

**9-25-22**

Sermon- Identify the Source of Your Contentment

Scripture- 1 Timothy 6:6-19, CTW PS 91:1-6, 14-16

Hymns- 612, 614, 617

Theme- In this passage, Paul uses active and forceful verbs to describe the Christian life: "run, pursue, fight, hold tightly." Some think that Christianity is a passive faith that we can just pick up when we are not busy doing other things. Here, Paul reminds Timothy and us that we must have an active faith: training, working hard, sacrificing and preparing to do that which is right. Have you identified this need for action in your life?

**I. Our text for today is commonly taken out of context in our culture.** When I did a Google search for "Money is the root..." it auto-filled with "of all evil." As we will see today this is actually a partial quote or rather a misquote, of a Bible verse.

**A. There are all sorts of clever clichés and maxims about money...**

- Here's one: "Money talks but all mine ever says is, 'Goodbye.'"
- Mark Twain used to say, "The lack of money is the root of all evil."
- It was Elizabeth Taylor who quipped, "How can money be the root of all evil if shopping is the cure for sadness?"
- And here's my favorite, "Money is the root of all evil. For more information, send \$10 to me."

You don't need to give me ten bucks but hopefully we'll discover some new information that will lead to our transformation today.

Our text today is found in the Apostle Paul's first letter to young Timothy. After installing him as pastor of the church at Ephesus he sent him two letters to equip him for the task of pastoring.

We could summarize Paul's proposition this way: True gospel preaching leads to true godly practice. He goes over the key ingredients that will make for a healthy church and in Chapter six he gives Timothy some practical ways to deal with false teachers.

**B. These prosperity preachers were promising financial gain for those who claimed it by faith.** They were also trying to get rich from the redeemed. Sound familiar? In verses 6-8, Paul gives three ways to become a contented Christian.

**1. Prioritize faithful godliness over financial gain.**

Look at verse 6: "But godliness with contentment is great gain." The word, "but" shows the contrast with the common teaching. Godliness leads to contentment, which is "great gain." When we seek our satisfaction in the Savior, we'll become content Christians.

**2. Proclaim that what you have is not yours.**

Everything you have has been given to you and you can't take what you do have with you when you die. Look at verse 7: "For we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world."

**3. Pursue wanting what you already have.** Notice verse 8: "But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content." If we have the necessities of life, our needs are met, right? Contentment is not having everything you want; contentment comes when you want what you already have.

Listen to the wisdom of Corrie Ten Boom: "I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess."

**II. Know that contentment is not a function of what you possess but what you cherish.** The key question is this: Is

Christ alone enough for you? Christians can be content because Christ is with us as **Hebrews 13:5** says: "Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"

**A. In verse 9 we see a contrast with contentment: "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction."** Here Paul lays out words that form the slippery slope of chasing after "just a little bit more."

**1. Desire.** The word for "desire" means, "to crave and long for; to stretch out to get something." Those who stretch out for shekels are in huge danger. Some time ago, Money magazine declared that money is now the #1 obsession of Americans. Newsweek reports that we have achieved a new plane of consciousness called "transcendental acquisition." It's easy for our desire for money to become an idol.

**2. Deviation.** The next step down is a "fall into temptation." An illustration of this is found in **Genesis 13:10-13** when Lot chose the best land but in doing so, he set up his tent right next to Sodom. Are you aware we never stand still spiritually? If we try to coast, we'll eventually compromise.

**3. Deception.** Notice the next phrase in **1 Timothy 6:9**: "...into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires..." A snare was like a noose or a sudden and unexpected trap. The word "senseless" refers to being irrational or foolish and "harmful" means to be injured or hurt. That reminds me of the vivid picture in **Deuteronomy 7:25**: "...You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God."

**4. Destruction.** All of this leads to a very dark place: "...that plunge people into ruin and destruction." This word

“plunge” was used of something sinking to the bottom of a lake. If we don’t control our desires for dollars we can sink to the bottom of the devil’s lake as well.

**B. The word “ruin” refers to divine punishment, while “destruction” was used of eternal damnation.** According to the National Endowment for Financial Education, about 70 percent of people who win a lottery actually end up broke in a few years.

