

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday March 29, 2023 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

## Honoring 1 TIMOTHY GOD

HONORING GOD  
“How To Be a Good Christian Victim”  
*1 Timothy 6:1-2*



### Key Reminders for 1 Timothy:

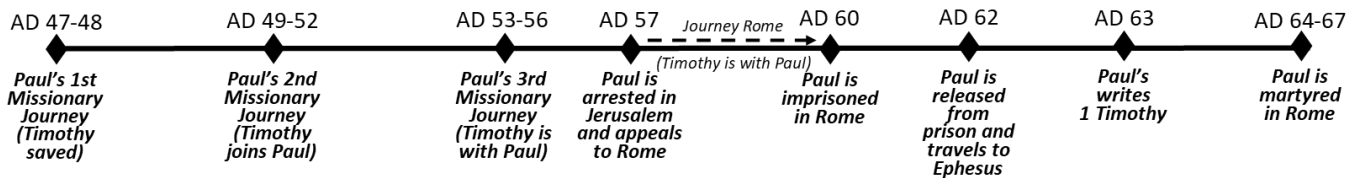
(1) **1 Timothy is a personal letter** – It is unlike most of Paul’s other letters that appear in the New Testament. Remember that most of Paul’s letters were written to churches and/or groups of churches, like Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians (a circular letter), etc. 1 Timothy was not a letter written to a group of Christians (churches). It is written to an individual and should be read and studied with that in mind. It’s personal in nature, rather than corporate. That doesn’t mean it’s not for the church today or applicable for

the church and Christians. It is! It just means that in studying and understanding the letter for context purposes this must be kept in mind. It does have a bearing on interpretation of Paul's letter.

- (2) **1 Timothy is written by Paul to Timothy, his apprentice in ministry** – As already - else's mail, or better said we are privileged by design to get to read someone else's mail. God want us to for a reason. He wants us to apply the truths Paul spoke to Timothy to our own lives. Remember that the name Timothy means "one who honors God," likewise our lives ought to honor God by how we conduct our lives, how we relate to believers in the church, how we serve and lead in the church, our behaviour, our spirit and attitudes, our words, our victory over the very things that defeat us and may keep us from being all that God has called us to be in Christ. Remember that Timothy was a young teenager from the town of Lystra when Paul first met him on his first missionary journey through Asia Minor. Paul lead Timothy to the Lord, as well as the rest of his family... his mother and grandmother. When Paul returned to the area on his second missionary journey, apparently Timothy has grown in his faith to the point that Paul asked him to join him on his missionary journey. Timothy would remain a ministry companion to Paul for the rest of Paul's life, as a faithful servant and fellow ministry.
- (3) **1 Timothy is known as a "Pastoral Epistle" (or letter)** – That makes this personal letter instructional especially for a pastor. There are three "Pastoral Epistles" in all in the New Testament; 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus, all written by Paul. They are "pastoral" in nature. In its simplest form, "pastoral" means pertaining to the pastor and or his responsibilities. The most common definitions of "pastoral" would be 1. Pastoral - of or pertaining to shepherds; hence, relating to rural life and scenes; as in a pastoral life (remember that pastors are often referred to the shepherd of the flock caring for their needs especially spiritual), 2. Pastoral – relating to the care of souls, or to the pastor of a church, as in, pastoral duties or a pastoral letter, 3. Pastoral – used to refer to the part of the work of teachers, preachers (pastors) and priests that involves giving help and advice about personal matters, or giving pastoral care through teaching, sermons, homilies, etc. The Pastoral Epistles are 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. All three are letters from an old man at the close of his ministry who is concerned for his successors in the pastorate. As such, the letters concern the things that would be crucial for the young pastors to understand—church organization and discipline, including such matters as the appointment of elders and deacons, the opposition of rebellious members or false teachers, and the maintenance of doctrinal purity.
- (4) **1 Timothy was written to address problems in the church at Ephesus and encourage their pastor, Timothy** – Timothy would eventually become the pastor of the church at Ephesus, likely around AD 62, following Paul's release from prison. Paul's release allowed him the opportunity to travel to Ephesus and eventually place Timothy in ministry at that church. Paul often sent Timothy to churches as his representative (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Philippians 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:2), and 1 Timothy finds him on another assignment, serving as pastor of the church at Ephesus (1 Thessalonians 1:3)... a troubled church with problems (Revelation 2:4, "... *you have left*

