

“THE MEASURE OF A MAN”  
(1 Timothy 6:11-12)  
© 2010 Rev. Dr. Brian E. Germano

[East Cobb U.M.C.; 6-20-10]

-I-

1. [Traditional Service ONLY:] Read NRSV Text: 1 Timothy 6:11-12 and Pray.

2. How do we (or should we) measure masculinity? What is the measure of a man?

A–Well, if we watch TV, or the internet, or think about famous images of pop culture, we’re going to see one set of answers to those questions.

1–For example, in these places, the nature and character of manhood is usually defined by sheer brute, brawn, and buff – by one’s knowledge and use of power tools, by a fascination of how many HEMIs a truck has, or an ability to recite football stats and scores on any given weekend!

2–Now, I’m being a facetious, of course.... but not entirely...

B–...Because today’s society / culture tends to idealize masculinity in a way that, though the ideal is difficult to live up to, it’s an ideal that’s harder still just to ignore.

3. And yet, if we look at today’s scripture, we find a very *different* set of standards set forth for manhood – a set of standards defined *not* by popular culture, but by God Himself.

[Contemp. Service ONLY: Let me read it... (Read MSG Version of 1 Timothy 6:11-12)]

A–You see, here in 1 Timothy 6, we find the apostle Paul talking to his young apprentice Timothy about some of the qualities of a Godly man – qualities that men of God are called upon to practice and emulate in their daily lives.

B–And while these qualities aren’t *only* for men (they can equally be applied to *women*, as well), since this *is* Father’s Day, *today* I’m using them specifically to describe the life of a Godly *man*.

C–So, what are they? How does *God* (instead of popular culture) measure men? And how do *His* measurements help us ALL to be better able to understand and practice our faith?

-II-

4. Well, according to today’s scripture, the first “measure of a (Godly) man” is **FIDELITY**.

A–Verse 11 begins by saying (MSG) “*But you, Timothy, man of God: run for your life from all this...*” (NRSV) “*As for you, man of God, shun all this...*” – now, *what* exactly is the “*all this...*” to which its referring?

1–Well, it’s actually whole host of things that Paul talks about in the preceding verses that Verse 9 says will cause us to (MSG) “*lose [our] footing in the faith completely and live to regret it bitterly ever after*” / (NRSV) “*fall into temptation and [be] trapped by senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.*”<sup>1</sup>

2–In other words... we’re to “*run for our lives from / shun*” anything that gets in the way of a right relationship with God, others, and ourselves.

B–And *that*, essentially, is the biblical meaning of “FIDELITY” – it means guarding our hearts and behaviors in such a way that worldly things don’t get in the way of our God-given relationships.

1–For example, some of us have difficulty being faithful in our relationships with God, our spouse, our families, and even with our own self-claimed values because we’ve allowed *unhealthy* relationships to be substituted for the *healthy* ones.

2–For instance, some try to find comfort from the pains and boredom of life in the arms of those are not our spouse, or in the misuse of drugs, or alcohol, or nicotine.

3–And the accessibility of online and other types of pornography today causes nearly 40% of all men to struggle in the area of sexuality – many have “*affairs of the heart,*” even if its not a *physical* affair.

C–But fidelity doesn’t deal only with tangible things. No. I know many men (and women) for whom *work*, or *food*, or *gambling*, or *technology* have become mistresses.

1–A number of years back I had to make my wife a promise to avoid working on our computer after I got home because she felt she had become a “*computer widow.*”

2–Some of you may have a similar problem right now with your *over-use* of social media like Facebook or Twitter – some people are on it so much that it’s taken the place of “in-person” relationship building (for which there is *no substitute*).

D–What is it that’s getting in the way of YOUR God-given relationships? Whatever it is... practice FIDELITY by “*running for your life from it / shunning it.*”

5. However, I need to say that according to today’s scripture, the *only* way that men (or women) can truly be faithful in life is if they practice the second “measure of a man”: **FAITH**.

