

Things To Follow After

I Timothy 6:9-12

I. INTRODUCTION: 1

1. It's a pleasure to have you in our assembly tonight and if you're visiting we're glad you're here.
2. **2** I want to talk to us today about the topic Things To Follow After.
 - A. **3** The word "follow" occurs 86 times in this sacred volume.
 - B. To follow after something means to accept, pursue, or practice; to adhere to, keep, or to respect a certain thing.
 - C. As the basis for our study I'd like to read from the book of I Timothy chapter 6 verses 9 through 12. Paul, writing to the young evangelist Timothy, said this:
*"⁹But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. ¹¹But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and **follow after** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. ¹²Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."*
 - D. As Christians we need to be interested in following the Lord.
 - (1) The Bible catalogs several things that we as God's people need to **follow after** and I want to look at those tonight.
 - (2) As always I will give you book, chapter, and verse for those things I wish to say.
 - (3) I urge you to jot them down, take them home with you, and study for yourself whether these things be so; and if they be true to God's book I encourage you to **follow after** them!

II. DISCUSSION: 4

- I. **** Things That Make For Peace:**
 - A. The first thing that we need to follow after are the things which make for peace.
 - B. Come with me to the book of Isaiah chapter 2 and verse 4.
 - (1) Isaiah 2 is a prophecy concerning the Lord's church which is called the Lord's house.
 - (2) In verse 4 Isaiah describes the nature of God's people. He said this: *"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."*
 - C. What Isaiah's talking about when he talks about beating the swords into plowshares and the spears into pruning hooks is about taking the implements of war and turning them into peaceful things.
 - (1) The Lord's people are to be a peaceful people.
 - (2) Now that doesn't mean that we're timid or wimpy when it comes to teaching the truth and standing for the truth, but we need to be interested in finding ways to live peacefully among ourselves.
 - (3) Paul said in Romans 14:17-19, *"¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and **peace**, and joy in the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. ¹⁹Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."*

- (4) In Hebrews 12:14 the Hebrew writer said, *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”*
- (5) Paul instructed the young evangelist Timothy about this concept of things in 2 Timothy 2:22, *“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, **peace**, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”*
- (6) He said we need to follow peace!
- D. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, **“Blessed are the peacemakers.”** (Matt. 5:9)
 - (1) There are a number of Scriptures in the New Testament that teach the Lord’s people need to follow after the things that make for peace.
 - (2) But in spite of that it seems that everywhere you go there is always somebody trying to stir up trouble among the Lord’s people – they’re not satisfied, they’re not content unless they do that evidently.
 - (3) But that kind of thing must not be tolerated. It’s been tolerated in a lot of places for far too long.
- E. Those that would disturb the peace among the Lord’s people must be nipped in the bud!
 - (1) These people need to be marked, identified, and avoided (Rom. 16:17-18).
 - (2) There is no room in the church; the Lord did not die on the cross to purchase the church for somebody to just come along and tear it up.
- F. But whenever you catalog the things the Bible says to follow after we need to follow after the things that make for peace. But there’s something else...

2. **** The Steps of Jesus:**

- A. Whenever you think about things to follow after the Bible talks about the fact that we need to follow after the steps of Jesus.
- B. I don’t know of any better person that we could emulate and imitate than the Lord Himself, do you?
- C. In the book of 1 Peter chapter 2 and in verse 21 the apostle Peter penned these words: *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”*
- D. I know of no better steps to follow than the steps of Jesus Christ, the Son of God!
 - (1) Notice this description of the life of our Lord: *“²²Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: ²³Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: ²⁴Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”* (1 Pet. 1:22-24)
 - (2) In that text there are a number of things that are mentioned that are worthy of our imitation – like the fact He was without sin (in both word and deed), the fact He did not seek vengeance in spite of being mistreated, the fact that even though He was accused and convicted He trusted in God’s plan (which led to Him being crucified on the cross, by the way), and also the fact He was more concerned about others than Himself even to the very end.
- E. So whenever you make a list of the things we need to follow after as the Lord’s people we need to follow after the steps of our Lord who is our great example. But not only that...

3. **** Things That Are Good:**

- A. Number three, not only do we need to follow after the things that make for peace and the steps of Jesus we also need to follow after things that are good.

- B. In I Thessalonians 5:15 the apostle Paul said, “*See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.*”
- C. You know, there are a lot people who always want to follow that which is evil but the Scriptures emphasize that God’s people need to follow after that which is good.
 - (1) Good works are something we all need to be involved in.
 - (2) Peter also talked about that in I Peter 3:13 when he said, “*And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?*”
 - (3) You see, if we follow that which is good we have nothing to fear.
- D. In fact, everything in this lesson can be described as things that are good, right?
- E. Well, let me give you something else to think about...