*your first love.*”). Timothy find’s himself... perhaps at a young age, pastoring a very strategic, yet troubled church with a lot of problems.

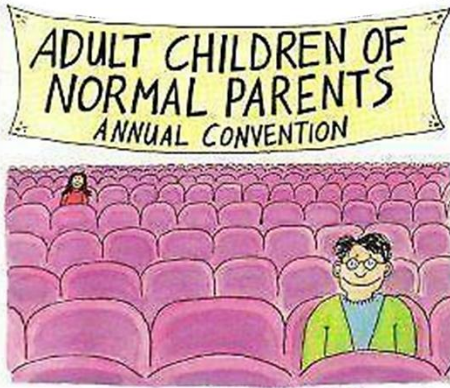
**(5) 1 Timothy was likely written about AD 63** - The Bible’s silence on the ultimate fate of Paul has generated a great deal of debate in modern times. The book of Acts ends with Paul sitting in a Roman prison awaiting his hearing before the Roman emperor, a privilege of appeal that all Roman citizens like Paul possessed. However, the writing of the Pastoral Epistles clearly dates to a time after the events of Acts. So where was Paul when he wrote 1 Timothy? Paul had expected the Romans to release him from prison, something that likely happened near the end of AD 62 (Philippians 2:24). As previously stated, his release allowed him the opportunity to travel to Ephesus and eventually place Timothy in ministry at that church. Paul then went on to preach in Macedonia, where he heard reports of Timothy’s work at Ephesus that prompted him to write 1 Timothy, probably in AD 63.



*<sup>1</sup>Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. <sup>2</sup>And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.” -1 Timothy 6:1-2 (NKJV)*

### Some questions to consider:

- *What does it mean to be a victim?*
- *What does it mean to have a victim mentality?*
- *What is the difference between a “victim” and “victim mentality”?*
- *Is everyone that has a “victim mentality” truly a victim? Why or why not?*
- *What are some evidences today that point to a “victim mentality” or cultural “victimhood” in our world, our country, and in culture generally?*



We live in a society where almost everyone can claim victim status. A humorous T-shirt pokes fun at this. It pictures a huge auditorium with a convention banner welcoming “Adult Children of Normal Parents.” Two people are in the audience. *What is that cartoon saying?*

It’s not far off the mark. Recovery movement guru **John Bradshaw** has said that “96% of us come from dysfunctional families. Americans are flocking to a variety of specialized self-help groups where they focus on how the traumas from their pasts have impaired their lives. Every sort of problem and even criminal behavior is being excused because the person was a helpless victim of something or other.”

Department of Homeland Security Director of Victims, **Ronald Devine**, has stated, “It’s 100% as of today. Every American is now classified — officially — as a victim.”

- A jury acquitted Mrs. Bobbitt from emasculating her husband because she was a victim of his abusive and selfish behavior.
- Another jury can’t decide to convict two brothers who admit to blowing their parents into oblivion with a shotgun, because they were abused as children.
- The guy who shot the abortion doctor is claiming that the pro-life propaganda made him do it.
- A robber in New York was beating a 71-year-old man senseless when two police officers heard the screams and responded. In the ensuing scuffle, the mugger was shot and the bullet cut his spinal cord, leaving him paralyzed. He sued the city of New York and a jury awarded him \$4.3 million in damages (in *Reader’s Digest* [6/90], p. 196)!

