



Frisco First Baptist Church

Distracted • Distracted by Greed • 1 Timothy 6:6-10 • Jan 19, 2025

MAIN POINT

Mark your calendars for January 26th. After the second service we will have LIFEGroup Leader Training. The topic is: How to know if you are winning.

Today's Lesson: Distracted by greed. (Luke 12:-21, 1 Tim 6:8-10) Greed is hard to see in the mirror. Jesus warns us against making material wealth the measure of our life.

INTRODUCTION

1. **What is the most extravagant gift you have ever given (or been given)?**
2. **What evidence do you see of a love for money?**
3. **On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being very important), how important is money to you?**

"Greed is often something we struggle to recognize in ourselves. It can be subtle, slipping into our lives in ways that are hard to see, even in the mirror. In today's lesson, we'll explore how Jesus warns us against making material wealth the measure of our life, reminding us that our worth is not found in what we own, but in who we are in Him."

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 Timothy 6:6-10

6:6. Picking up on the words "godliness" and "gain," Paul shifted their meaning in a characteristically Pauline fashion (cf. 1 Cor. 2:5-6 for a similar shift) from the erroneous to the truthful. Godliness does not give financial gain (1 Tim. 6:5); it itself is gain when accompanied with contentment. Autarkeias literally means "self-sufficiency." Yet the sufficiency of oneself is due to the sufficiency of God (cf. 2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:11, 13 for other uses of the same word). Godliness combined with that inner God-given sufficiency which does not depend on material circumstances (the opposite of the false teachers' greed) is indeed of great gain. ⁱ

4. **Why do you think most people are or aren't content with what they have?**
5. **With what should we be content? (6:8)**

6. How could someone think that godliness was a means to financial gain?

6:7–8. Paul supported his point with a common Jewish and Christian idea (cf. Job 1:21; Ecc. 5:15; Luke 12:16–21) about the complete transiency of material things. They should freely be used and enjoyed to the glory of God if one has them (cf. 1 Tim. 4:3–4; 6:17), but in no way do they contribute to godliness. Christians do have basic material needs for food and clothing, of course, like everyone else; but when these are met a godly Christian can be satisfied (cf. Heb. 13:5–6).

7. What often happens to people who want to get rich? (6:9)

8. How do people attempt to use Christianity for their own profit?

6:9–10. Paul contrasted the proper attitude of contentment with its opposites: The craving to get rich and the love of money, two sides of the same coin. The history of the human race, and perhaps especially that of modern Western societies, cries out in support of Paul's point. The grasping after riches leads to: (1) temptation, (2) a trap, and (3) many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. Though not an end in itself, greed is actually a root of all kinds of evil. It is a crucial chink through which other vices gain access. To illustrate his point Paul referred indirectly to some people, undoubtedly known to Timothy, who had fallen into the trap Paul was discussing. Eager for money, they wandered from the faith. This may mean that they had fallen into heretical teaching (cf. 2 Tim. 2:17–18) or simply that their spiritual fruitfulness had been choked off (cf. Luke 8:14) by their concern for riches. In either case, they had suffered for it, causing themselves to be pierced ... with many griefs (lit., "pains").

9. Why is it hard to be content?

10. What would it take to make you content right now?

11. Why do people have a tendency to look to materialism for satisfaction rather than to God? How do we fight against this tendency?

12. How can you guard against placing too much stock in your personal possessions?

13. How does Satan use materialism to blind Christians to the needs of the world?

14. What steps do you take to maintain a proper attitude toward material things while living in this culture?

15. Where does a person get the idea that he or she is immune to the deception and danger of materialism?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

16. How can we keep ourselves pure in a society that does not support God's ideals?

17. About what situation in life will you ask God to help you be more content each day this week?

18. What is holding you back from giving radically of your money, time, and family to God's work?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

We come before You today, grateful for the many blessings You've given us. We acknowledge that everything we have is a gift from You. Lord, we confess that sometimes we allow material wealth and possessions to take priority in our hearts, forgetting that our true worth is found in You, not in what we own.

Thank You for Your Word, which warns us against the dangers of greed. Help us to understand that contentment is not about accumulating wealth, but about trusting in You to provide for our needs. Teach us to seek godliness over gain, knowing that You are enough.

We ask for Your forgiveness when we've been distracted by the desire for more. Help us to guard our hearts from the trap of materialism, and remind us daily that our hope is not in earthly things but in the eternal treasure we have in Christ.

Lord, give us hearts of generosity, willing to share our resources with others for Your glory. Protect us from the love of money and help us to be content with what we have. We pray that our lives would reflect Your love and that we would seek to honor You in all we do.

In Jesus' name, we pray,

Amen.

COMMENTARY

6:6–8 Paul urged Timothy to remember that true and great gain comes from the acquisition of godliness, which includes an attitude of contentment with one's material possessions. It does not come from teaching godliness to others primarily in order to receive pay for doing so. That conduct demonstrates an attitude of discontent with one's material possessions.

"Though Christianity is the worst trade, it is the best calling in the world.

Those that make a trade of it, merely to serve their turn for this world, will find it a sorry trade; but those that mind it as their calling, and make a business of it, will find it a gainful calling."

The apostle further reminded Timothy that there is really no relationship between godliness and one's material possessions. Material things are transitory. As we entered the world without anything material, so we will leave it with nothing material (cf. Job 1:21; Eccles. 5:15).

"As the Spanish proverb grimly puts it: 'There are no pockets in a shroud.'"

