

Money, and the life that is truly life

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[0 : 00] of 1 Timothy's day. It's on page 1194 of the Bible's in front of you. And we're starting at the second part of verse 2 of chapter 6 and reading to the end of the book.

So 1 Timothy chapter 6 beginning at the second half of verse 2. These are the things you are to teach and insist on. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing.

They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Those who want to get rich fall in temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

[1 : 16] Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time.

God, the blessed and only ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant, nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

[2 : 41] Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.

Grace be with you all. Well, Katrina, thank you very much for reading that for us, and it would be a great help to me if you could have your Bibles open, if they've fallen close, it's page 1194 there of 1 Timothy in the church Bibles, anyway.

1 Timothy chapter 6. And you can find an outline inside the notice sheet, just to follow as we go along and look at this together. Let's ask for God's help as we turn to his word.

Let's pray. Almighty God and loving Heavenly Father, the God who generously provides us with all that we have and all that we need, we ask that your Spirit will speak to us this morning.

Holy Spirit, would you open our ears to hear your voice, open our minds to focus and understand, and open our hearts to respond rightly to you. We pray these things for your glory and for our good, in Jesus' name.

[3 : 56] Amen. Well, as I was preparing in this passage this week, I read an article in my newspaper by a journalist, Stephen Bleach, and he wrote an article asking, do we really need more money?

He wrote it because last week there were reports that our economy in the UK will only grow by 1% this year. And the story is that that is very bad.

That's a very bad thing. It's bad for the NHS, it's bad for public services, it's bad for everyone. And Stephen Bleach wrote, I just cannot understand why.

He went on, I looked up economic growth in the dictionary, and it turns out it means an increase in the amount of goods and services produced. And then I looked around my house and thought, hang on, don't I already have too much stuff?

Our addiction to buying stuff is making us miserable. Around Britain there are 1.6 billion items of clothing in our wardrobes that have not been worn for at least a year.

[5 : 02] On average, here we go, how many items of clothing do you think we will buy in Britain this year per person on average? 61.

We've got 69 million pairs of feet in Britain. How many pairs of shoes will be sold this year in Britain? For 69 million pairs of feet. This year, 300 million.

How many toys do you think the average child has in Britain? People are actually calling out answers.

238. Then, of course, we've got a whole category of TV shows dedicated to helping us throw things away. Marie Kondo, Nick Knowles, Stacy Solomon.

She's great, isn't she? Telling us how you get rid of the stuff that we've actually bought. So he pointed out in this article, we can afford to eat more than ever before.

[6 : 03] We can buy gadgets we don't need, dubious vitamin supplements, pointless scented candles, bloodthirsty video games, and none of it is making us happier.

But then he finished his article saying, I don't know the answer. I do not understand how we get through this. I cannot see what a healthy approach looks like to money. Now, what he was putting his finger on there is that we've got money sickness.

In our culture, we think we need more of it all the time. We strive for more money, and we long for more of it. But when you get it, it doesn't seem to make you any happier.

Now, if you've been with us in 1 Timothy, in this series we're in, we've seen that a key theme in the letter 1 Timothy is that the church is to display the truth about Jesus to the world.

Because, chapter 2, verses 3 and 4, God is a saviour. He wants all people to be saved, and so the way that he will lift up the saving truth about Jesus is when his people, the church, get our house in order, so that we hold on to good doctrine about Jesus and we live godly lives that show the world how good Jesus is.

[7 : 18] And what we're seeing at the end of the letter here is that that should include us having a better approach to money, that we as Christians can unlock that secret of how we are to think about money differently.

God wants to liberate us into money wellness. And the Apostle Paul, who wrote this letter to Timothy, who he's put in charge of this church in Ephesus, he tells Timothy that the false teachers in Ephesus, they're actually only in it for the money.

He talks about how divisive they are in verses 3 and 4, and then if you just look down at the end of verse 5, he talks about how the fruit of their work among the people, and stemming from them themselves, is they think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

They're in it for the money. So Timothy is given three things he must do to put that right. First of all, Timothy, expose the lies behind money sickness.

We've all got a real danger we have to watch out for this morning. Just look with me at verse 9. Have a look with me. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

[8 : 40] I don't know if you've ever seen someone fall into a trap. There was an old film, Danny the Champion of the World, I used to watch as a kid, where there was this boy, Danny, his mum had died, he had this fantastic dad.

Obviously it's based on a book, you might be thinking I've read the book. And Danny wakes up one night and his dad is gone and it's two in the morning, doesn't know where his dad is. He goes out looking for his dad and his dad has gone out into the woods and the gamekeepers out to catch him have dug a pit and they've covered it with undergrowth and he's fallen into the trap and he's broken his leg and Danny finds his dad stuck in this trap and it's a disaster for them.

Now Paul warns that there is a trap lurking like that in your life and the trap is wanting to get rich.

Do you see that? Why is it a trap? Well, when you want to get rich you start making foolish choices. Did you see that in verse 9? It leads you into many foolish desires and harmful desires and then you fall down into a pit.