Thankfully the world is waking up to the stupidity of this nonsense. Atlanta psychiatrist **Frank Pittman** observed that “the adult child movement, by declaring practically everyone to be a victim of imperfect parenting and therefore eligible for lifelong, self-absorbed irresponsibility, has trivialized real suffering and made psychic invalids of those who once had a bad day” (cited in *The Los Angeles Times* [11/4/92], p. E10).



## The consequences of victimhood culture (The Daily Universe)

Welcome to America, the land of the free and the home of the entitled. Victimhood culture has created a nation of individuals who fight vigilantly against microaggressions, standing

up for every underprivileged group. This must end if we want to restore individual autonomy, shape identities and effectively assist true victims.

### **5 Consequences of the Victimhood Culture of Our Day:** *(The Daily Universe publication)*

- (1) **Subscribing to victimhood culture detracts from one's sense of personal responsibility** - Those who avoid owning up to their role in their situation surrender their ability to choose by giving greater leverage to forces outside of themselves. This attitude of entitlement takes life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and turns it into government handouts, reparations and a lack of accountability for oneself. Victimhood culture allows blame-shifting, excuse-making and self-pity to keep people from being accountable for their own actions.
- (2) **Victimhood culture also generates a society of people who identify foremost as being oppressed** - The most important parts of one's identity should not be based on what injustices one has faced. In a research study at Tel Aviv University, professor Rahav Gabay found that individuals who defined themselves by their victimhood were more likely to shift blame to others and see themselves as victims in all interpersonal relationships. This identity shift unfortunately perpetuates a fixed victimhood mindset that stunts individuals from being able to progress past their current circumstances. "As a result, victimization becomes a central part of the individual's identity," Gabay said.
- (3) **A victimhood mindset grants a momentary feeling of power and moral superiority but does not improve any lives in the long run** - The strength of a person's character and the value of their life are defined not by what problems have been placed in their path but instead by what they have done to turn those obstacles into opportunities.
- (4) **Developing a victim mentality detracts from more pressing and constructive issues** - American political commentator Candace Owens pointed out that promoting victimhood culture, ironically, is a sign of great privilege. She said, "In times of true injustice, no one debates gender pronouns and microaggressions. In times of real conflict, no one demands the government come take away their guns." Owens said, "The victimhood culture we see in America today is the plaything of a society with too much time on its hands."
- (5) **The tragedy of increasingly blurred lines between fighting for the wellbeing of truly victimized individuals and promoting a culture of victimhood** - This is not to say that true victims of deprivation, crime and discrimination do not deserve empathy. Well-meaning politicians have only made situations worse by victimizing groups, from creating stagnating Native American reservations overrun with crime to funding housing projects that leave inner-city Blacks in a cycle of poverty. Letting others dictate our progress in life is a recipe for defeat.



But let's suppose you truly are a victim. Maybe a parent or a spouse abuses you verbally and emotionally. Perhaps you suffer racial discrimination. Or, on a lesser scale, maybe you're being treated unfairly at work. Maybe you're a victim of reverse discrimination, where you get passed over for a promotion because you're not classified as a minority. How should a Christian respond when he or she is truly a victim of abusive or unfair treatment?

***NOTE: Let me clarify from the start that if you are being abused sexually or physically, you should immediately seek outside help so that the situation can be stopped. While you still need to apply the things I'm going to talk about today to your attitude, I do not want you mistakenly to think that God wants you to endure such abuse passively. A sexual offender or a violent person needs to be brought under the law. If your attitude is right before God, there is a proper place for confrontation, as we saw in 1 Tim. 5:1-2.)***

- **How should you deal with it if you are the victim?**
- **How should you counsel a victimized person who comes to you for help?**
- **Do we have a right to get angry at God for letting this happen?**
- **Should we rail at God and get all our rage out?**
- **Should we vent our rage toward the ones who abused us by hitting a pillow or yelling, "I hate you"?**
- **Or, perhaps we should take a positive approach and build our self-esteem.**

What a downtrodden person needs is self-respect! So we tell ourselves over and over how wonderful we are.

