

Money and the Bible, Pt. 2

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(Continued from last month)

1 Timothy 6:6–10 (NKJV) “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

The love of money refers to how we regard money. The love of money is an inordinate attachment to money and the things it can buy. The love of money is a drive to attain it. We are around money all the time so it's easy to love it. It is a powerful and constant part of our lives. We're never away from money matters. It is always on our mind. Advertising is relentless in presenting the “need” to have more of it. The love of money is not an emotional thing that says, “Oh, money, money, I love you!” The love of money is not an issue of having money. You can love money and have a lot of it. You can also love money and have none of it.

Those who have money also have a greater responsibility before God. God gives special instruction to those who have money:

1 Timothy 6:17–19 (NKJV) “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

The rich in this present world are to guard against pride and feelings of superiority. They are not to be haughty, i.e. conceited and proud about their station in life or their possessions. The rich are not to trust in uncertain riches but in God. With their riches, the rich are to: 1) do good, 2) be rich in good works, 3) be ready to give, 4) be willing to share, 5) store up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, and 6) to lay hold on eternal life (rather than hold on to riches)—remember the rich young ruler!

The love of money robs us of doing our best. Consider a story I heard not long ago of a General Manager of one of the Major League baseball teams. In the course of time his first baseman had gone four days without getting a hit and was obviously not putting out any effort. So he went to this young man and he said to him, “Look...what's wrong? You haven't had a hit in four days. You're not putting out the effort.” The young man replied, “Well what do you expect, I'm only making six-hundred thousand a year.” This man had a problem but it was not his salary. What kind of an athlete will a young man be who is motivated only by the dollar sign? He'll never be what he could be.

Do we think the same way about our job or about doing the work of the Lord? Do we only work for God or serve in the church if and when the money is right? We should not be motivated by money but by the desire to be the best we can be for God and let the money

come as it comes. No matter what occupation we hold, we should love what we do rather than loving money.

The love of money is covetousness which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). In a recent survey, forty-five percent of people admitted that they did not have enough income to support their "lifestyles." Attempting to maintain a lifestyle we cannot afford is driven by covetousness—an inordinate desire to get what we want apart from the blessing, provision, and timing of God.

The love of money will cause us to sin against the Lord. What will a man do for the love of money? Our news is filled with people whose lives are forever ruined because they broke the law in order to get money. God's people are not immune. The Bible is filled with examples. For the love of money Achan brought defeat on Israel's army and death to himself and his family. For the love of money Balaam sinned and tried to curse God's own people. For the love of money Delilah betrayed Samson, and caused the slaughter of thousands. For the love of money Ananias and Sapphira became the first hypocrites in the church and God executed them there. For the love of money Judas betrayed and sold Jesus. These are not very good company in which to be associated. Money lovers aren't a very good crowd.

Anytime we begin to pursue money, we are going to forget God. Godliness is characterized by a pursuit of God, not of money and being content with what you have. 1 Timothy 6:8-10 clearly reveals that the love of money brings all kinds of problems—temptations, snares, foolish and hurtful lusts, drowning you in destruction and loss. These are all serious things!

Jesus said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these (other) things shall be added to you." In other words, we are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and let God decide whether or not we will have a million dollars. We are to set our heart on glorifying God rather than on fleeting riches. Most really rich people would tell you that being rich is a lot harder than being poor.

Money is not to be our treasure in life. Jesus said, Matthew 6:19–21 (NKJV) *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* (Matthew 6:19-21 NKJV) There are two kinds of treasures: 1) Earthly treasures that are temporal and uncertain, and 2) Heavenly treasures that are eternal and certain. There are also two kinds of storehouses: 1) Earthly storehouses which are subject to moths, rust, and thieves, and 2) the heavenly storehouse which are not subject to these things and which yield great dividends for eternity. The foolishness of storing up treasures on earth is clearly set forth in Jesus' Parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:16-21: *"The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. ¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' ¹⁸ So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.' ²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' ²¹ 'So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

(Continued next month)

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