

2 Timothy 2:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Analysis

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Paul gives practical counsel for personal purity. "Flee also youthful lusts" (tas de neanik as epithymias pheuge, τὰς δὲ νεανικὰς ἐπιθυμίας φεῦγε). The verb pheugō (φεύγω) means run away from, escape—same word describing Joseph fleeing Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:12). "Youthful lusts" (neanikas epithymias, νεανικὰς ἐπιθυμίας) includes but isn't limited to sexual temptation—also pride, ambition, controversy-seeking, rashness, impulsiveness characteristic of youth. Timothy, likely in his thirties, still needed this warning.

Negatives alone insufficient; Paul adds positives: "but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace" (diōke de dikaiosynēn pistin agapēn eirēnēn, δίωκε δὲ δικαιοσύνην πίστιν ἀγάπην εἰρήνην). The verb diōkō (διώκω) means pursue eagerly, chase—same intensity as fleeing but opposite direction. Four virtues encompass Christian character: dikaiosynē (righteousness, right living), pistis (faith, faithfulness, trustworthiness), agapē (self-sacrificial love), eirēnē (peace, harmony, reconciliation).

Crucially, this pursuit occurs "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (meta tōn epikaloumenōn ton kyrion ek katharas kardias, μετὰ τῶν ἐπικαλουμένων τὸν κύριον ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας). Christian growth isn't solitary but communal. We need fellowship with genuine believers whose worship is sincere, not hypocritical.

"Pure heart" (katharas kardias, καθαρᾶς καρδίας) indicates undivided loyalty, sincere devotion, authentic faith unmarred by mixed motives.

Historical Context

Timothy's youth and temperament made him vulnerable to specific temptations. Ancient youth were stereotypically viewed as impulsive, pleasure-seeking, argumentative, and proud. Timothy's leadership in Ephesus—a wealthy, cosmopolitan city with temple prostitution and philosophical debates—exposed him to sexual temptation, intellectual pride, and contentious controversy. Paul's counsel addresses these specific dangers while emphasizing community: spiritual growth occurs best in fellowship with sincere believers who pursue godliness together.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What specific 'youthful lusts'—whether actual youth or immature impulses—do you need to actively flee rather than merely resist?
2. How intentionally are you pursuing righteousness, faith, love, and peace, or do you passively wait for spiritual maturity to develop automatically?
3. Who are the fellow believers with 'pure hearts' you're pursuing godliness alongside, and are you in authentic Christian community or isolated individualism?

Interlinear Text

τὰς δὲ νεωτερικὰς ἐπιθυμίας φεῦγε δίωκε δὲ
G3588 also youthful lusts Flee follow also
G1161 G3512 G1939 G5343 G1377 G1161

δικαιοσύνην πίστιν ἀγάπην εἰρήνην μετὰ τῶν
righteousness faith charity peace with G3588
G1343 G4102 G26 G1515 G3326

ἐπικαλουμένων τὸν κύριον ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας
them that call on G3588 the Lord out of a pure heart
G1941 G2962 G1537 G2513 G2588

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:11 (Love): Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

1 Peter 3:11 (Peace): Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

1 Corinthians 6:18 (Parallel theme): Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

Psalms 119:9 (Parallel theme): Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

1 Timothy 6:11 (Faith): But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Hebrews 12:14 (Peace): Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

1 Timothy 4:12 (Faith): Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

1 Corinthians 10:14 (Love): Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

1 Timothy 1:5 (Faith): Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

3 John 1:11 (Love): Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org