

Shepherds & Servants 16

Do Not Desire To Be Rich

1 Timothy 6:6-10

Memory Verses: 1 Timothy 6:6

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Over the course of the last 4 months we have been in this series focusing on the book of 1 Timothy and how it relates to those who lead our church and those who serve in our church.

Those who lead, we refer to as Elders and Deacons. Elders are the Spiritual Shepherds of the congregation and the Deacons are the Sacrificial Servants of the congregation. These Shepherds and Servants protect the gospel, praise God for his mercy, hold to the faith, pray for the people, know God and obey his call, partner with women in ministry, lead the church, and are qualified. They don't fall victim to legalism, nor do they look down on the young. Instead they train for godliness, persist in preaching, disciple relationally, and take care of widows.

And though all of these are responsibilities of our leaders, they still apply to each and everyone of us who are called to be followers of Christ. Just because we may not be assigned to the office of Elder or Deacon, doesn't mean we don't have an obligation to live to a higher standard in Christ.

And so this morning we come to one of my least favorite topics in the word of God; money and wealth. But we must address it because Paul addresses it here in the book of 1 Timothy. And why does Paul feel the need to be address this issue to Timothy? Simple. Elders, like each of us, struggle with a desire to be rich. If this struggle is not addressed it could lead, not only to his demise, but to that of his church and his congregants as well. A love for money corrupts everyone.

We all struggle with this do we not? We all want to have nicer things, more security, to be able to spend without consequence. The more money we have the less problems we think we will encounter. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The more we chase wealth the more it consumes our hearts; the more it decays our faith. That is why it is important this morning that we recognize that in order to walk with Christ as a leader or layperson, we must flee a longing for wealth and avoid being trapped in its snare. This is Paul's plea. This is my plea... fight the urge for more money, and more stuff... do not desire to be rich but find contentment in less. Look with me in 1 Timothy 6:6-10. The main point this morning is clear... **You'll never have more than when you learn to be content with less!**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here is that... **A Desire For Wealth Dismisses The Gain Of Godliness.** Look at **verse 6.** In essence, money and wealth are nothing compared to the riches of godliness. What is godliness exactly? Does this mean that in order to be content in poverty we must be like God? Of course not. Being like God is not achievable. What is achievable is a desire to be like God and grow in your spiritual maturity as you are being sanctified. Therefore, what Paul is saying is, **contentment is found when you replace a desire for money and wealth with a desire for a deeper walk with God.** No amount of money can compare to a righteous, holy, and mature life in Christ.

1 Timothy 6:17-18 shows us how this practically works in the life of a believer. **Those seeking godliness will not put their hope and faith in their wealth. The security of money is nothing compared to the promises of God.** Riches make one proud, faith in God makes one humble. The world may be rich in wealth, but the godly are rich in good works. The world may hoard their wealth for themselves, but the godly are generous and giving. The world sets their hope on wealth, the godly set their hope in God alone. What does it look like for someone to desire godliness more than anything else, including money? **Psalms 63:1-5.** God, your loving kindness is better than life. My soul finds satisfaction in you and you alone! Who needs money and worldly treasures when you have this? **Look again at this passage. I want us to spend a couple of minutes simply praying through this passage and asking God to give us a desire for him like this!**

Another thing to consider is that when we place our desires in godliness instead of riches God will still take care of our physical needs. Look at **verse 8.** Also look at the end of **verse 17** again. "but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy." God will give us clothes, food, and shelter. He will provide us with everything we need in order to not just survive this life but to enjoy this life. It may not be much but we can be content with little when we are filled with the riches of God. Look at what Paul says in **Philippians 4:11-13.** Look again especially at **4:13.** I can do all things through Christ does not correlate with sports, or feats of strength. In context it deals with something much harder than hitting a home run or running a marathon. It's talking about being content. Finding contentment is hard. It can only be done through the strength of Christ. Paul says it's a secret. The secret is this... It can only be found through the riches of godliness. **You'll never have more than when you learn to be content with less!**

The next thing we need to see here is that... **A Desire For Wealth Focuses On The Temporary.** Look at **verse 7.** We were born with nothing and we will die with nothing to bring with us. **Job 1:21** and **Ecclesiastes 5:15** agree. **Proverbs 27:24** warns that riches aren't forever. The old Spanish

proverb says “there are no pockets in a burial shroud.” The modern equivalent might be, “hearses don't pull u-hauls” You get the point though, right? **What good is storing up money when in the end you can't take it with you and it will mean nothing to you in the afterlife?** Rather than focusing on temporary treasures, why not start building wealth that lasts forever? **1 Timothy 6:19** speaks to this. When we store up godliness and good works, we build a foundation for an eternal future. **Matthew 6:19-20** makes this clear.

