

Pivotoal Commands for Church Life

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[0:00] I'm trying to learn another one now too. Good and Gracious King is the name of the song that I'm learning.

And you think you like only Holy God, you're going to like this one too. Let's take our Bibles and let's go to 1 Timothy. Got two more weeks in 1 Timothy.

As I said, I was kiddingly last week saying I'm going to preach numbers, but I am going to preach the book of Judges. I decided to do the book of Judges.

I might do some filler messages the first one or two Sundays of March. Those are things you think about at 3.30 in the morning. At least I do. So I was thinking about doing fill-in sermons, which helps me to be able to prepare for the book of Judges because I'd like to read through it a bunch of times so I get an understanding of the book of Judges, which I think would be most pertinent to what we're going to be looking at, just what we see in our world.

People do things, they live, what's the phrase? Do what's right in their own eyes. You see that in our society, in our culture. So I think it would be most appropriate to do the book of Judges.

[1:20] And yet you see still the grace of God in the book of Judges. So you're going to be preparing for that. And we have two more weeks in 1 Timothy, and then we'll do a couple of filler messages, and then we'll jump into the book of Judges.

But let's do 1 Timothy 6. If you're visiting with us, pull that black Bible and a chair in front of you to the back, page 165. 165. 1 Timothy 1 Timothy 6.

We're just going to look at verses 11 through 16 this morning. 11 through 16. And again, I'm mixing Greek translation with New American Standard here, so that's why it might sound a little choppy and different.

But you, man of God, flee these things, pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith.

Take hold of the eternal life into which you were called, and you confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things, excuse me, and of Christ Jesus, who testified to Pontius Pilate the good confession, that you keep the command, blamelessly, irreproachably, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will show, which at the proper time He will show, the one who is the happy and only sovereign God, the only happy and sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or is able to see, to Him honor and eternal dominion.

[3:17] Amen. We have a particular speaker for our TV, and there's a specific hookup to the speaker.

One night, this was like a couple months ago, whatever, I inadvertently pushed the wrong button. I know you people don't have a problem with that. I pushed the wrong button to turn it off, and it didn't turn off.

So I'm like, oh, what's wrong? Okay. So I pushed the right button, went off, and blah, blah, blah, went to bed. Next day or two days later, the kids are like, hey, Dad, the speaker doesn't work. I'm like, what? I could not figure out what in the world was going on with that dumb thing. Until finally, what do I pull out? The manual.

This part is pivotal for you to use the speaker. You have to push, apparently I had pushed the input button. I didn't know this.

[4:22] You have to push the input button to tell the speaker that it has a certain, I have to read this because I don't remember, because it has a certain connection, that it has a certain connection to the TV. And so on the speaker, there's like, if you're looking at it, there's like all these lights, you

know, and that's like for volume.

But then it says, if you're connected through Bluetooth, these two lights blink. If you're connected through this thing, these two lights blink. If you're connected, these two lights blink. Somebody, oh, you're going to be joking at me. This is pivotal.

If you want to, the speaker won't work. You have to do this. So, okay, that's blinking. Okay, so wait a minute.

What am I connected at? I'm like looking. Okay, this is, two lights blinking. Okay, two lights blinking. Okay. And I do this, push the button, and then the next two lights, they're blinking.

It went on. I'm like, okay, fixed it. And now I know, the moron that I am. Now I know how to fix the speaker.

[5:26] Now it works. Pivotal. Here in Paul's letter to Timothy, as he's closing, coming to a close to his letter, to his protege, to his disciple, these aspects that he brings up here in verses 11 through 16 are pivotal for him, not just as a pastor, but really for all Christians.

Because as you read through this, you're like, wow, this is almost, these are things that we could take away. Exactly. And even so, remember, Paul is to Timothy to tell it to the church, but as he's telling Timothy, this is how you're gonna, when the church gathers together, and then other times as well, but these are aspects even for you as the church to consider as well in your own lives. So I titled this part, God's Manor for Church Life, Pivotal Commands for Jesus' Followers. Pivotal Commands for Jesus' Followers.