The world offers all sorts of solutions for those who are victims. Some sound reasonable. Some even sound biblical and are espoused by Christian counselors who quote verses to support their points; but they often mix biblical truth with subtle error. We need to rely on God's Word alone to learn how Christians who are mistreated should respond in their difficult situations.

In the history of the sinful human race, slaves rank among the most victimized people of all. Slaves were literally the property of their owners, who could use them and dispose of them as they saw fit. They were viewed and often treated as animals. This is brought out in Paul's descriptive phrase, "under the yoke." Slaves, like oxen, were under the yoke of their masters, used for the profit and benefit of their owners, with no personal rights.

Estimates vary, but anywhere from one-third to over one-half of the Roman population in Paul's day were slaves. Many of them were becoming Christians. **How should these victimized people respond to the unjust situations they found themselves in?** Should they lead protest marches? Should they revolt? Should they express their rage at God, at society, at their owners? Should they focus on building their self-esteem?



In 1 Timothy 6:1-2 Paul gives an answer. It's easy for us to sit in church and say, "Preach it to those slaves, Paul!" But Paul isn't just preaching to slaves in a far away culture that no longer exists. His words apply to every believer today who is a victim of abusive, unfair treatment. He shows us all how to be a good Christian victim. I offer five observations:

### **5 IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS WHO ARE VICTIMS:**

- (1) **Life isn't fair** – As a matter of fact, life is very unfair at times. We live in a fallen world, where sin has left its toll.
- (2) **Life can have hope no matter how unfairly you've been treated** – It really can! You may be a victim of some bad stuff in your life, but you don't have to be victimized by it. You can find hope, and joy, and peace, and grace, and life through Jesus Christ. Your problems don't have to define you. Your new life in Christ defines you.
- (3) **Becoming a Christian doesn't solve all your problems** – We know this here (the head), but often not here (in the heart), so we are blindsided with as Christians we go through tough times and become victims of our circumstances. "But, God I'm a Christians! I'm one of the good guys (gals)! I go to church. I read my Bible. I seek to honor your with my life. Why have you allowed this to happen to me?" We think that because we are a Christian we shouldn't have to go through stuff, life should be easy with not problems, not difficulties... everything smooth sailing.
- (4) **Becoming a Christian does deal with your root problem** – Again, we live in a fallen world, and sin has marked and marred all... everything, including us. We are sinners by nature and by choice, and sin has left it's mark on us. Your root problem is your selfish rebellion against God that alienates you from His holy presence. If that problem isn't dealt with through the cross of Jesus Christ before you die, you will spend eternity away from God's presence, suffering eternal punishment. Becoming a Christian through faith in Christ takes care of that most basic need.
- (5) **Dealing with the root problem of self is a lifelong process, not a once-and-for-all deliverance** - Jesus taught that this is a lifelong process for those who follow Him when He said, "*If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me*" (Luke 9:23). Daily! We have to die daily to sin and self and choose to follow Christ... a better way. We choose each day whether we will be a victim of our life and circumstance, of whether we will walk in victory in Christ.

Now having given you those 5 observations, which come from our passage in 1 Timothy 6:1-2, let unpack each on a little further and look at each one. Let's go back and tackle them one at a time and think a little deeper about each one, because I think these are so important in our life and for our life.

### **LIFE ISN'T FAIR**

That is not really what we want to hear, is it? But it's true! Think about this... most of the slaves in the Roman world of Paul's day were born that way. It wasn't that they committed a crime or got into debt and ended up as slaves by consequence of their own foolishness.

They were born as slaves.