Other studies show that lottery winners frequently become estranged from family and friends, and incur a greater incidence of depression, drug and alcohol abuse, divorce, and suicide than the average American.

### **III. Putting all this in context**

**A. We now come to perhaps the most well-known line in verse 10:** “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”

We notice right away that money is the not the root of all evil but **“the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.”**

It’s interesting to see that verse 9 and verse 10 are almost exact parallels. Again, Paul uses a series of words that begin with the letter “D”, which is a good way to remember them

**1. Desire.** Verse 9 describes those who “desire” to be rich and verse 10 uses the phrase, “love of money.”

**2. Deviation.** Verse 9 says that those who desire to be rich “fall into temptation” which really means that they Deviate from the way in which God would want them to go.

**Psalm 10:3** says, “The one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD.”

**3. Deception.** Verse 9 tells us that this temptation can lead us “into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires” and verse 10 says, “...it is through this **craving** that some have **wandered away from the faith.**” The word “wandered” means to get lost and “craving” refers “to stretching oneself out, to reach after.” Money, by its very nature, is deceptive. In describing the four soul types represented by four different soils, Jesus describes how the “deceitfulness of riches and desires for other things enter in and choke the word.”

**4. Destruction.** Verse 9 describes how these desires will “plunge people into ruin and destruction” while verse 10 shows that they have “pierced themselves with many pangs.” The word “pierce” is quite graphic – it was used for putting meat on a spit and then cooking it over an open flame. It also means, “to pierce through or impale.” Notice that people do this to themselves because “pangs” was used to describe self-inflicted wounds.

Jesus says in **Luke 12:15**, “Watch out! Be on your guard against greed!”

#### **IV. Therefore We Are To Flee and Fight Evil Desires in Regard to Money and the Pursuit Thereof.**

**A. We’re to flee those things that trip us up and we’re to fight for the things that grow our faith.** Drop down to verses 17-19 for specific ways to be fruitful with our finances.

“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”

**Paul addresses “the rich in this present age.”** You may think that doesn’t include you but compared to the rest of the world, most of us have way more than what others have. Even if you

don't consider yourself wealthy, the wisdom Paul shares is spot on for all of us. Notice that he wants Timothy to "charge them." This is strong, like a military command and was used to advance an order. These are not just helpful hints or funny quotes about our cash. I see seven commands that come directly from this passage.

**1. Don't be haughty about what you have.** To be "haughty" means to be high-minded, proud and even arrogant. Having some wealth can make us feel like we're worth more and that we're better than those who have less. The issue is not how much money you have but how much does money have of you? Albert Schweitzer once said, "If you have something you can't live without, you don't own it, it owns you." It's good to ponder this question: Do my possessions possess me?

**2. Don't set your hopes on what you have.** Riches are "uncertain," which means that they are not safe. **Proverbs 23:5:** "When your eyes light on it, it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven."

**3. Set your hopes on God and enjoy what you have.** We can do this because God "richly provides us with everything to enjoy." Christians don't have to be curmudgeons because God wants us to find pleasure in the gifts He gives to us. The word "richly" here means "abundantly." The key is to recognize that everything we have is a gift from Him.

**4. Do good with what you have.** Verse 18 calls us to be "rich in good works" or wealthy in works. Remember **James 2:15-17:** "If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

**5. Be generous with what you have.** We're to be "ready to share" by freely giving what we've been freely given.

**2 Corinthians 9:6-7** states: "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

**6. Invest what you have for eternity.** Listen to the first part of verse 19: "Thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future..." We're to lay up in heaven so a foundation can be laid down.

Jesus said something very similar in **Matthew 6:19-21**: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

**7. The only way to live is to give what you have.** Check out the last phrase in verse 19: "...so that you may take hold of that which is truly life."

We could say it this way: Giving brings real living. **Acts 20:35**: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Jesus said it like this in **Matthew 6:24**: "No one 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."

You will never grow in contentment without a consuming passion for Christ. It's time for us to surrender to the Savior and be saved so that we will serve Him, not money, as our Master. But you have to come to the Cross for that to happen.

Amen? Let Us Pray...