A–The last part of Verse 11 says (MSG) “*Pursue a righteous life – a life of wonder, faith, love, steadiness, courtesy...*” (NRSV) “*Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness...*”

1–Now, I think what this is really saying is that without faith in God *that’s lived out daily*, it’s absolutely *impossible* for us (especially for men) to truly practice fidelity and faithfulness in our lives and behaviors.

2–In other words, *Faith* is the key to *Fidelity* – if we want to be more *faithful* to God, to our spouse, to our family, and to ourselves, then we *first* need to put more of our faith *in* God by the way we live our lives.<sup>2</sup>

B–You know, I can think back on various times in my own life where I fell to temptation because I was trying to fight it only in my own strength – I was trying to grit and bear through it, *instead of* having enough faith to turn my struggle over to God to fight *for me!*

1–And the times I *did* turn my struggles over to God, HE gave me victory.

2–Now, I’ve also learned that sometimes turning my struggle over to God means that I have to be willing to confide in Godly men to hold me accountable.

3–But even in those cases, I recognized that *God* was in charge, *not* me – and it was in those times I understood that *Faith* in God (lived out) is the key to *Fidelity*.

6. Now, a final “measure of a man” that I think Paul encourages Timothy (and us) to live by in today’s scripture is... **FORBEARANCE**.

A–In Verse 12, Paul says (MSG) “*Run hard and fast in the faith. Seize the eternal life, the life you were called to...*” (NRSV) “*Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called...*”

B–In other words, in the face of the struggles and difficulties of life, don’t give up, but instead practice endurance, persistence, perseverance, and tenacity.<sup>3</sup>

1–In the pastoral counseling that I’ve done, and even just in observing church life for many years, I’ve noticed that the men who survive the challenges and pitfalls of manhood – not just physically, but also who survive emotionally, mentally, and spiritually – are the ones who’ve endured because of their faith in God.

2–They’ve survived challenges to their marriages, families, their work, and survived even when things *didn’t* turn out so well.

3–And conversely, the ones I’ve observed who end up shipwrecked because of affairs, or because of abuse of alcohol, drugs, or an addiction to gambling, pornography, or food do so because they’ve lacked hope, and have simply given up.

C–And yet, Paul’s words to Timothy say that practiced faith in God can give us hope to persevere through even the most bleak of circumstances – *Forbearance*, you see, is also a product of *Faith*, and is therefore a quality that defines a Godly man.

## -III-

7. So, while *SOCIETY* measures men by their brute, brawn, and buff, *GOD* measures men (and women, for that matter) by their *Fidelity*, their *Faith*, and their *Forbearance*.

A—Now, I don't know where you are in your relationship with God this Father's Day, but Paul's words make it clear that if you want to real life a life of joy and freedom, it's starts with us answering a call to be people of faith.

B—For Paul, the real "*Measure of a Man*" is their *Faith* in God that produces *Fidelity* and *Forbearance*.

C—Today, ALL of us (men and women alike) are invited to that journey of Faith.

8. [PRAY: (*Invite people to make commitment to faith in God through acceptance of Jesus as Savior for first time, or to renew that commitment...*)]
9. [HOLY COMMUNION]

**ENDNOTES:**

1. Things like unbridled lust, drunkenness, misuse of money, gossip, and what Paul describes as "*envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, and wrangling.*" Find these (and others) in 1 Timothy 6:4-5, as well as in the verses (and Chapter) preceding.
2. In the words of today's scripture, we can't "*run from / shun these things*" until we first "*pursue a righteous life / pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love,*" etc.
3. As a side point, notice that the NRSV translation of Verse 12a says "*fight the good fight...*" – as opposed to "*fight the bad/trivial fight....*" In other words, keep your priorities straight – don't get bogged down in trivialities, or stuck in issues, concerns, and/or attitudes and behaviors that don't have eternal significance.