In chapter 6, verses 11 through 16. There's actually five, five pivotal commands, every Christian, especially pastors though, should heed, not just when they gather together, but as a way to live. We live this way. And you're gonna see what motivates us towards these commands. What's the motivation what's driving us to this is the appearing or return of Jesus Christ and the awesomeness of God that motivates us.

[7:18] So you see, you'll look at five pivotal commands. It's really, it's for pastors. It's directly applying to me. But then there's commands for all of us, all of you, not just when we gather together, how much greater should we have these and understand these things and think this way and live this way when we're gathered together, but even as a way that we live as Christians, as Jesus' followers.

What motivates us is the appearing, the return of Jesus and God's awesomeness, another, put it a different way. Our disposition is one of Christ's character.

Our obligation is to the gospel. Our motivation is Jesus' return and God's awesomeness. You'll see these three different parts.

Our disposition, our character. Our obligation, our ministry. And then our motivation. Jesus will return and God is so awesome.

So again, this is the closing of his letter and Paul needed to give Timothy these crucial commands as a pastor but also words that he must pass on to the church body because these are things that they can take away as well.

[8:41] Aspects that's so vital for them and pivotal for them as well. He had a charge to do this too. Notice how it begins.

It's pretty simple there in verse 11. The first one is flee. But you, and actually from the Greek it actually starts with, but you, O man of God.

And by the way, it's flee contrasted with the false teachers. You, Timothy. Versus what these false teachers were doing. Remember verse 3 through 10 of chapter 6?

Remember chapter 1? And that's why not only is this directed to Timothy, you man of God, you Timothy, you can all take this to heart.

But you, Travis. But you, Sandy.

[9:53] And as he says, O man of God, not only does this phrase denote one who is a spiritual leader, but also an example to other believers. And be careful, don't see this in terms of Old Testament terms.

That's what prophets were called in the Old Testament. Don't put Old Testament definitions to New Testament terms. Be careful of that. But it's a description of any Jesus follower, really.

Paul gave Timothy the commands in reference to gospel ministry. Flee, which means seek safety in flight, escape, avoid, shun, shun from what?

Flee from what? All the errors and the sins mentioned above in verses 3 through 10. We talked about that last week. a huge, long section of that.

And then 6, 7, and 8, he talks about contentment. We looked at that too. A godliness with contentment. Run away from those sins, Timothy.

[10:59] Run away from these desires. Run away from seeking stuff. I heard a song, what was it?

It reminded me, all of us want to be rock stars. Want to be big rock stars. Remember that song?

And I was listening, I was listening to the lyrics like, wow, that is so much our culture.

Don't listen to that. Run from that stuff. Run and flee from these things. There's a time for us to run from sin. Run away from it.

Get away. Don't foster it. Cut it off. Run away. But pursue these godly virtues, which is new.

You know what the next one is. Oh, all the errors and sins mentioned above. Yeah, I didn't put that up there. But number two, pursue. pursue. The word actually means following after zealously.

[12:12] Go after, and he's gonna list off six virtues in opposition to the five vices that he brings up, verses four and five from chapter six that we looked at last week.

So pursue, following after zealously, these six virtues. Notice, number one, righteousness.

Now you might say, righteousness? I thought you're declared righteous in God's sight. You're justified by his blood. How does that make it? What is this all about?

Righteousness, not in the salvific sense, but conduct that is upright, behavior that pleases God and is according to his commanding will. It's the character according to Christ.

That of a Christian. That of a Jesus follower. You follow Jesus, right? Pursue that.

[13:15] Pursue uprightness. And then notice the next word, pursue godliness. Well, he's been bringing that up since chapter one. What is godliness?

Remember, godliness is a life of reverence before and obedience to God. They're evidences of genuine trust in Christ with a life that centers upon Christ.

Remember, when he uses this word godliness, it's the essence of Christianity. And the essence of Christianity is being fixated on a person not in being a good person.

you're fixated on Jesus. We got that from chapter three verse 16 because the mystery of godliness who?

It's not about behavior necessarily. It's about fixating upon Jesus. So when he says pursue godliness, he's saying pursue Christ. That applies to all of you, doesn't it?

