It's important that we begin at the end of verse two, because that phrase serves as a hinge between all that's come before and then all that Paul is going to say is yet to come. He says to **teach**, in other words: instruct...preach...proclaim...exhort the congregation. **Teach and preach these principles.** He's referring to all that he said already, and all he's going to say as **principles**. And in doing so, he's using a word that was quite common in philosophical circles in the first century. This word **principles** refers to *first things, elementary things, the basic building blocks, the fundamental beliefs*. That's all that Paul has said, thus far. He's given these fundamental principles, these fundamental basics of authentic Christian faith.

We know that false teachers were a problem in Ephesus, and the false teachers were giving alternate versions of truth, alternate versions of knowledge. But what Paul gave to Timothy, and Timothy was then charged with passing on to the congregation in Ephesus, was the real stuff: authentic Christianity. The outline of the *true faith* is the doctrine that makes up that which we believe, that which we hold to be true, and we, as a church, are called to uphold. So, Timothy is to **teach and preach these principles**. That refers to what's been said and then what is about to be said. So Paul continues in verse 3:

If anyone advocates a different doctrine... (*NASB, 1 Timothy 6:1a)

So this is referring to the false teachers. Paul is beginning this last chapter right where he began the entire book. We know that false teachers were his primary concern. In fact, that's the very reason that he had Timothy stay behind in Ephesus, rather than joining him on his journey to Macedonia. Timothy was to stay, and Paul said in 1 Timothy 1, verse 3, that he was to stay in order that he would instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, different doctrines. This is a major concern for Paul. It's a big deal to him, and the question is, "Why?" "Why was that such a big deal?" The answer is, "Because the truth is incredibly important!"

We have talked for a number of weeks about the reality of the truth. That's come up over and over again in our study in 1 Timothy. The church is called to uphold the truth. The truth is important in our lives. Our job is to essentially have our lives aligned with what is actually true. We want our beliefs to line up, to be aligned with what is actually true. But the way life works is, it's quite possible that as we go through life, we pick up beliefs; we pick up ideas that are misaligned, are not aligned with the truth. And so it's very possible, in fact it's very likely, that even right now, all of us in this room hold some beliefs that are not true. And having beliefs that aren't aligned with the truth, starts to set us on a very precarious course. It puts us on a very unfirm foundation, a shaky foundation.

A few weeks ago, when we were talking about the truth, I used this analogy of my old car with a broken fuel gauge. Every time I drive in that car, it is a great adventure. I never know how it's going to go. I told you during that time, that what is way more important than what I believe about the quantity of fuel that I have, is how much fuel I actually have. What is true about the amount of fuel I have will determine whether or not I'm able to get where I'm trying to go, or whether I'm going to be on the side of the road calling for help. I could believe that I have a full tank. I can believe that all I want, but it makes little difference if it's not actually true. That's the way that truth works. Nothing's ever become true because I believe it really strongly, or because lots of us believe it. Nothing has ever become true because anyone believes it. Truth doesn't change. Truth is solid. Our job is to align our lives and our beliefs with the truth. Now, the reason that's so important is to not be aligned with the truth, sets one on a path that will lead to chaos and destruction and ruin. And that means that if there is anyone advocating for something other than the truth, they ultimately are harming those they are instructing. They're leading them down a path that will lead to a painful end, a painful realization. So those who advocate different or strange doctrine was of great concern to Paul, because they actually were doing great harm to the people that they were leading. So Paul again says,

If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words (*Sound words are healthy words, words full of integrity, wholeness*) and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, (Vs. 1-3)

So how do we know if words are sound words, if teaching contains sound words, if it's healthy teaching, true teaching? Well, two indicators are listed out here in verse 3. First of all, sound teaching is aligned with who Jesus was and with what He taught. It's aligned with Jesus Christ Himself. And second of all, sound teaching conforms to godliness. I might even say sound teaching doesn't just conform with godliness, it also leads to and produces godliness. Sound teaching leads to sound living. As we believe the truth, as it's taught to us and we believe it, it starts to reform our very lives. Our lives look different.