4. ** The Apostle Paul:

- A. When you open the Bible and study its pages you’ll also discover we’re to follow the apostle Paul.
 - (1) But you have to be careful with this one. Come with me to the book of I Corinthians chapter 11. In verse 1 he said, “*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*”
 - (2) Notice where he put the period – He said that we are to follow him only so far as he followed Jesus Christ. That narrows it down quite a bit because before he became an apostle he persecuted God’s people.
 - (3) But after his conversion he followed the Lord one hundred and ten percent!
 - (4) He followed the Lord wholeheartedly and he expects us to do the same.
- B. Also, in Philippians 3:17 the apostle penned these words: “*Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*” In chapter 4 and verse 9 he said again, “*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*”
- C. Do you want God to be with you? Most of us probably do, right? Well, that’s how to make it happen – right there!
- D. By following the teachings of the Lord as demonstrated in the life of the apostle Paul. But again, **Things To Follow After**...include...

5. **5** The Faith of Those Who Rule Over Us:

- A. Number five, we also need to follow the faith of those who rule over us.
 - (1) In Hebrews 13:7 the Bible says this: “*Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*”
 - (2) Now this passage has been the source of some disagreement as to who he’s talking about.
 - (3) Is he talking about the elders of the church at Jerusalem, or the elders of the church in general, or just the apostles? Well, what is the proper standard by which we can measure ourselves?
 - (4) We know that man is not the correct standard. The only proper standard that we can estimate ourselves is the truth of God’s word.
- B. Today, the truth of God is contained in the gospel which Paul refers to as “***the faith.***” (Eph. 4:4) And that’s what we’re to follow!
 - (1) And we’re to only follow men insofar as their lives are consistent with and patterned after the truth of God’s word.

- (2) The apostles were certainly worthy of our imitation in that respect and so are faithful, Bible believing, and God fearing elders.
- C. By the way, the church is in dire need of faithful men to serve in that capacity – men who meet the qualifications given by the apostle in I Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1.
 - (1) Part of their job is to set good examples for members of the church to follow.
 - (2) In describing the responsibility of elders Peter had this to say in **I Peter 5:1-3**: *“¹The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: ²Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; ³Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”*
- D. Any man who would meet the qualifications and requirements to serve as an elder in the local church is certainly worthy of our admiration and imitation. Don’t you agree? But that’s not all we’re to follow after...

6. **** God:**

- A. The Scriptures also teach that we are to follow after God.
 - (1) Ephesians 5:1-2 says this: *“¹Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; ²And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”*
 - (2) God is the creator and sustainer of the universe. He speaks to us through the natural world and revelation.
 - (3) He created us in His own image and loved us so much He sent his Son to die on the cross on our behalf. God can best be described by His attributes. Some of His attributes are as follows:**
 - (a) **God Is Changeless:** Progress and change may characterize some of His works but His nature remains unchanged.
 - (b) **God Is All Powerful:** God’s power is unlimited. He can do anything that is not inconsistent with His nature, character, and purpose. The only limitations on God’s power are those He imposes on Himself.
 - (c) **God Is Everywhere:** God is not confined to one part of the universe but is present in all His power at every point in space and every moment of time.
 - (d) **God Is All Knowing:** God possesses all knowledge. Because God is everywhere at once He knows everything simultaneously. He has the power to know the thoughts and motives of every heart. And, finally,
 - (e) **God Is Eternal:** Past, present, and future are all the same to Him.
- B. Time is like a parade that man sees only a segment at a time but God sees time in its entirety.
 - (1) These are the natural attributes of God.
 - (2) He also possesses the following moral attributes: God is holy; God is righteous, God is just and fair; God is love; and God is truth.
- C. Needless to say this is a tough act to follow but it’s what the Scriptures call upon us to do to the best of our ability. One more point and the lesson’s yours...

7. **** Love:**

- A. Number 7, the Bible also teaches that we are to follow after love. Bible love is misunderstood today.
 - (1) Most people have no concept of what real Bible love is all about.

(2) In I Corinthians 13 Paul discussed what real Bible love is all about – it's a text that will help you appreciate this concept of things. It's a text that we should read often. He said, *"¹Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ²And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. ⁴Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never fails..."* (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

B. We need to read that often and make application in our lives.

(1) Come with me to the next chapter (14) in verse 1 do you know what he said next?

(2) He said, *"Follow after love!"*

C. There's a great need today for people, including myself, to understand what real Bible love is all about.

D. You know, if you go out here and ask a hundred people at random if they love the Lord most of them would probably say "Yes."

(1) But does that really prove a person loves the Lord? What is the real test whether or not a person loves the Lord?

(2) Well, maybe we should let the Lord define that: In **John 14:15** Jesus said, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

(3) John nailed it down real good when he said in **1 John 5:3**, *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."*

(4) That's the real, Biblical definition of love, right there. It's the kind of love that motivates people to hear, believe, and obey the teachings of the Lord.

III. CONCLUSION:

1. After learning about some things to follow after the only thing left to say is let's do that!

2. Let's get busy in following after

A. The Things That Make For Peace,

B. The Steps of Jesus,

C. Things That Are Good,

D. The Apostle Paul,

E. The Faith of Those Who Rule Over Us,

F. God, and,

G. Love.

3. Invitation

Adapted from a sermon by Ryan Thomas.