[14:15] Of course it does. Flee from these things. Pursue righteousness. Pursue godliness.

Notice he says pursue faith. Keep pursuing your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We hope, we trust, we believe in Him with our whole heart, with our whole soul. And there's times where your faith is tried and stretched as you go through times of suffering and trials and difficulties and tribulations.

Oh, boy. Pastors face that. The trials and the tribulations of ministry. Timothy understood that. He understood the tribulation.

That's why he's saying to Timothy, Timothy, pursue trusting in the Lord. Trust Him. Pursue faith.

Notice the next one.

Pursue love. Pursuing, pursue loving God and loving His people. Notice, love is choosing to give yourself to another whether you feel like it or not.

[15:22] Love is choosing to give yourself to another whether you feel like it or not. Feelings are not necessarily part of this. That's very much anti-cultural.

love. Don't you think it's odd that you're commanded to love? Love's a feeling, man.

You're commanded to love which means you have to choose. To choose to love. righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance or steadfastness is the fifth one.

It means patience, endurance. It means staying truly faithful to the gospel, to Christ, to the words of the faith from chapter 4, to the truth from chapter 1.

Endure in Christ, he's saying to Timothy, he's saying to us, steadfastness and last interesting, gentleness.

[16:45] When we respond in love toward each other, we display gentleness and kindness. we react graciously, not harshly. So good to hear Timothy say that to pastors.

Pastors need that to not respond harshly and we all need that. Not respond harshly toward each other but respond graciously with gentleness. Look, see how these virtues are not just for me but they're for all of us.

You see that? Flee pursue and I'm giving you one word but there's other parts of it. Flee, pursue, fight. Number three, fight. Fight for the faith. Verse 12. Fight the good fight and it says just of faith, literally it's of the faith.

Fight is it could be used in a military context or even an athletic context and Paul has used it in both ways. Military terms and athletic terms.

[17:53] Seems to be more athletic in this way but whichever way you think of it, well he's talking about military, he's talking more athletic, whichever, here's the idea. The idea is that of a struggle with great effort against difficulties or dangers.

That's the idea of the word. or striving after something with strenuous zeal as one writer put it. You're fighting for the gospel, for the truth.

It's just the idea you're just struggling with great effort against difficulties or dangers. There's another way to put it. They're struggling in the faith as a good struggle because it is for our Lord and for the gospel and because it is the only solution to the problem of our evil, lost, fallen, sin seeking world.

That is exactly where our world is at. Our world is against the truth. They're against biblical truth. They're against the gospel word. And that's why when you have that fight the good fight of the faith, it's the faith, God's objective truth.

[19:23] This moves into our obligation. First he talked about character, now he's talking about his obligation, holding fast to the gospel. the objective truth, all that entails Christianity, it's the message of the gospel with its body of truth, the word of God, who God is, our God is just and righteous.

Who are we? We are sinners that rebelled against God. Who is Jesus? He died for sinners, he resurrected from the dead. What's our response? Repent and believe.

That gospel truth. And if you're here and you're not a Christian, that gospel truth is just for you. And if you're here and you are a Christian, that gospel truth is just for you.

Because you need to be saved, you're not here and if you're here you don't know Jesus Christ and if you're here and you do know Jesus Christ, you need to remember that you've been saved and remember the gospel and the truth of God's word and the truth that God's promises have been fulfilled in Jesus and you're forgiven of all your sins and now a holy God you can call him Father who gave his son on our behalf.

You see? We have to hold to this. We gotta hold it tenaciously. We fight the good fight for the objective body of truth for the gospel because what's our tendency?

[20:56] The tendency of many in the last days is to fall away and go after their desires. We were in the last days not because there's some virus pandemic that's hitting the world.

That's not why. We were in the last days a year and four months ago. That's like December, November 2019.

We were in the last days then. Nothing's changed. When Messiah came that began the last days. We are in the messianic age now.

We're in the last days. Now we might be in the last of the last days. That's coming. It could be now. I don't know. I ain't God. Good thing.