A few weeks ago, we talked about the role of the elder, the overseer in the church. It said this is a group of qualified men who are called to define and then guard sound teaching: the doctrine, the essential principles, the elementary foundational truths that we are to uphold. It said it's important that we understand those men who are called must be qualified. And so when we turn to chapter 3, Paul then lists qualifications for those elders and overseers. I find it very instructive, very interesting, that it's important that they're able to teach. That's important. But the long list of qualifications that Paul names has mostly to do with their character...who they are. It's important that they teach the right things, that they uphold the truth. But the reason that's so important is because that starts to take shape in a life, and their very lives are to be conformed to the truth of the teaching that they are to uphold. They teach what is true, and their lives start to mirror that truth, because they are becoming different people. Sound teaching leads to sound living.

Now that's true of what is true, and it's also true of falsehood. To teach falsehood, to believe what is false, will also begin to shape a life. And as Paul continues, he's going to tell us about the internal life of those who teach false things. Verse 4: The false teacher...

...he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness means gain. (Vs. 4-5)

Now that is an unflattering picture. Sound teaching conforms to godliness. It produces godliness in a person. False teaching does the exact opposite. He says, "The false teacher **has a morbid interest in controversial questions.**" Now, I think it's important that we affirm that there's nothing wrong with asking questions. In fact, I think asking questions can be quite good for our faith. I love when I have the opportunity to sit down with our youth or with our college students and just say, "Ask anything. Let's ask any question; the hard ones are the best ones. Let's dig in, because we believe that what we hold to be true is not going to be rattled or shaken by a hard question." We can walk through those questions, but there is a big difference between asking a question in order to arrive at the truth and asking a question just to stir up controversy. There are people who like to ask questions, but their goal is not to arrive at something sure. Their goal is just to stir

people up, just to create confusion, just to gain listeners. Whether they ever arrive at anything solid and sure and true is not important to them. What's important is the gathering of the crowd.

Call these pot-stirrers, instigators, people looking to stir up divisiveness and chaos. He says that they're of **depraved mind and deprived of the truth**. These pot-stirrers are focused on confusing people. Now maybe people are quite interested. It's an interesting conversation, but the fact that it never arrives at anything sure is a major problem. It sets people on a dangerous course. And what's worse is that Paul says that these false teachers have made a profession out of this...Professional Pot-stirrers...pot-stirrers who are getting a profit from how well they stir the pot. He says that they suppose that godliness means gain, and gain in this sense is profit, making a living off stirring up trouble. This happened in Ephesus, and I think we can all agree, it still happens today.

There are people who make it their goal in life, just to ask questions that cause problems, that create doubt, that never are intended or aimed at actually arriving at something true and sure and good. Turn on the television and you'll see it everywhere. Or on the internet, you'll see it everywhere. The reason for that is it does attract attention. It gets people's eyeballs on that conversation. We like questions. We like things that maybe even stir up controversy. Our world runs on this. It gets clicks. It's true then; it's true now.

We can't really know what exactly they were asking...what the questions were...what the content of their teaching was. We kind of assume that by what Paul is saying, but what we can be very clear on, is they had one motivation. Their motivation was selfish gain. It wasn't helping people step into the truth and live life the way it's meant to be lived. It was to make money. Pride was driving them. So, they supposed that godliness, the things of religion, were a means of gain. Godliness is not to be sought in order to make a profit. It's not to be sought as a means of gain. I think we can look at Paul's life and affirm that Paul didn't do any of these things because he gained so much. He did these things because they were true. Godliness is not to be sought as a means of gain. But then Paul says something a little confusing in verse 6:

But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

So here's a paradox. Godliness is not to be sought as a means of gain. That's the wrong motivation. But Paul also affirms godliness actually does produce gain, and not just gain, but great gain. **Godliness is a means of great gain.** The term godliness has come up a number of times in 1 Timothy, and we've defined it different ways. We've talked about how God is the head of the household, the Church, and, as members of His household, we are learning the family rules so to speak, becoming more like Him, learning to operate in His household. That's one way of thinking about godliness, saying godliness is Christ-likeness. It's becoming more like Jesus.

