

**1 Timothy #19**

**September 7, 2025**

**Series: Body Essentials: Imperatives for Church and Leaders**

**Today's Message: Do Two Things: Flee and Pursue; 1 Timothy 6:11**

This short text today is packed with encouragement so powerful that it will change your life and the life of this church, and even our impact in this community if we take it to heart! Paul is urging Timothy to run as fast as he can, to run like a coward away from the evil, fruitless pattern of living like the false teachers were exemplifying, and to stretch his neck out in pursuit of godliness. So, the main thrust of the message has to do with our sanctification, by way of two exhortations, namely, to flee and pursue.

This text is written to pastors. Now a pastor is to live out what God is working in. In other words, his life is to be consecrated to the Lord for His service and His purposes. And a pastor is to serve as an example to the flock to which he has been called to lead as and under-shepherd of the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is to be an example for others in fleeing and pursuing!

This brings to mind the comment of the great Scottish preacher Robert Murray M'Cheyne. He keenly observed, "The greatest need of my congregation is my own personal holiness." Holiness is what we are called to as Christians. In our day the concept of holiness is foreign both to church leaders and congregations alike. But we are called to holiness. Holiness means separation. Separation from the world (the system of thinking and acting as fallen men in a fallen world) and separated unto God for His use and purposes (Phil 2:13). Peter reminds the church that they are to be holy. In 1 Peter 1:15-16 Peter writes, "...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" He's quoting from Leviticus 11:44 and 19:2.

As we will then see from our text today Paul is dealing with sanctification and instructing Timothy how to grow in sanctification. He does it with the two words I want to focus on and that God wants you to do: flee and pursue.

Let's get to our text today, 1 Timothy 6:11.

**I) Timothy the sanctified Man of God (set apart from false teachers and unto God).**

- A) Remember the chasm that separates the false teachers from the Man of God:
  - 1) The false teachers were workers of iniquity, teaching the doctrines of demons (4:1).
  - 2) The false teachers were to be regarded as hypocritical liars (4:2).
  - 3) The false teachers looked distinguished and sounded wise, but they were wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15)
  - 4) The false teachers are far from being men of God, they are, rather, cursed of God (Galatians 1:6-9)!
  - 5) The false teachers are troublemakers, controversial, argumentative, corrupt in mind and doctrine, conceited, and greedy for financial gain (6:3-10)
- B) What did Paul mean by distinguishing Timothy as a "Man of God"?
  - 1) First, we can learn from Scripture that a man of God has three characteristics:
    - (a) The man of God obeys God's commands and directions.
    - (b) The man of God represents God at all times.
    - (c) And, the man of God speaks for God.
  - 2) Examples of men of God from the OT:
    - (a) Moses "the man of God" (Dt. 33:1).
    - (b) Samuel "the man of God" (1 Samuel 9:6).
    - (c) David "the man of God" (Nehemiah 12:24).
    - (d) Elijah "the man of God" (1 Kings 17:24).
    - (e) Elisha "the man of God" (2 Kings 4:7).
  - 3) Timothy "the man of God" demonstrated the three characteristics.
    - (a) Timothy, as pastor of the church in Ephesus, was an example of how we are to conduct ourselves.

**II) Timothy the sanctified Man of God is first instructed to flee (to run from the example of false teachers).**

- A) Let's take a moment to distinguish sanctification from justification.

- 1) Justification is complete forever, and a one-time event.
    - (a) A believer is justified once through faith in the blood (the sacrifice) of Jesus Christ (See Rm. 5:1).
  - 2) Sanctification is progressive, on going throughout the Christian life.
    - (a) A believer is compelled by the Holy Spirit to cooperate with the Spirit of Christ to abandon the base desires to the flesh and to be continually conformed to the image of Christ!
      - (i) Verses that speak about the ongoing, progressive nature of sanctification:
        - (a) John 17:17; Hebrews 10:4; 1 Cor. 6:11 (being separated from the love of sin); Phil. 2:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17 (made new for God and His purposes); Phil. 1:6 (ongoing for a lifetime).
- B) The first of the two things Timothy (and we who are in Christ) is to do: **Flee!**
- 1) "Flee from all this"
    - (a) Paul has expounded on the "this" most recently in 6:3-10. Flee from:
      - (i) Entertaining false doctrine
      - (ii) From becoming conceited (thinking more highly of yourself than you should).
      - (iii) From stirring up controversies and quarrels about words, which tear down believers' faith.
        - (a) These kinds of conversations stir up strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and create constant friction.
      - (iv) Flee from the love of money, which leads to many evil temptations and harmful desires.
    - (b) Other examples in the NT concerning what to flee from:
      - (i) James encourages believers to "wait patiently until the Lord comes" (James 5:7-8).
        - (a) Then he tells them emphatically to flee from grumbling. "Do not grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The judge is standing at the door." (James 5:9)
          1. We should not entertain sinful thoughts, words or behavior for even a minute. James says that the Judge is standing at the door!
            - a. A pastor and his wife were having a terrible argument one day full of yelling harsh words at each other. Then came a knock at the door! The wife of the head deacon was knocking. She was at the door. What a solemn reminder for us that the Judge is standing at the door!
        - (ii) Peter addressed the need to flee in 1 Peter 2:1. "Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind."
    - 2) If you will, to **flee** means to run like a coward from these things! Paul then tells Timothy to turn and pursue the important things that are in keeping with the sanctification of the "man of God".

III) **Timothy the man of God is then instructed to do the second thing: Pursue godliness.**

    - A) The sanctification of a believer involves both fleeing and pursuing. A run-from-evil to a pursuit of godliness.
    - B) Paul encourages Timothy to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love endurance and gentleness.
      - 1) Pursue. The word has the idea of "stretching out the neck" like a runner stretching over the finish line!
        - (a) Fleeing from evil like a coward and run with great determination to finish the race victoriously!
          - (i) It is a mindset. Paul tells us that we are to run the race for holiness to win! (1 Cor. 9:24)
            - (a) Holiness unto the Lord doesn't just happen. It is the goal of our sanctification!
        - 2) Pursue righteousness and godliness. These two coupled together establish the horizontal and vertical aspect of our sanctification!
          - (a) Righteousness: doing what is right in conduct to benefit others! This is contrary to false teachers.
          - (b) Godliness: doing what is right before God! (**see 1 Timothy 4:8**).
        - 3) Pursue faith and love. These two run together. Trust God and therefore be free to love sacrificially!
          - (a) Ephesians 4:15: "Speaking the Truth in Love we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ!"
        - 4) Pursue endurance and gentleness. (hupomeno) never quit, persevere. Don't tire when people oppose the Truth. Be willing to tell the truth but do it with all gentleness and meekness. (**see 2 Tim. 2:23-26**)
      - C) Conclusion: **There are two things to do: Flee from evil and Pursue God!**
        - 1) Stott writes: We are simply to run from evil as we run from danger and run after goodness as we run after success. That is, we have to give our mind, time and energy to both flight and pursuit."