But Paul does say in 2 Timothy 3, verse 1, in the last days people will become lovers of self, lovers of money.

[21:55] And they'll fall away from the faith. We looked at that last week. Friends, when we gather together as a church body, we should make sure not only in our lives but as we gather together, we're reminding each other of this gospel truth of the faith.

And we hold high God's word. And not just a little part of our service but the centrality of our service. By the way, Paul did not mean we take up guns and fight for our rights. Don't read that into the Bible.

Paul did not mean we storm buildings to proclaim our freedoms. No. Don't read that into the text. Don't take culture and start reading that into the Bible.

No. Paul called Timothy to fight for truth. We contend for the faith. We must hold to the veracity and authority of God's word of the Bible. Bring up more about that.

[23:06] Bring up more of that. to later on. Flee. Pursue. Fight. Grab.

Grab. Grab. Grab. Eternal life. Take hold, he says in verse 12. Take hold of the eternal life.

Take hold. It could mean even make it your own. In other words, focus on the prize of eternal life and he says into which you were called. All of us as Jesus followers have been called to eternal life.

All have been called into eternal life because we've trusted in Christ Jesus. We've trusted in Christ Jesus and God is the one sovereignly called us to himself. The irresistible grace of God. But you might say, well I thought eternal life was a future thing. you die and go to heaven. Have you forgotten John 17 3?

[24 : 14] And this is eternal life that you die and go to heaven. That's what Jesus says. No, that's not in the Bible. It's not in my version. And this is eternal life that they might know you the one and only true God and Jesus Christ whom you've sent.

I said this to a friend of mine this past week. I said, Christianity is personal. It's relational. It's a relationship with God through Jesus. See, eternal life is not merely a possession we receive when we die.

We have it here and now. We possess this gift now. It is something called by God for us to have now and He sovereignly gave it to us.

This relationship with God through Christ Jesus and therefore the relationship we have with each other as the body, this whole thing that we have, you realize this is just a foretaste of heaven.

It's a small and a window and sometimes a window can be really, really small but it's a small window of what the future is going to be like because in the future it's going to be even more so.

[25 : 34] So get used to loving each other now. And notice He says here unto which you were called this eternal life the numeric standard says and you made the good confession literally it reads like this you confessed the good confession.

What's He talking about? When did Timothy do this? To what does this refer? Commentators have different views. It's an interpretive issue.

It could be a special moment of persecution in Timothy's life. It could be the time of his baptism or it could be the time of Timothy being ordained to be the pastor or into gospel ministry.

And that's what I believe Paul is referring to here. I believe he's actually talking about Timothy's ordination because he brings that up in chapter 1 verse 18 brings it up again in chapter 4 verse 14 so I think he brings it up again here.

He says you were called eternal life this is your salvation and this was the time that he confessed Christ Jesus as Lord and that he would take on the ministry to which God had called him.

[26 : 51] Paul called Timothy not to neglect this calling this confession and Paul exhorted him again here. Timothy publicly acknowledge and testify of Jesus and his gospel ministry he said I follow Jesus and I'm going into this gospel ministry this is what God's called me to.

Well you know you realize all of us have a ministry to fulfill you realize that right? All of us have a ministry to fulfill as well first to your family second to your local church body then to the world that's your ministry.

You know I'm not called into the ministry oh yes you are. Maybe not in the same vein or in the same way as me but you have your ministry to your family to this local church body to the world.

You need to fulfill that ministry this is what you have all of you have to fulfill the ministry to which you were called by God he called this for you to fulfill. flee pursue fight grab last one guard or keep guard or keep the command verse 13 into verse 14 notice how it begins verse 13 I charge you or I command you or I direct you here's an authoritative announcement I charge you and notice the charge is by the authority of two to show Paul's being serious God and the Lord Jesus it's not just I charge you Timothy this is important listen notice he says

I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things that's why we sang immortal invisible Paul charged Timothy to keep this command by the authority of God himself God gives life to all so there are huge implications to be his minister all of us we owe it all to him he owes us nothing we owe him everything he's given us life we didn't ask for that we don't deserve that and notice not just God who gives life to all things he says of Christ Jesus God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ two persons of the Trinity by their authority I'm charging you Timothy and notice what he says about Jesus here interesting who testified to Pontius Pilate the good confession there's that phrase confession again