Possessions are simply tools that we can use to bring glory to God (cf. 4:3–4; 6:17). Having the basic necessities of life—"food and covering [clothing and shelter]"—we can and should be content (cf. Matt. 6:24–34; Luke 12:16–32; Heb. 13:5–6). "Food and covering" is a synecdoche for all the necessities of life. Paul had learned this lesson of healthy detachment from material things in his own life (Phil. 4:10–13). We must learn it too (cf. Heb. 13:5).

"Materialism is a desire to possess things instead of a love for the God who made those things."

"To whom little is not enough nothing is enough."

"Contentment is one of the greatest assets of life."

"... the heathen world understood that to be content was to be really wealthy; while to be always seeking earthly wealth was to be poor. ... The reason is because heathenism conceives of man as finding perfect satisfaction in himself, and so resents a desire for external objects as interfering with this proud sense of self-satisfaction. St. Paul knows that man is only satisfied in God; and therefore devotion to God is the first condition of this true satisfaction, and contentedness with an earthly lot the second."

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the famous Welch physician turned preacher, made the following comments in an address delivered to the Literary and Debating Society at Westminster Chapel, on Feb. 6, 1925, shortly after becoming a Member of the Royal College of Physicians:

"Of course, the fallacy which underlies all these things [he was speaking of the pursuit of money] is a very old one. It is that, if you are wealthy, you are happy. Quite by accident, it has been my lot to be able to study a large number of wealthy men at close quarters. [The British prime minister David Lloyd George, Rudyard Kipling, King Edward VII, and many other wealthy and prominent members of the British nobility were patients of his mentor, Dr. Thomas Horder, Chief of Staff at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, to whom Lloyd-Jones was Chief Clinical Assistant.] The conclusion at which I have arrived concerning them has been that they are intensely miserable people, their misery being exceeded only by those who worship wealth and have it not."

"How can the Christian learn to be content with simple living? Certainly not by accepting the standards set by this world. Paul suggests that an eternal perspective and an attitude of detachment toward things are prerequisites. As an eternal perspective develops, dependence on things material will decline."

6:9–10 A simple lifestyle demonstrates contentment with the basics of life (cf. Acts 20:33). In contrast, greed for more ("those who want to get rich") opens the door to temptation (cf. Prov. 23:4). This temptation comes in the form of unwise lustful desires—for wealth, power, and/or pleasure—that impede one's spiritual progress, like a trap holds an animal that gets snared by it. Eventually the end of the person, so entangled, is spiritual ruin and personal destruction, if he or she does not escape its grip and turn from it (cf. Prov. 28:20).

Paul used a second figure to warn against greed (v. 10a). The root attitude of greed bears all sorts of evil fruit in wicked actions. Note that it is the love of money, not money itself, that is the snare. It is possible to have very little money and yet to love it. Some people have much money yet do not love it. Love of money contrasts with love of God and neighbor, the two objects of affection that should draw the Christian (Matt. 22:39; cf. Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13; 1 John 2:15).

"The connotation in 'the love of money' (philaguria) is not the acquisition of wealth in order that it may be used in prodigal expenditure but rather the miserly accumulation and hoarding of money for the very love of it. That which should be a means to support life is made the end of life itself."

"Money in itself is neither good nor bad; it is simply dangerous in that the love of it may become bad."

What are the dangers involved in the love of money? Barclay listed five:

"(i) The desire for money tends to be a thirst which is insatiable. ... (ii) The desire for wealth is founded on an illusion. ... It is founded, first, on the desire for security; and, second, when a man thinks that he has attained to a minimum of security, the desire for further wealth is founded on the desire for comfort and for luxury. ... (iii) The desire for money tends to make a man selfish. ... (iv) The strange thing is that the desire for wealth is based on the desire for security, but it ends in nothing but worry and anxiety. ... (v) The love of money may easily lead

a man into wrong ways of getting money; and therefore may lead him in the end into the pain and regret and remorse.”

“To seek to be independent, to be able to pay one’s debts, to provide a house and a home and an opportunity for one’s family, prudently to provide for the future, is a Christian duty; but to evaluate everything in terms of money, to make the love of money the driving-force of life, cannot ever be anything else than the most perilous of sins.”

Paul pictured a person wandering from the narrow path of truth as he pursues money. He gets caught in thorns that pierce his skin and cause him great pain (cf. Matt. 13:22). Paul may have been thinking of these false teachers impaling themselves.

“The sentiment is, that there is no kind of evil to which the love of money may not lead men, when once it fairly takes hold of them.”

As Christians who live in a materialistic world, we must cultivate Paul’s attitude of contentment very deliberately (cf. Heb. 13:5–6). This is an especially difficult task in a society like the one in which we live in North America. We are constantly hearing through advertising and the media that we need all kinds of luxuries. According to Paul, and Jesus, our personal needs as human beings are very few. Paul’s point was that we should seek godliness more diligently than we seek money and the things that it can buy.

“If you are afraid that perhaps the love of money is getting a hold on your soul, start giving some of it away and see how you feel! If you feel really glad then you are still safe, but if it almost breaks your heart then it is time to get down on your knees and pray to be freed from this sin of covetousness! It is going to ruin you unless you are delivered from it.”

Compare Paul’s attitude of contentment with that of the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:22, Mark 10:22, and Luke 18:23.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ Litfin, A. D. (1985). 1 Timothy. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 746). Victor Books.

ⁱⁱ Constable, T. (2003). *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (1 Ti 6:6–9). Galaxie Software.