Paul, in Romans, says that those who belong to God are called to be conformed to the image of His Son. I think it's important that we understand that when we talk about godliness, we can describe it in different ways, because when Paul says the word godliness, he's not talking about a rule or a law or legalism or a box that someone needs to fit into. So, it's tempting for us to think, "Well, what is it, so I can check it off?" What Paul is talking about is a life, the type of life that has been made available to us: life surrendered to God, marked by Him, and a totally different type of life. It can be described in different ways. I think about the word *healthy*. It's a little bit like that. I could say to you, "You know, so and so is a very healthy person." And you might say, "Well, is his blood pressure good?" And I'd say, "Well, yes, that's one aspect of health." "Does he exercise?" "Yes, that's part of being healthy." "Does he eat the right diet?" "Well, yes, that's part of being healthy." All of that makes up this idea, this concept of living in a healthy way. Godliness is a description of a type of life that's been made available to us. It's a different kind of life.

As I've been thinking about godliness, my mind has gone back over and over again to Jesus' very words. In Mark chapter 12, verses 30 and 31, He is asked a question by someone. "***What is the greatest commandment?***" He responds and says, "***The greatest commandment is this. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength.***" In other words, "Love God with every ounce of your being, everything you've got, and love your neighbor as yourself." That's a different kind of life. That's a characterization of a type, a quality of life, a life marked by love of God and love of neighbor. It's a way of thinking about godliness. And Paul says, "**But godliness is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.**"

So now here's another paradox within this one verse. Godliness is a means of great gain, but the interesting thing about contentment is, if someone is content, then thinking about gain is nowhere on the radar. A content person isn't curious or looking to gain anything. They're very happy. They are satisfied with what they have. Their life is sufficiently cared for. And I think what Paul is helping us understand is that when you step into life with God, and you start to grow in godliness, you have been given "Him" and that means you've been given everything. And when you've been given everything, you can step into a life filled with contentment. You have everything you need because you have God.

Now, as Paul continues, he helps us understand how to think rightly about things, and that's part of what happens when we come into life with God. He starts to reform our very thinking. So, when it comes to riches, when it comes to wealth, when it comes to possessions, how should we think about those things? Paul says in verse 7 that God leads us to great gain when accompanied by contentment,

For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. (Vs. 7-8)

In other words, we think rightly about these things. We will understand that, at the end of the game, it all goes back in the box. We brought nothing with us. We will take nothing with us when we pass. Therefore, we can release our grip, this compulsive need to gather. We can set ourselves free from this compulsive desire to accumulate and, instead, we can embrace a life of simplicity, satisfaction and dependence upon God...simply abiding in and with Him. He's given me food. He's given me covering. I'm okay; I have God; He takes care of me. It's a life of freedom. I know sometimes it's hard to believe that it's a life of freedom. But it's helpful sometimes to contrast it with the alternative. And that's precisely where Paul goes next. Just consider those who don't embrace that contentment that comes with life with God. Verse 9:

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (Vs. 9-10)

The opposite of contentment—discontentment—sets one on a course of compulsive accumulation, looking out for number one, and that introduces all sorts of trouble. It's important that we pay attention to the language. Paul didn't say that riches *themselves* are wrong or are evil, but he says the *desire* for riches will lead one down a path that will fall into **temptation** and finally to **destruction**. He says it's **a snare**. A snare is a trap for **many foolish desires**. To give ourselves over, to give one's life over to this desire for more—this love of money and the endless pursuit of it—is to set our lives on a path towards ruin. The desire for wealth will inevitably become a compulsion, because you never will have enough, and it will lead to chaos and destruction and pain. And as alluring as our world paints the picture of a luxurious life, as alluring as that might be, Paul is encouraging Timothy here to reject that life, reject that value system, and instead embrace a different way. So, he says in verse 11:

But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (Vs. 11-12)

Paul's language could hardly be any stronger here. **Flee!** Run away. Run away from that temptation. I don't know about you, but when I hear the word flee, my mind immediately goes to the story of Joseph in Genesis. Remember, Joseph is the manager of Potiphar's house. In time, Potiphar's wife becomes obsessed with him and tries to seduce him, and as she grabs hold of him, what does Joseph do? He runs! In fact, if we look at the Greek translation of the Old Testament—it's called the Septuagint—it's the same word **flee**. Joseph fled...got out of there so quick that she held on to some of his clothing as he ran in the opposite direction. And in the same way, Paul is saying to Timothy, "Run away from the temptation, the desire for wealth, the love of money. Run