[29 : 59] Christ confessed the good confession before Pilate when did he do this why did Paul make a reference to this why is he saying this this was when Christ answered Pilate's question if he was the king of the Jews are you the king of the Jews and Jesus as you say which provided the grounds for Jesus crucifixion why because he claimed royalty and sonship he was the Messiah as you find out in John's gospel he claimed himself to be God which scared Pilate it freaked him out this is what Jesus confessed in essence that's what he's saying that's what Paul brings this up and

notice how it ties in to Timothy and gospel ministry and fighting for the faith for the gospel for the truth notice that ties it in how so because in essence when Jesus proclaimed himself as are you the king of the Jews you say he proclaimed he was Messiah and in making this good confession he willingly gave his life unto death to be our substitute to be our sacrifice to die on our behalf

Christ Jesus and him crucified Jesus made this good confession so we're called to make the same one see this is the kind of confession that we as his followers all of us are called to make as well we affirm this truth of who Jesus is though it may cost us our very lives just like it cost the life for the son of God I charge you with God and his authority Jesus and his authority and that's the testimony that's the confession he testified this to Pilate notice he says here in verse 14 that you keep the command keep it or guard it because of this good confession

Paul charged Timothy to keep the what command the Christian faith I believe Jesus made this good confession Timothy made the good confession himself so now Paul charged Timothy to guard this good confession this command the words of the faith remember chapter 4 he's calling him I'm charging you to keep this guard this this is pivotal for us as Christians because our tendency will be to fall away from the gospel and to get ourselves sidetracked on other things go to history look at what happened in the end of the 1800s into the 1900s with the modernist movement what tended to happen is

Christian churches started to emphasize social justice not a bad thing good things right of course social justice is good but there became an emphasis on social justice and they slowly moved away from gospel truth into just social justice so now you have these churches United Methodist Church American Baptist churches all these different churches that used to be sound in the faith they're now liberal now it's about the social gospel now it's about we have to feed the poor and take care of all these good nice things and now it's about being a good person not being fixated on the person of Christ that's what happens look at history that's why it's so vital for us the church to hold fast to the gospel know this all Christians not just pastors or leaders who lead in gospel ministry are called to guard and keep this good confession this command of the gospel the words of the faith of the truth it's vital we must pursue it and fight the good fight we must hold to the gospel and the truth like God made us male and female biologically marriage is between one man and one woman God is a just God and righteous in all his ways we are sinners we've rebelled against God willfully rebelled we are sinners conceived and been born as sinners we need God to be gracious to us Jesus is the God man you must trust in God the body of Christ all these things and the way we fight is by speaking truth we speak it we say this is what the Bible says and notice how he tells them how to do this keeping it or guarding it he says you do it blamelessly irreproachably blamelessly without spot without blemish and irreproachably do not adultery or mix any kind of error with the gospel with the truth because it's upon the gospel that we as a body but really the church the church stands or falls what is faith who's

[36 : 33] Christ the truth is so vital it's so vital for us it's as pivotal for us as a church and notice how he gives us the motivation for this the motivation the first motivation he gives us is the return of Jesus Jesus is going to come verse 14 that you keep the command irreproachably blamelessly and irreproachably until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ an obligation for all Christians is until Christ returns when we'll have to give an account especially me pastors interesting though don't you think it's odd why doesn't Paul say Timothy hold fast until you die why did he say that don't you think it's weird

I thought it was weird why didn't Paul say death because we need to always remember that we need to be ready that Christ may come at any time we are in the last days so it's always be alert for Christ to come always alert attentive and notice he says in verse 15 which he will bring or which he will display or show and that he we believe talks about God the Father God the Father will show or manifest at the proper or right or precise time at the perfect time you gotta take that stake out and it's really good at the perfect time Jesus will return the right time God the Father knows God the Father controls and determines when the Son will return in judgment and when our struggle will finally be over there will be an end to this mind you you see all these things going on people will have to give an account mind you there will be an end to this that should motivate us to be faithful to the gospel and to

