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KILL THE LOVE OF MONEY

The love of money is crouching at your door, and its desire is for you. But do not give your heart to wealth, money and possessions! We know from Paul that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). We know from the author of Ecclesiastes that he who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income (5:10). We know we are from dust and to dust we will return (Genesis 3:19). But we are still tempted by wealth.

Riches are deceitful. As soon as you think you have them, they are gone, or worse, our appetites for them have increased. And yet, despite these and many other warnings, we are so easily tempted by the love of money. It glitters, catching our eye, and tries to build a stronghold in our hearts. When someone falls into the love of money, they trust in their possessions for their security and begin to hope in riches. They grasp their possessions tightly, holding them close as "Precious." And we all know that holding something tightly while saying, "my Precious" is a bad idea.

Nowhere is the danger more clearly articulated than by Jesus himself in Luke 16:13, "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." And what happens next in this passage? Pharisees, *who are lovers of money*, scoff at Jesus.

This is my warning for you: the love of money leads to the seat of scoffers (Psalm 1). Do not let this sin lead you to scoff at our Lord. We must kill the love of money, or it will turn our hearts away from God. So what weapons do we have at our disposal? All attacks flow from a single principal. If you cannot love God and money, the surest way to kill the love of money is to increase love for God.

If the lover of money is tight-fisted, the man who loves God receives his money, possessions, and wealth with an open hand. How is it that Job, after losing everything, could say, "He gives and

takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord?" It is because he loved God and held his possessions with an open hand.

Open one of your hands right now, palm facing heaven. This is an image of what it looks like when someone who loves God receives money and possessions from him. Now relax your hand. Do you see that? The natural position of your hand is to curl the fingers. So too, our hearts naturally close around our possessions. Sin is crouching at your door, and its desire is for you. But you must put it to death.

And let me remind you, Christian. You have been given a new self with new desires. Your heart of stone has turned to flesh. If indeed you have been raised with Christ, you have been freed from the power of sin and can put this to death. We all know ways that we can cultivate our love for God, and make no mistake: love is far more than a feeling. We are to love him with our heart, soul, mind and strength. Church going, bible study, praying, singing, and many other good and worthwhile acts of love for God are readily available. Do all of these and more to express love for God.

Most of all, I encourage you to use your wallet as a person governed by your love for the Lord. It is from this foundation that we are able to:

- Give cheerfully
- Practice generous hospitality
- Be content in abundance or with lack
- Enjoy God's gifts with gratitude
- Trust and hope in God rather than in riches
- Joyfully care for those under our charge

We are able to view money rightly as a form of strength and wholeheartedly love the Lord with all of our strength.