3-5PURSUE THESE THINGS

I Timothy 6:11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

What to Flee

I Timothy 6:1a(NASB) But flee from these things, you man of God,

The context is very clear, Timothy is being told to flee thinking that “godliness is a means to financial gain” (verse 5), because “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (verse 10).

And although as a “man of God” in full-time Christian work, this applies especially to Timothy, it also applies to all of us.

What to Pursue

“Righteousness:” In this context means doing the right thing. In the context of entering into a relationship with God it means God giving us what we do not deserve, right standing with Him through faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:1-3 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about – but not before God. What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Romans 4:4-6 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trust God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to who God credits righteousness apart from works:

Romans 4:7&8 “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

I Peter 2:24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

“Godliness:” *“Eusebeia”* …denotes that piety which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him.” (Vines) I Timothy 6:3 is literally the “teaching according to godliness.” *“Eusebeia”* is also translated “godliness” in verses 5&6. A godly person lives his life fully aware of who God is and that God is totally aware not only of his actions but also of his thoughts and that someday he will stand before God and give an account of his life. False teachers will fake it.

“Faith:” “firm persuasion, a conviction based on hearing” (Vine’s) Romans 10:17 (NASB) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Hebrews 11:1&2 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

“Love” is *“agape”* in Greek, the kind of love that sacrificially does for others what they need; the kind of love God manifested in sending Jesus. John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

I John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

“Endurance” is *“hupomone,”* “literally an abiding under” (Vines). It is translated “perseverance” in James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking in anything.

Romans 5:3-5 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

“Gentleness” is *“prautes”* which really means “meekness,” as in the King James Version. Modern translations do not use the word “meekness” because it is a character quality so absent from American culture that very few people actually understand what the word means.

Matthew 11:28-30 (KJV) “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (“Lowly” is translated “humble” in most modern translations.)

Galatians 5:22&23 (KJV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Matthew 5:5 (KJV) “Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.”

Various forms of this Greek word occur 15 times in the New Testament. In Matthew 11:29 and Ephesians and Colossians it is linked with humility.

Ephesians 4:1-3 (KJV) I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (“Lowliness” is translated “humility” in most modern translations.)

Colossians 3:12 (KJV) Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.

Because Jesus is our example of humility (Philippians 2:1-11), humility cannot mean thinking we are worthless. It is rather choosing to put others above ourselves. As someone has well said, “It is not thinking less of ourselves, it is thinking of ourselves less.” It is the opposite of being “full of oneself.”

“It is only the humble heart which is also the meek, and which, as such, does not fight against God and more or less struggle and contend with Him…The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was ‘meek’ because he had the infinite resources of God at His command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest.” (Vines)

James 3:13-16 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility (meekness in KJV) that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

“Meekness is therefore an active and deliberate acceptance of undesirable circumstances that are wisely seen by the individual as only part of a larger picture…The patient and hopeful endurance of undesirable circumstances identifies the person as externally vulnerable and weak but inwardly resilient and strong…The…Greek word…means ‘tame’ when applied to wild animals.”

(Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology.)

Character Qualities We Should Pursue

Righteousness: doing the right thing

Godliness: living in the continual awareness of God and seeking to please Him

Faith: firmly believing that what God says is true

Love: doing for others what they need even when it costs us

Endurance: not giving up when things get tough

Meekness: an attitude flowing from humility that deliberately accepts undesirable circumstances as part of God’s will and is not self-assertive or ambitious for honor.