Christ's likeness that should motivate us and not only does the return of Jesus motivate us but the awesomeness of God you have seven statements of the awesomeness of God in verse 15 to 16 I'll sum it up for you the happy God the sovereign God the king God the lord God the immortal God the

God of light the unseen God this should motivate us to hold fast to the faith the happy God he breaks into doxology the one who is most blessed or the blessed which means happy he's the most praised he's not directing in terms of that there's a praise he's the most praised

God he's the happy God God contains all happiness in himself and he graciously gives it to us through his son in whom there's true happiness and joy God is so happy and satisfied with himself and then what he does is he pulls you into that happiness so now you can be happy in him he's the happy God notice he's the sovereign God the only sovereign the only one who's in control and rules over us all he's the only one in this position there is no one like our God as the song says king of kings and lord of lords that phrase is only three times in the new testament here and then twice in the psalms and you see a remnant of it in Deuteronomy which we read today and then also psalm 136 there's no king no lord but our king and lord he possesses the highest power and his full control as the master of all there's no one like our

God so keeping the command maybe it's not so hard after all if this is the God that we serve and he just gave us two or three the happy God the sovereign God the king God the lord God notice actually four the immortal God he says who alone possesses immortality that's the aseity of God or the self-existent one God has self-existence you rely on God to keep you going if you don't believe me just put your hand in your heart that's why what's happening but he has always been and always will be he's not able to die the immortal God and then he says dwelling in unapproachable light light characterizes God's existence as well as his character 1st John chapter 1 God is light in him there's no darkness at all and that light is unapproachable well how so what does he mean by this a commentator gave this great illustration it's like the sun we need the sun and the sun gives warmth and it helps growth you get too close you're gone kind of kind of think of

[42:40] God that way gives life but he can kill you that's what he means notice in reference to that light whom no man has seen or is able to see takes us back to Exodus chapter 33 with Moses he is so holy so awesome so great dwelling in such light that no human has or is able to see him but praise God for Christ because as John says no man has seen God any time the only begotten God is in the bosom of the father he has explained him and that's why Jesus says in John 14 if you've seen me you've seen the father you want an ultimate expression of who the father is go to Jesus to him honor and eternal dominion amen honor all reverence and respect are due him alone if he alone is the happy

God the sovereign God the king God the Lord God the immortal God the God of light the unseen God all honor should be given to him to him honor and eternal dominion being the only sovereign king and only lord all eternal power belongs to him eternal sovereignty rule and power truly belongs to him alone he has the possession of force or strength that affords supremacy as one writer says and it's everlasting all men not all women what an idiotic foolish stupid thing to say you're not even looking at the etymology of the word the etymology of the word it means so be it alpha main ada and noon alpha moon ada and noon that's in the Greek those are

Greek letters and it means so be it so it is may it be fulfilled that's what the word means there's no gender tied to that dear friends the charge is to me but it's also to us keep it I mean does this motivate you the awesomeness of God doesn't this drive you to be faithful in character and to the gospel one writer says this quote the awesomeness of God's character underscores the seriousness of his command it helps to put things in perspective so our disposition is one of Christ's character our obligation to the gospel our motivation the appearing of Jesus and the awesomeness of God so I'll give you to put it up there so we can see it the five pivotal commands every Christian especially pastors should heed not just when we gather together as a church body which should but it's a way to live and what motivates us is the appearing or return of

Christ and the awesomeness of God I pray you'll take these truths to heart would you pray with me would you pray Father by your spirit help us as your church as your people that we would hold tenaciously we would flee pursue fight grab and guard our character will be of Christ likeness we would pursue Christ that would be our disposition our obligation is to hold fast to the faith as a church and Jesus we look forward to you returning may that motivate us to be alert and God you're such an awesome God a holy God may that motivate us motivate us to motivate us to be gracious to each other as you've been so gracious to us and motivate us to speak truth to evil lost sinful fallen world

God encourage you take these few moments fill your mind with God's truth after a few moments we'll sing we'll pray music music ■ Active