

Desire for Wealth

1 Timothy 6:6-10; 17-19

Pastor Guna Raman

We need to awaken and align our hearts as a covenant community to make Jesus the greatest treasure and desire of our lives. Paul unpacks the famous message that Jesus preached about money (Matt. 6:19-24) in 1 Timothy 6.

Three lenses to 1 Timothy 6:6-10; 17-19

1. Apathy

Paul referred to two types of people from the text: those who desire to be rich, and those who were already rich. Contentment is where we are at peace at all times with what God has given to us right now (v6). While we brought nothing into this world (v7), along the way in life, we acquire things. When we leave this world, we do not take any of these things with us. When we die, we stand before God completely empty handed, regardless of how much or little we have on this earth. Just as everyone is equal at the time of their birth, so will we be when we die. Nothing is ours because everything was given to us by God and none of it translates into eternity.

Paul warned against the distorted desire to be rich in earthly treasures that would lead to ruin and destruction (v9). This broken and distorted desire grows out from the love of money (v10a). What woos our hearts away from God more than anything else are things that money can buy (Mark 4, Luke 12:15; 18:25). The desire and love for money can cause our hearts to drift away from God. The love of money is a root sin that produces a craving (fruit) that causes someone to slowly wander away from God (v10b). *"The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison, but apple pie. It is not the banquet of the wicked that dulls our appetite for heaven, but the endless nibbling at the table of the world."* – John Piper. Be careful of apathy that causes a heart that refuses to be generous and is reluctant to give.

2. Anxiety

Loving money doesn't just lead to apathy, but also anxiety. Anxiety is almost always about control. Placing security and feeling in-control with the possession of more money makes us fall into the trap of a false sense of security and control that money gives. All earth-bound treasures do not last; we could lose them.

Paul exhorts the rich not to put their hope in their riches but on God (v17). While it is not wrong to be rich, it is wrong to hope in riches. Contentment isn't about not enjoying good things. Contentment is about not needing more things. Paul also exhorts the rich to be rich in doing good works and being generous (v18). The opposite of hoping and desiring for more wealth is learning to give more of yourself and your resources to others. We need to grow in generosity, that we may take hold of what is truly life (v19).

3. Desire for more of life

We wrongly believe that money will give us a good foundation for the future and that it would help us take hold of that which is truly life. Paul warns against this; hoarding money brings apathy into our hearts; we slowly lose heart for God. It creates anxiety in our souls; the root of pain and anguish in our hearts. The love of money will drain us of what is truly life. The abundant and significant life is not one that possesses much and desires more. It is releasing our grip on money and grabbing onto what is truly life – God.

The act of giving is not God taking something away from us. Rather, it is God giving to us. He leads us out of our wandering and lifts us up to flourish. We need to be generous and plunge our heart into God, putting our hope in Him. Hoping in God brings life; hoping in money brings anxiety and apathy (v19). Know that you are extremely valued and loved by God and respond with generosity!