away and instead pursue, move towards that which can actually deliver a life that is worth living.” These things that are from above—**pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness**. Chase after that which can fully and truly satisfy. Flee! Pursue! Fight! Take hold of! All these words occur in what’s called the imperative mood. It’s a command; it’s an urging. It’s not like Paul is saying, “Hey, you know one thing you might consider, is maybe you should consider fleeing.” Not like that at all! It’s urgent! “Flee Timothy, run! Take this seriously.” We talk about how our faith is an active faith, and what we mean is we’re not active in trying to gain anything in terms of trying to impress God. But we are active in running away from that which He has freed us from and running towards the life that He has made available to us. “Chase after it,” Paul says. As Paul closes this series of charges to Timothy, he adds one more command, one more urging to Timothy. He says, in verse 13:

I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

I charge you. So one more imperative, one more command. It’s a strong word already. To charge someone is a strong thing. But then Paul adds this word of encouragement to Timothy by saying, **in the presence of God, who gives life to all things**. Now, there is a sense in which we can say this means that God is watching. God is present. And I don’t think that’s a heavy, burdensome thing. I think that’s intended to be an encouragement to Timothy. God knows. But I think it also conveys another reality. Here, Timothy is in Ephesus. I’m sure he felt quite alone. But Paul is reminding him he’s not alone. “God is present. The One who gives life to all things is present. And not only God, the Father, but Christ Jesus, is present. He’s with you. Be encouraged, Timothy. Consider Jesus the One **who testified the good confession to Pontius Pilate.**”

What an apt reminder this is even for us here on this Palm Sunday. We just sang, “Hosanna” and that’s what happened on that day. Jesus entered Jerusalem to acclaim, but soon everything turned. Before long, He stood before Pontius Pilate, and Pontius Pilate looked at Him and said, “***Are you the King of the Jews?***” And Jesus says, “***It is as you say.***” In other words, “You said it just right. You spoke the truth.” Jesus, upheld the very truth of who He was in the face of death, knowing what that confession would mean. And Paul is reminding Timothy, “Timothy, as you fight the good fight of faith, as you seek to uphold the truth, remember you’re not alone, and look to Jesus, your Lord and Savior, the One who, when faced with death, upheld the truth confidently...boldly! Take confidence. Remember Jesus’s own boldness before Pilate under the threat of death, He made the good confession.” So this verse started by saying, **I charge you in the presence of God**, and then it continues in verse 14:

...that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He (God) will bring about at the proper time—

(Vs. 14-15a)

So this final charge for Timothy to keep the commandment is simply an urging for Timothy to persevere. “Stick with it. It’s tough work you’re doing, going up against false teachers in Ephesus. Standing for the truth, I know it’s tough. Stick with it. Stick with it until the day comes that Jesus appears, to the very final culmination of history. Stick with it.”

Now it is interesting, we know, that many New Testament writers believed that was going to happen in their lifetime. And yet their life came and went, and now here we are 2000 years later, and the same charge applies to us. We, as a church, are called to stick with it until when? Until Jesus returns! May that happen in our lifetime? Possibly. May it not? It might not. It doesn’t matter. It doesn’t change the fact that we are called to live on mission, and that God is the One who has set the time, the proper time. God knows precisely when He is going to send His Son. He knows precisely the day when He is going to culminate all things. Only He knows it. Our job is to be faithful as we await that day, to be set on mission, to live for what matters. So, as Paul considers that amazing moment—that blessed moment of God sending Jesus to finally wrap up history and launch a new heaven and a new earth—he can’t help himself but be overwhelmed with praise. And so he breaks out in worship. He says in verse 15:

—He (*that is God*) who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen. (Vs. 15b-16)

It’s a beautiful two verses...just a glorious description of who God is, almost inconceivable to us. He **dwells in unapproachable light**, and yet through His Son, He’s allowed us to draw near to Him. It’s amazing! This is the motivation for mission. We serve this kind of God. We uphold the truth of who He is, because the world needs to know its Creator. This is what He’s like. Now, if you ask me, this would have been an ideal place to end this book. But Paul had a few more things he wanted to say. So he continues in the next few verses after that doxology, that abundance of praise, he then turns his attention back and he addresses the fact that within this community in Ephesus, surely there were people who were already rich. And so, knowing that he just said the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, he now addresses those who have wealth. Verse 17:

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. (Vs. 17-19)

So Paul already addressed wealth, and he said, “Money is the root of all evil,” right? That’s not what he said. That’s sometimes the way we quote it. What he said is the love of money is **a root** of all sorts of evil. The love of money...this desire...this is what leads us astray. Every time we

talk about possessions, about money, about giving, we always try our best to make it abundantly clear that it's not that wealth, in and of itself, is bad. It's not that riches are bad. It's not that possessions are bad. None of that is true. It's the unhealthy, disordered desire for those things that gets us into trouble. Money does pose a significant temptation. And the reason for that is that money introduces an opportunity—riches introduce an opportunity—to trust something other than God. So you remember Jesus in the Lord's Prayer says, **"Give us this day our daily bread."**

Well, when you have wealth, and we do need to acknowledge that compared to the first century, nearly everyone in this room qualifies as rich. None of us...very few of us...are living hand to mouth and wondering whether we actually are going to have food today. And so when you have money, any source of money, any amount of money, you can take care of yourself. You can go buy a meal. You can head over to Runza...wherever. You can get that done. And so it's easy to start to trust what's in your bank account, or what's in your 401k, or what's in your savings account, rather than trusting the source of all life. That's the temptation that money introduces. It's not that money is bad, but it is something that we need to be very cautious about. We need to be on guard against the drift, the very, very subtle drift to start to place our hope there, rather than in God. Money is not bad. It's something that God has supplied in order for us to enjoy. We just need to beware. We need to be on guard. So, Paul instructs the rich, just as he instructed Timothy, "Pursue that which matters. Set your hope on God. Pursue a life of godliness." Why? "So that they might take hold of that which is **life indeed**." It's one of my favorite descriptions of the life that we've been given. Some of your translations might say *the life that is truly life*. That's what we've been given: actual life...real life...life as God intended it. Life with Him, connected to the Creator is the life that's **life indeed**. So finally, Paul closes with one last encouragement charge to Timothy. **O Timothy**, he says in verse 20:

O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly *and* empty chatter *and* the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge" – which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.

Grace be with you. (Vs. 20-21)

To say some have gone astray, is to say that some have gotten off track, stepped out of alignment with what God intends for His people and what He intends for His Church. So here, as we close, I think it's important for us to say and affirm the gratitude that we have that this very church, I think I can say with confidence, has been characterized by remaining on track for over 60 years. It's not to say we're perfect, not to say that, but it is to say that the overwhelming testimony of this church is it has been on mission for God to make Christ's name known. We are part of a heritage of faith, a heritage of faith that has been faithful to the mission. But it's so important that we remember that past success, past faithfulness, is no guarantee of present or future faithfulness. It's no guarantee that 10 years from now, we will be a church that is on mission, that is on track. For 60 years, men and women—godly men and godly women—have taken up the call to be about the work of God,

to uphold the truth in the world. Their time came and their time went, and now in this generation—and by this generation—here’s what I mean: Us! All of us who call this our church home. The past congregations 40 years ago, that congregation has now, over time, passed the baton to us. And the question is, “Will this generation take the baton and run? Run with endurance, run with passion the race that God set before us? Will we stretch out in faith, to take up the call, to represent Jesus, to uphold the truth, to be the church according to God’s design?”

Paul said, in the middle of this book to Timothy, *“I’m writing you, hoping to come to you soon, but in case I’m delayed, I’m writing so that you will know how to conduct yourself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.”* That’s what we’re called to be. So, we ask as we close this study, “Is the truth worth upholding?” And we would say, “Yes, helping people align their lives to the truth allows them to step into life as it was meant to be lived. It says that the life that is **life indeed** is a truly satisfying one, and we’d affirm again, it is the life that God intends. It’s the life from above.” The only life worth living is the one of godliness with great gain. We’d affirm again, “Absolutely, there is no other pursuit that is worth the entirety of our focus, but to pursue God and the godliness that comes through life with Him.”

Church, these are the truths we’re called to uphold in this moment, in this city, and around the world. And the question I ask is, “If we don’t, not just Lincoln Berean but if the Church in Lincoln and around the world, if we don’t uphold these truths, who will?” Oh, may the Lord find us faithful! May He empower us by His Spirit to stand firm, to uphold the truth that many might come to know...might set their life on solid ground...might step into the life that is truly life...to God’s glory and for His praise. We ask that we do that now.