- That isn't fair, is it? It isn't fair that some people are born into comfortable homes in America, with plenty to eat and good medical care, while others are born in poverty and live that way... right here in this country, or worse in countries like Somalia or Afghanistan, where they can barely eke out enough to survive, assuming they don't get shot or step on a land mine.
- It isn't fair that some people have parents who love them and treat them kindly, while others are neglected and abused by their drug-using mother and her latest boyfriend.
- Let's face it, life is grossly unfair and the Bible never pretends any differently.

Sin and its devastating effects make this evil world a most unfair place. But may I point out that you don't solve the problem by eliminating God. You only complicate your problems further and seal your fate when you eliminate God. Man has tried and tried and tried that and it doesn't work.

The Communists thought they could solve the problem of unfairness by creating a classless society where everyone has equal status and opportunity. But it didn't work because they didn't deal with the intractable problem of the selfish, greedy human heart. So those in power abused their position for their own advancement. The haves still clung to what they had, while the have-nots greedily scrambled to take it away from them.

**By taking God out of the equation, you extinguish the only true source of hope in an unfair world.** If there is no God, then this is just a dog-eat-dog world where the toughest, meanest dogs manage to survive a few more years than the weaker dogs. If you happen to be born as a caged, diseased dog with a cruel master who beats you every day, "Sorry about that!"

Determinism, the view that victims are at the mercy of outside forces, offers no hope except to try to get into better circumstances. But even if you succeed, you'll soon die, so what have you accomplished? Taking God out of the picture doesn't solve the problem of unfairness.

➤ *What is wrong with focusing on "fairness" or what is fair (for a believer)?*

**Why for a believer/Christian, "fairness" is the wrong focus?**

**(1) The question of fairness strikes at the sovereignty of God –**

**(2) God is not fair, He is just –**

**(3) Fairness fails to take into account our sin –**

**(4) Fairness fails to take into account God's holiness –**

**(5) Fairness misses the point of God's grace and mercy –** We have it better than we deserve, and by God's abundant mercy and grace we don't get what we deserve. That isn't fair, but it God's grace.



The Bible is clear that if we got what was fair, we all would go straight to hell, because we've all rebelled against a holy God. Every one of us has cast off God's rightful rulership over us and has sought to live for self and for pleasure, to the disregard of God and others. When we say, "I don't deserve to be treated as I've been treated," we only reveal our pride that lifts ourselves up against a holy God, as if we have some claim on Him. We all deserve His wrath because of our rebellious, self-willed ways. Any earthly comforts we enjoy are not because we deserve them or have a right to them. They only come from His undeserved kindness.

## **LIFE CAN HAVE HOPE, NO MATTER HOW UNFAIRLY YOU'VE BEEN TREATED**

The good news of the gospel brings hope to those who despair. The gospel can shine into the most rat-infested, foulest prison cell and give instant hope of eternal life to a condemned prisoner.

In Paul's day, the good news that *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,"* even the worst of them (1 Tim. 1:15), meant that these people who were treated as human work animals could become gifted members of the body of Christ, with equal status with their masters before God. They became heirs of the hope of eternal life with God in heaven. Slaves were becoming saved through faith in Jesus Christ!

Political or economic solutions offer only superficial hope to the oppressed.

- Paul could have organized opposition to the institution of slavery.
- He could have called for a campaign for everyone to write their senator in Rome and protest this awful injustice.
- Maybe he even could have led an armed slave revolt. It certainly would have been a just cause.
- Or he could have organized the slaves into trade unions, to give them power to fight for better working conditions, higher wages, health care, and paid vacations.

But even if he had succeeded, what would he have accomplished? Slaves would have lived better and easier lives. But they'd still die and go to hell if they did not repent of their sins and trust in Christ. While I'm not suggesting that Christians should not work for social causes, it is true that comfortable people are the most difficult to reach with the gospel, because they don't sense their need to be right with God before they die.

