

Lasting Investments
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1 Timothy 6:6-19

Opening: Finish the famous quote – *“This is why we can’t have _____!”*

Illustration: Knox’s first experience in “consuming” God’s word.

- **How would you define luxury?**
- **Is it wrong for God’s people to pursue “nice things” (luxury?) Why?**
- Some might say, “Forget luxury, I’m trying to pay the bills.” Fair enough.
- Even if you’re just trying to pay the bills, **how can the pursuit of material riches become an unhealthy focus for a follower of Christ?**
- Some questions for followers of Christ to ponder regarding material things:
 - Do I possess material things or do they possess me?
 - Which is stronger, my pursuit of God or my pursuit of material things? In a contest for my time, attention, and energy, which one wins, God or “mammon?” (Riches that divert us from God - Mt. 6:24)
 - Am I experiencing CONTENTMENT? Where do I look for the source of CONTENTMENT?
- Considering material things, God’s word never said followers of Christ should only have the bare necessities; it DOES say we are to be CONTENT if our basic needs are met and grateful for more than that.

Big Idea: For a follower of Christ, riches are not inherently bad; the sin is trusting in riches (rather than God) as the source of our contentment, and allowing the pursuit of riches to hinder the pursuit of our relationship with God.

- In this last chapter of 1 Timothy, Paul returned to the danger of false teachers in the church at Ephesus. Specifically, false teachers who saw ministry as “a way to become wealthy (6:5.)
- Though the context of this teaching on contentment and materialism was instruction for a young pastor, it applies to every follower of Christ.
- In verse six Paul contrasts the false teachers with the right standard:

⁶ Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth.

- Let’s talk about that word “contentment.” “The word *contentment* means “an inner sufficiency that keeps us at peace in spite of outward circumstances.”ⁱ That sounds good; peace despite our circumstances.
- Stoic philosophers saw this as “self sufficiency” describing a person who was unflappable and unmoved by external circumstances.”ⁱⁱ
- Manufacturing contentment from within yourself - you are the source!
- How realistic is that? Ever been very successful at gritting your teeth all the way to contentment?
- We can’t churn up contentment on our own; we need a source. Paul says that source of contentment is found in our relationship with Christ.
- Wiersbe: *“True contentment comes from godliness in the heart, not wealth in the hand. A person who depends on material things for peace and assurance will never be satisfied, for material things have a way of losing their appeal.”*ⁱⁱⁱ
- Paul wrote about this in his letter to the Philippians: *“...I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. ¹² I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. ¹³ For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.”*^{iv}
- Paul was not a “prosperity preacher” teaching that trusting God would result in material wealth. He said our relationship with Christ gives us TRUE CONTENTMENT regardless of how much or how little we have.

⁷ After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. ⁸ So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.

Hebrews 13:5 (NLT) ⁵ Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."

- One commentator summed up the futility of seeking contentment in riches: *"The human soul was not created to find contentment in the accumulation of stuff. This is a phantom that too many people chase. Personal peace is found in intimate relationship with God—this is great gain."*
- **Are we saying God wants his people to live in poverty? Why not?**
- Solomon was arguably the richest man in history (trillions in today's \$.)
- At the end of his life what did Solomon say about pursuing riches?

Ecclesiastes 5:10–12 (NLT)

¹⁰ Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness! ¹¹ The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth—except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers! ¹² People who work hard sleep well, whether they eat little or much. But the rich seldom get a good night's sleep.

- Notice Solomon referred to "Those who love money." We see that he wasn't saying we shouldn't work hard and provide for our families. Those who work hard "sleep well!" This is about the mistaken belief that "wealth brings true happiness" and contentment.
- Riches can't bring contentment, but they can bring temptation.

⁹ But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction.

- **How can “longing” to be rich be a “trap?” What “harmless” examples are disguised as the American dream? What are some more extreme examples of the ruin and destruction?**
- Don't you hate those Joneses? **How can we guard against being jealous of a friend with a better job, bigger house, or nicer car?**
- 1) Not coveting is the 10th commandment (Ex. 20:17.) 2) Envy is “of the flesh” and a result of sin (Gal. 5:19–21; Rom. 1:29; 1 Peter 2:1–2). 3) Being jealous of another's life is telling God what He's given you is not enough. 4) You can only see the “surface.” Life in “Charlie's Shoes” may not be so great!
- The love of money can also impact your spiritual life.

¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

- Paul didn't say they lost their salvation. They were like “sheep who wandered away from the shepherd as they sought greener pastures.”^{vi}
- Here's another indication that God is okay with his people having material wealth if it's in its proper place. Paul speaks to the wealthy in the church:

¹⁷ Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment.

- **How can material wealth make a person proud or arrogant?**
- Luke 12:17-21 – “I'll build bigger barns..eat, drink, be merry!” “Fool! This night your soul is required of you,” who will have your “stuff” then?
- Jesus: Luke 12:21 (NLT) ²¹ “Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.”
- **How can money be unreliable as a source of our trust?**
- God warned His people way back in Old Testament times:

Deuteronomy 8:12–14 (NLT)

¹² For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, ¹³ and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, be careful! ¹⁴ Do not become proud at that time and forget the LORD your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt.

- How should a rich person live to honor Christ?

¹⁸ Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. ¹⁹ By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

Matthew 6:19–21 (NLT) Jesus taught us:

¹⁹ “Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

Matthew 13:22 (NLT) In the parable of the sower Jesus warned:

²² The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God’s word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced.

Matthew 19:16–29 (NLT) Jesus said to the Rich Young Ruler

²¹ ...“If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, ...[the young man] went away sad...²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Luke 12:15 (NLT) Jesus warned us all:

¹⁵ Then he said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.”

- Closing out this letter, Paul gave Pastor Timothy some final instructions:

¹¹ But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses.

So, What's the Takeaway?

- Is it okay for believers to have “nice things?” It depends.
- For a follower of Christ, riches are not inherently bad; the sin is trusting in riches (rather than God) as the source of our contentment, and allowing the pursuit of riches to hinder the pursuit of our relationship with God.
- Back to our earlier questions to ponder regarding material things:
 - Do I possess material things or do they possess me?
 - Which is stronger, my pursuit of God or my pursuit of material things? In a contest for my time, attention, and energy, which one wins, God or “mammon?”
 - Am I experiencing CONTENTMENT?
 - Where do I look for the source of CONTENTMENT?
- As Paul taught us, regardless of how much or how little we have in terms of material wealth: “...*true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth.*”

ⁱ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 2, p. 235).

ⁱⁱ THE MACARTHUR BIBLE COMMENTARY Copyright © 2005 by John MacArthur

ⁱⁱⁱ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 2, p. 235). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^{iv} Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Php 4:11–13). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

^v Larson, Knute. Holman New Testament Commentary - 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon: 9 . B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

^{vi} Explore the Bible © 2019 LifeWay. Christian Resources, Nashville, TN 37234.