Our Father, we do ask that You will empower us, embolden us to be people who uphold the truth, that we teach what’s true, and also that the truth would penetrate our very lives and would conform us into the image of Your Son, and would help us to become different kinds of people. We thank You that You’ve allowed us to draw near to You through the blood of the cross. You’ve made us into sons and daughters, brought us into the household of God, and so we ask, Father, empower us. Empower us to be a church that operates according to Your design, for Your name and for Your glory we ask this, Amen.

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SPRING 2025 // WEEK 2

Life Group Questions

1 Timothy – What Are We Doing Here? // April 12/13, 2025

The Great Gain of Godliness // 1 Timothy 6:3-21

Introduction

This week we wrap up our dive into 1 Timothy and the various teachings about leadership, money, and truth about which Paul wrote. Remember, there won't be Life Group questions for next weekend's Easter Service, but you are still more than welcome to meet as a Life Group and enjoy time in fellowship celebrating the great joy we have in Jesus' triumph over death!

This week is a sort of wrap up and final thoughts for Timothy and has many parallels to Chapter 1. As you read through this passage and meet as a group, allow yourself to be reminded of the promise made to us as believers that we may "live the life that is truly life." But also take pause and reflect on if you are truly living this kind of life, or if you are allowing other distractions and pitfalls to take hold of your heart.

We invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Some people even use these questions to take notes during the sermon. The questions are meant to stir your thinking and prompt open discussion, and we do not expect you to cover every question each week.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

- 1) If someone were to give you a laser to inscribe a message on the surface of the moon that the whole world could see, what message would you leave?
- 2) Are you the kind of person who loves seeing projects all the way through and finishing them, or are you more likely to get halfway done with something and then jump into something new?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
 - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
- 2) Choose someone to read the passage aloud for the group.

Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

1. What stood out to you about the message from this weekend?
2. Throughout this passage, Paul warns Timothy about false teachers who use godliness as a means of financial gain. **Where might we see someone today using religion or godliness as a way to gain wealth?**

In his opening, Pastor Ryan asked if you had a choice between being rich or being godly, which one would you choose. **What would your answer to this question be? Why?**

What is the gain or benefit of godliness that makes it outweigh whatever money or material possessions may get us?

Why do you think money and material possessions seem so desirable, even though we know how much greater our reward in Christ is?

3. In verse 10, the love of money is described as “a root of all evil.” **Why do you think this is?**

What practical steps do you take in your own life to guard against the love of money that is described as a “root of all evil” in verses 9 and 10?

4. At LBC we typically preach from the New American Standard Bible (NASB 1995). In that translation, the end of verse 19 reads “so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.” **As a group, compare the different ways this verse is translated. Based on different readings, how would you describe to someone else what is meant by “life indeed”.** (If you want suggestions for other translations to look at, try the NIV, NLT, and ESV)

Did any of the different translations have a way of describing the reward of godliness that really stood out to you?

Would other people describe you (regardless of how much money you have) **as a person that is content in their godliness, or someone who is more devoted to gaining riches?**

5. A major theme throughout 1 Timothy is the value of good and truthful teaching. **Why would you describe this as being important?**

As you reflect on the last few months we have spent in 1 Timothy, and covered topics such as: the importance of truth, the dangers of the love of money, and church leadership. **What has been the biggest realization or takeaway that you have had from this book? How has that impacted your life?**

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts.

Scripture Focus: Proverbs 11 describes the rewards of righteousness contrasted with the consequences of wickedness. Read through this passage and think through areas of your life where you may be enjoying the rewards of righteousness or maybe where you are facing the consequences of wickedness. You can take anything you learn from this to God and to your group for further discussion or accountability.

Prayer Focus: As we approach Easter and the busyness of Springtime, consider how you can continually be walking alongside God. If you want a place to start, this prayer from the Book of Common Prayer is a beautifully written self-dedication to God. As you pray it, consider all the ways in which you can richly experience God in all aspects of your life.

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to thee, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly thine, utterly dedicated unto thee; and then use us, we pray thee, as thou wilt, and always to thy glory and the welfare of thy people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (The Book of Common Prayer)

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?