So Paul preached the gospel to slaves and to slave owners, because it alone is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). It alone can transform the self-centered, greedy human heart into a new creation who loves God and others. It alone can loosen our grasp on the things of this world and put our focus on the life to come. It alone meets the most basic need of every human heart, to be reconciled to the holy, eternal God. If you're a mistreated victim, God offers the same hope to you today, of having your sins

forgiven and knowing the living and true God through His Son Jesus, who died to pay the penalty for all your sins.

But there's a third thing you need to know. Life isn't fair; but, life can have hope, no matter how unfairly you've been treated, if you will believe in the gospel.

### **BECOMING A CHRISTIAN DOESN'T SOLVE ALL YOUR PROBLEMS.**

These slaves weren't instantly liberated from their slavery the minute they believed in Jesus. Many died as slaves. The next morning they still had to get up and meet the demands of their master. They still had to do difficult, distasteful chores. They still had to work long hours with little time off. Abusive masters weren't suddenly transformed into nice men just because their slaves were now Christians. Circumstances weren't much different for these slaves who had become Christians.

In fact, the demands on them probably increased because of their new faith. Their owners now taunted them with, "If you're such a good Christian, why are you complaining about your work load?" As Christian slaves, they could no longer steal from their masters as they used to do and as all the pagan slaves still did. And then Paul has the nerve to tell them that they need to honor these brutes and work even harder! No griping allowed! Life didn't get easier; it got harder as Christian slaves.

We have to be careful that we don't misrepresent the gospel when we tell people that God has a "wonderful plan" for their lives or that He offers them "abundant life." God's wonderful plan may be that you suffer from a debilitating disease or that you get tortured or martyred for your testimony. It may be that you suffer rejection and slander because you stand for God's truth.

Read Hebrews 11. God's abundant life for some was that they "conquered kingdoms, ... obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, ... put foreign armies to flight, ... received back their dead by resurrection" (vv. 33-35a). We read that and say, "Amen!" Keep reading: "Others were tortured, ... and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, ... they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated ..., wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground" (vv. 35-38). Make sure you include all that in your concept of the "abundant life"!

Someone may be wondering, "If becoming a Christian doesn't promise me the good life and the solution to all my problems, then why do it?"

## **BECOMING A CHRISTIAN DOES DEAL WITH YOUR ROOT PROBLEM**

Your root problem is your selfish rebellion against God that alienates you from His holy presence. If that problem isn't dealt with through the cross of Jesus Christ before you die, you will spend eternity away from God's presence, suffering eternal punishment. Becoming a Christian through faith in Christ takes care of that most basic need.

It also continues to deal with your root problem, which is living to please self rather than living to love God and others. Put yourself in the place of a slave in Ephesus. You're a new Christian and you're suffering under a cruel, insensitive master who treats you like a work animal. Or, perhaps you're blessed to have a Christian master, and you assume that Paul will tell him to treat you decently. But along comes this letter and Paul confronts your attitude and performance as a slave, and he doesn't say anything to slave owners!

To all slaves, but especially to those with pagan masters, Paul says, "Regard them as worthy of all honor ...." "But Paul, don't you realize what abusive tyrants these guys are? They don't care about anyone but themselves! When I'm exhausted, when I've already put in a long day, and they have a need, they don't give any thought about me or my needs. They just say, 'Do this,' and I'm expected to hop to it. What about my needs, Paul?" Paul says, "Your need is to honor these men."

But why, Paul? "So that the name of our God and our doctrine may not be spoken against." There is something higher than our happiness and our rights, namely, God's glory. How we act toward an abusive person bears witness of the God we serve and of the kind of selfless love He calls us to model. We're the only Bible a lot of pagans will ever read. Can they tell by your attitude, by your hard work on the job, by your refusal to retaliate when you're wronged, by your returning a blessing in word or deed when you're insulted, what it means to follow Jesus? By honoring that abusive authority figure (boss, parent, husband, government leader), by serving him all the more because we are Christians, we honor God and the teaching of His Word. And if the authority is a Christian, then rather than slacking off, we owe even better service with proper respect, since they are believers and beloved.