Those who live for temporary treasures, wealth and riches on this earth will be sorely disappointed when their soul is required of them. Listen to the parable of **Luke 12:15-21**. **Those who are rich in wealth but not in God have nothing to take with them to eternity. For those of us who are believers, in this life we are the poorest we will ever be. For those who don't have Christ, in this life you are the richest you will ever be. For all of eternity you will suffer in the worst kind of poverty! Christian, be content with what you have now... for great is your reward! You'll never have more than when you learn to be content with less!**

Lastly, we need to see that... **A Desire For Wealth Ruins Faithful Living**. Let's look again at **verses 9-10**. A love for money leads to temptation, ruin, destruction, and apostasy. Notice how many times you see the words desire, love, or craving here. It's all about our desires. **We can desire godliness and be content or we can desire wealth which leads to many other harmful desires.** The desire of wealth is a snare. An old Roman proverb put it like this, “money is like sea water, the more you drink the thirstier you get.” The craving of wealth and money only begets a greater desire for more of it. One who desires money is never satisfied. Enough money is never enough. In the end you'll realize that you've been on the hamster wheel chasing your own tail into oblivion. It's one of the devil's greatest and nastiest tricks.

And you can easily see how chasing wealth turns into even more harmful desires. To get more money one will compromise their integrity and morals. They will lie to get it. They will steal to get it. Some will even murder to get it. There are 25 million sex slaves world wide right now. Why? Cause it pays! In fact, there is not depravity mankind will not stoop to in order to get more money! It is the one ring and it must be taken to Mordor and cast into mount doom!

The saddest of all temptations that money and wealth provide is that which makes men walk away from their faith. They have decided to trade money for godliness. We have seen this. Faithful followers who have come begging for the hope and peace that can only be found in Christ who in weakness slip away into an endless pursuit of wealth. All they ever find is discontentment and ruin!

And of course, the temptations that chasing wealth and money

provide are not beyond the leaders of the church. In fact, it is one of the primary means of temptation that Satan uses to lure men from the ministry. If he can make godly Elders and Deacons chase after money then he can lead them from the faith or ruin their ministry all together. He has succeeded in this before and he will again. **In fact, as a youth pastor in my very first ministry 21 years ago, the pastor embezzled over 100k from the church. Why? Because he desired riches more than God!**

And yes, it is on the Elder or Deacon to remain faithful and flee the desire to be rich, but the church can help. “You've heard the joke before that it's God's job to keep the pastor humble, and the deacon's job to keep him poor.” It's funny, just not biblical. In fact, if you want to help your leaders not stray from their calling to chase money, you should abide by Paul's instructions to the church at Ephesus in **1 Timothy 5:17-18**. Simply put, pay your Elders well. Some interpret “double honor” to mean, twice the average wage of the congregation. I don't think that's the case, nor should a humble, non-money loving pastor want such. But it at least means, you should want to take good care of your pastors. Any church who pays their pastors a deserving wage, will stem the tide of temptation for more money and wealth! **On an aside, Stone Creek Church most definitely takes care of their Pastor and I couldn't be more appreciative of how you honor me.** The point is simple, be content in godly things, and don't go chasing wealth into destruction. The treasure of godliness is here now. The treasures of heaven awaits. **You'll never have more than when you learn to be content with less!**

Application

The application this morning is simple. Desire godliness above all else and you will find contentment with little wealth and riches. John D. Rockefeller once said, “I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness. The poorest man I know is the man who has nothing but money.” Cornelius Vanderbilt said, “the care of millions is too great a load. There is no pleasure in it.” The millionaire John Jacob Astor described himself as “the most miserable man on earth.” And despite his vast fortune, Henry Ford once remarked, “I was happier doing mechanics work.” More recently, as Tom Brady was being interviewed, he remarked, “i've won many Superbowls, I've made millions upon millions of dollars, and nothing satisfies. I only want more.” As **Ecclesiastes 5:10** sums it up, “he who loves money will not be satisfied with money.”

Conclusion

Contrast that with C.T. Studd. I mean, you can just tell from his last name... this guy was a stud. Right? In the 1800's C.T. was one of the greatest athletes in all of England and one of the greatest Cricket players ever. He had amassed the largest purse of any athlete up to that time, a

fortune worth about 1.3 million in today's money. When C.T. was converted to Christ he decided to quit cricket and become a missionary. He also decided to give away all of his money upon disembarking to Africa. A fifth he gave to D.L. Moody. A fifth he gave to George Muller. A fifth he gave to the salvation army. The rest was given to a dozen other organizations. He only kept some of the money to give to his fiance as a wedding present. She in return gave it away as well. They left their life of wealth behind to pursue godliness in contentment with nothing but Christ. **You'll never have more than when you learn to be content with less!**