

## Money is the Root of all Evil

1 Timothy 6:3-10

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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.

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.

Last week we put the text of Jeremiah 29:11 into context and discovered that *God will not always do what we desire but He will always do what He decides.* This is sermon #8 in our series we’re calling CONTEXT – and we have six more to go!

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.

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.”** The word **“great”** is the Greek word, **“megas,”** which means large or huge. Instead of focusing on wealth and health, we’re to prioritize growth in godliness. Godliness does not give financial gain; it is itself gain when combined with contentment. 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.”** The word **“nothing”** can be translated, **“absolutely nothing.”** Job 1:21: **“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return...”** Solomon discovered this as well in Ecclesiastes 5:15: **“As he came from his mother’s womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand.”** Psalm 49:17: **“For when he dies he will carry nothing away.”**
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. Proverbs 15:16: **“Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it.”**

It’s interesting how millionaire J.D. Rockefeller once answered the question, **“How much money is enough?”** Here’s what he said, **“Just a little bit more.”** After he died, someone asked, **“How much did he leave behind?”** The answer: **“All of it.”** In contrast, 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.”**

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.’”**

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.***” Paul lays out the slippery slope of chasing after “just a little bit more.”

- **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. And one of the problems with idols is that they need to be fed because they’re always hungry. Their needs are insatiable and they demand an ongoing sacrifice.
- **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. Here’s how his spiritual slippage happened.
  - ✓ He *saw* the seduction of Sodom in Genesis 13:10: “*And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere...*”
  - ✓ He *walked* toward Sodom in Genesis 13:11: “*So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east.*”
  - ✓ He *lived* near Sodom in Genesis 13:12: “*Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.*” He faced his tents “*toward Sodom*” so he could look with longing.
  - ✓ He *sat* in the gate of Sodom in Genesis 19:1: “*Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city.*” He no longer lived near Sodom, now he lived *in* and *with* the wicked.

This reminds me of Samson’s slide into sin as well. I’m looking forward to speaking twice at Camp Summit this month on Samson’s life. This camp is part of Youth Hope, one of our Go Team Partners.

- **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.”*

- **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. I’ll never forget when I was about 8 and was fishing with my dad on Devil’s Lake in the middle of the night when our outboard motor fell off and sank to the bottom. If we don’t control our desires for dollars we can sink to the bottom of the devil’s lake as well.

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.

### **Our Text in Context**

Having camped in the context, we come now to our text 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. This is a great teaching method, often used in Hebrew literature. Even though this is written in Greek, Paul was a “Hebrew of Hebrews” and well well versed in this method. We’ll see our four “D’s” again.

**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*” while verse 10 describes the love of money as “*a root of all kinds of evils.*” Interestingly in the Greek text, “*root*” is placed at the front of the sentence for emphasis. The root determines the fruit for sure. The sin of coveting, which is covered in commandment #10, is often at the root of breaking the other nine.

This kind of love of money is the root of all sorts of sordid evil in the world today. I think of Achan in Joshua 7:21 when he finally confessed what he had done and why he had done it, ***“When I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them.”*** 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.”*** Paul writes about one such man who wandered in 2 Timothy 4:10: ***“For Demas, in love with the present world, has deserted me.”*** 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. People like Ananias and Sapphira and Simon Magus and Judas come to mind. Listen. The desire for, and love of money, will ultimately deceive and destroy you, causing you to lose what matters most.

### **Don't Bet on It**

I want to raise a topic that doesn't get talked much about in church today. It's the topic of gambling. I realize that there are three casinos in the Quad Cities and they make up a big part of our local economy and perhaps some of your livelihoods. I'm not out to attack anyone but I do want to briefly remind you that even though the buildings are beautiful and the food is cheap, there is dark underside to gambling.

In the course of a just a couple days last week, I read two articles and heard a podcast about the topic of gambling.

- On June 4<sup>th</sup>, the Quad Cities Times ran a huge cover story on the “success” of the Rhythm City Casino. In almost one year, gaming revenue has increased by 44% over the previous year. Through the end of April, Rhythm City brought in more than \$51 million in gaming revenue. More than 1 million people have gambled so far this fiscal year, which is an increase of 250,000 over all of the previous 12 months. A spokesperson for the Casino said this: *“We’re trying capitalize on...ways to encourage more traffic through additional services and amenities.”*
- I day after I read this, Albert Mohler, in his Daily Briefing podcast pointed to an article in the *Wall Street Journal* about the state of gambling in the U.S. He quoted someone from the gambling industry, who made this statement about the state of gambling: *“Now it faces a new challenge: How to grow when gambling is within driving distance of virtually every American...”* This is a massive change over the last couple of decades, when just a short time ago gambling was only offered in Las Vegas or Atlantic City.
- The next article I read came with this headline: *“Manila casino attack suspect was in debt, hooked on gambling.”* The story references the deadly attack on a casino and shopping complex where a number were killed and more than [get ready for this] 12,000 people were evacuated. It turns out that the shooter had gambling debts of over \$80,000! The suspect’s mother made this plea: *“The message of what happened to my son is people should not get hooked on gambling so their families won’t get destroyed.”*

### **Jacob Cameron Testimony**

I’d like to introduce you to Jacob Cameron. I met him at the 180 Banquet last month (180 is one of our Go Team partners) where I heard him give his testimony to over 1200 people about how gambling nearly destroyed his life. He shared how Jesus Christ has delivered him. Jacob attends Celebrate Recovery here at Edgewood and lives in the Men’s Home at 180.