Our sinful flesh is always quick to defend self, justify self, excuse self, and exalt self by blaming others. "Sure, I did wrong, but I was a victim! I was mistreated! What about the other guy and what he did to me? If he would just treat me decently, I'd treat him decently. You can't expect anybody to put up with the crud I've had to put up with!" But God does expect us who have been redeemed to confront our selfish attitudes so that we honor God and love others, even our enemies, by our attitudes and actions toward them. It is *especially* when they wrong us that we have the greatest opportunity for testimony.

Becoming a Christian means beginning a life of radical self-denial. Jesus described it as taking up your cross daily to follow Him (Luke 9:23). The cross wasn't a slight irritation a person had to learn to live with; it was a slow, tortuous means of death. Because of the fall,

we all come at life with a “me first, I deserve fair treatment, I have my rights” attitude. Even the non-Christian philosopher Alan Bloom saw this when he observed that “everyone loves himself most but wants others to love him more than they love themselves” (*The Closing of the American Mind* [Simon and Schuster], p. 118).

God confronts us by saying, “No, love Me first; honor My name by your life. And, love others as you do in fact love yourself. Think of them more highly than you do of yourself, even if you’re a slave and your owner isn’t a nice person. And don’t just do it with a self-pitying, martyr complex. You must actually love those who mistreat you and show it by serving them all the more!”

Good grief! That’s tough stuff! There’s a fifth point:

### **DEALING WITH THE ROOT PROBLEM OF SELF IS A LIFELONG PROCESS, NOT A ONCE-AND-FOR-ALL DELIVERANCE**

“Teach and exhort these things” (6:2b). They are present imperatives, implying an ongoing process. This isn’t a decision you make once and it’s settled forever. It’s something we all need to learn and practice every day for the rest of our lives. So we need constant teaching and exhortation to hang in there. Teaching is necessary to counter the false teaching that appeals to the flesh that tells us, “You have a right to be treated fairly! You don’t have to take this! Assert yourself!” Exhortation is necessary because we all get weary and are tempted to take the easy way out of tough situations.

Jesus taught that this is a lifelong process for those who follow Him when He said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). To sum up Paul’s word on how to be a good Christian victim: *Christian victims must continually confront their selfish attitude and replace it with love for God and for others.*

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Some concluding thoughts:**

- (1) **If you are being abused sexually or physically, this Scripture does not mean that you should silently endure it** - A person who violates you sexually or physically is not only breaking God’s law, but also the laws of this country. He needs to be confronted and punished for his crimes.
- (2) **This Scripture does not mean that we should never confront an abusive authority figure** - Love means seeking the highest good of the one loved, which sometimes requires proper confrontation. If you’re being sexually or physically abused, seek the help you need to get it stopped now.

- (3) This Scripture does confront our selfish, “I’ve got my rights,” “I don’t have to take any mistreatment,” “I’m a victim, so I’m not responsible” attitudes –
- (4) This Scripture also confronts our disregard for God’s honor above all else through the way we conduct ourselves in our homes and in the world –
- (5) This Scripture confronts our love for self over our love for others, including our enemies -
- (6) This Scripture calls us to the radical following of the One who laid aside His rights in order to save us from the judgment of a holy God - Brothers and sisters, let’s not be overcome by evil, but let’s overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21)!

### **Discussion Questions**

1. When (if ever) is it right to stand up for our rights? (Consider Acts 16:35-40; 22:24-29; 23:1-5; 25:10-11.)
2. Does denying self mean becoming “a Christian doormat”? What does it mean?
3. How far should Christians go in seeking political or economic solutions to social problems?
4. Don’t true victims need some self-respect rather than self-denial?
5. When should we confront an abusive person? How far should we go in enduring mistreatment?