As you listen to Jacob’s break-up letter with gambling, listen for how his *desire* led to *deviation* as he slipped into *deception* and how this contributed to his *destruction*.

Let’s give him a warm Edgewood welcome.

*Dear Gambling,*

*This isn't easy but I know I have to say good-bye though. I know the fire is still burning to sit at a poker table but to do so would be the death of me. I no longer want the crazy ups and even crazier lows you come with. I want two things that are more important; stability and most importantly I want to serve The LORD. I can't have those things with you in my life.*

***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 can not serve God and money." Gambling, you made me worship money! 1 Timothy 6:10: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."***

*Look at the relationships you've ruined! I've been fired from multiple jobs and kicked out of the military. I've lost all sense of myself and all my morals were lost to you. For me to keep gambling is to agree to live my life in sin and I refuse to do that.*

*To say I won't miss reading someone sitting across the table from me and figuring out if I should call, fold or raise is a lie, I'll miss it. I'll miss carrying 100-dollar bills in my pocket. I'll miss buying chips and even more cashing them in. What I won't miss is the lying and stealing and the anxiety if I'll make rent or eat the next day.*

***1 John 1:6: "If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in the darkness we lie and do not practice the truth." To gamble is to walk in darkness. Don't you understand, I can't see the light with you in my life.***

*I'm moving on gambling. I want to bear good fruit. I want to have healthy lasting relationships not built on lies. I want God to be first and last in my life. The only thing I need is The LORD.*

*As I'm writing this I'm still confused if I'm convincing you or myself how bad you are for me. Which is a little scary. But with God's grace, love and strength I will be able to say no when temptation comes. 1 Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God*

***is faithful and He will will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with temptation He will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it."***

*To love you is to love the world and my favorite verse tells me NOT to love the world. 1 John 2:15: "**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in Him.**" It has to end. My worldly desire to achieve some sort of status through you has to end. Yes, this letter wasn't my idea; nonetheless I'm writing it and feel the full weight of the conviction.*

*We had a lot of experiences together you and I. Different types of food, women and fun shows in Vegas but you also came with jail. Everything I took pleasure in through you never sustained me. And God finally showed me why. Deuteronomy 8:3: "**And He humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.**" Real life derives directly from God and trusting His word.*

*I may stumble in the future and have temptations. But from this day till my last I will not gamble. No longer will I hide my emotions behind cards. No longer will I drown my sorrows mindlessly pushing a slot machine button. I will face life head on with the whole armor of God protecting me.*

*This is my final swan song to you gambling. I can't say I wish you well since we both know you are the enemy and Christ defeated you at the cross.*

*Good-bye!*

*Jacob D. Cameron*

You can find the text of Jacob's letter in the sermon manuscript posted at [edgewoodbaptist.net](http://edgewoodbaptist.net), you can pick up a CD or you can watch or listen to this sermon from the free Edgewood app. We'll also be posting it on the Edgewood Facebook page if you'd like to share it with you someone you know.

We've looked at some warnings about loving money and we've heard a testimony of how gambling with what God has given us can lead to great loss in every way.

Jesus says in Luke 12:15, ***“Watch out! Be on your guard against greed!”*** Have you ever watched the TV show, *American Greed*? I’ve only caught an episode or two, but the whole show is designed to show that great greed feeds things like lying, lusting and even the taking of life. Are you slipping from *desire* to *deviation* to *deception* and headed for ultimate *destruction*? I highly recommend you check out CR this Friday night at 6:15.

If you’re struggling with this, or any other issue, we have some great news about how to be delivered from all this in verses 11-12: ***“But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”***

### **Flee and Fight**

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. When we think we’re something, it’s good to ponder the question asked in 1 Corinthians 4:7: ***“What do you have that you did not receive?”*** 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."* Money is like seawater; the more you drink it the thirstier you get. Ecclesiastes 5:10 is similar: *"He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity."*

**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. Proverbs 30:8-9 provides the right balance between wants and needs: *"Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God."*

**4. Do good with what you have.** Verse 18 calls us to be *"rich in good works"* or wealthy in works. 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: *"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."* Pastor Ray puts it like this: *"Money is like manure. If you pile it up, it stinks. But if you spread it around, it can do a lot of good."* Nothing cures greed like giving because coveting can't live in a generous heart. *If you're struggling with all this, give your way out of covetousness.* Thanks for your giving hearts, Edgewood. If you're new here and would like to live out our third "G" of giving, you can do so by using the offering envelope or you can utilize digital giving through our app or website.

BTW, the leadership team has been actively talking, meeting and praying about how we can best steward the space and land God has given to us for greatest ministry impact.

**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.”***

I like what Charles Spurgeon said on this topic: *“That only is worth my having which I can have forever. That only is worth my grasping which death cannot tear out of my hand.”*

**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.”***

## **Invitation**

In the *Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer, we read these timely words: *“Our woes began when God was forced out of His central shrine and ‘things’ were allowed to enter...God’s gifts now take the place of God and the whole course of nature is upset by this monstrous substitution.”*

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.

*Ev'ryone can come to the cross  
It doesn't matter what you've done*

*Ev'ryone can come to the cross*

*Mourner wherever you are*

*Wherever you are*

*At the cross there is room*

*Tell your burdened heart*

*Your burdened heart*

*At the cross there is room*

**Closing Song: “Come to the Cross”**

**Camp Commissioning (10:45 - Kyle)**