Verse 9, desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. And the worst thing that can happen is in verse 10. Paul tells us, some people eager for money have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

[10 : 07] That's the trap. And I've seen it unfold in people's lives myself. I can think of people who are friends of mine and they set out wanting to live for Jesus but they also wanted to get rich.

But then instead of God being the goal for their lives, desiring Him, seeking Him, instead money became the driving goal.

So that the Savior in their life wasn't Jesus because He can get them God. It was the thing that could give them more money. They start to see opportunities at work and they start saying no to opportunities to serve Christ by serving His people at church next year because they see ways, well, they could use that time at work differently and they could get on ahead and make more money.

And then one Sunday, the man says to his wife, do you know what? Today, would you mind just taking the kids to church this week? I've just got, I've got a deadline coming up and I could really use this morning just to get ahead.

And then he realizes by lunchtime on a Sunday, what a great time of the week Sunday morning can be to get some work done. And gradually, he checks out spiritually so that where the wife wants the husband to take the spiritual lead, the spiritual flame is dying out until eventually, without Christian friends anymore because he doesn't see them and without spiritual disciplines because they've long gone, he starts to say, do you know what?

[11 : 41] I'm not even really sure it's true anymore, this Christian stuff. And Jesus is saying to you and me this morning, do you want to get rich? Would you like that?

It's a trap. It can plunge you into spiritual ruin. I don't think the Bible ever says that it's wrong to be rich. It's not a virtue to be a poor person.

And there are people in our church family and people I've met in the past year who were supporting the church plant who are wealthy and they are being extravagantly generous towards gospel work.

But look at verse 10 where it's clear for us, the danger. Verse 10, for the love of money, it's the love of money that is a root of all kinds of evil.

It's the love of money that is the danger. What the Lord is concerned with is our hearts. So we have to expose the lies that tug away on our hearts towards money.

[12 : 41] And the first lie with money is if you just get more of it, you'll find satisfaction. That's the lie. So Paul gives us the contrast in verse 6, if you have a look there.

Verse 6, but godliness with contentment is great gain. In other words, the key to being satisfied in life is not actually to have more money.

It's to learn to be content. The whole advertising industry says to us, shouts to us, look at this. Don't you want that?

Don't you need that? Watch this. Isn't it beautiful? Don't you need it? And if we think, oh, that's what I need, we'll never be satisfied. We will never be content.

We'll become inured to the pleasures of that thing and we'll want the next thing. In fact, if you get more money, it actually becomes a hassle in your life as you try and work out what to do with it and how not to lose it.

[13 : 38] It creates stress. And when you get more money, things you used to think were just luxuries, they start to feel like necessities. Things you can't do without.

You find yourself surrounded by a new group of people. Maybe you're at a different school gate in a different postcard. Or you move from walking to Greggs to parking your Range Rover outside Eusebi.

And you move from being happy with your mates at the Wetherspoons to an exclusive golf club. And you move from the council swimming pool to David Lloyd.

And as you do that, you rub shoulders with a different group of people. And you're immersed in their lifestyle. And you think, that's normal. That's what everyone's doing these days.

The holidays they go on. The cars they drive. The work they do on their homes. Everyone's doing that now. I need it. I need it.

[14 : 36] More money, you see. It doesn't make you content. That's the lie. And instead, what Paul says here is, you have to pursue godliness. And through that, you'll discover contentment.

We know from Paul's, another letter, Philippians chapter 4, that the secret of being content is tied up with rejoicing in the Lord Jesus. In reflecting and meditating deeply on Him and what you have in Him.

And as you focus on Him and what you have in Him, you can discover a contentment that means you stop having this kind of restless desire in you for what other people have.

Because you see, what they are searching for, I already have. God has given it to me in Christ. And hopefully, like I can, you can think today of an older Christian you know who is not financially rich.

But you see in them this kind of payoff. That there is in them a joy, a steadiness, a wisdom, a satisfaction.

[15 : 47] And that's the truth of verse 6 being lived out in somebody's life. That really, what you should be aiming for is godliness with contentment, not more money.

Next, Paul exposes another lie behind money sickness. And it's that we think that money lasts. That there's a kind of permanence about riches.

We even say things, don't we, like diamonds are forever. Well, even if they last, you won't. So look with me at verse 7. For we brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it.

But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Now I've been present now at the birth of three different children and I can confirm they came into the world with no possessions.

There was nothing. And I've been at people's bedsides at the end of life and I've been at gravesides as people have been lowered in and I can confirm that when we die it doesn't matter, you know, you can be like a pharaoh and kind of stick all the stuff in there with you.

[16:58] You won't take it with you. It doesn't go with you. And so Paul is saying here it makes sense therefore to travel light in this world. I remember going backpacking through Africa when I was 21 and I didn't buy anything expensive because I knew I've got to leave it behind anyway.

And so the Christian can have that mentality as we're just passing through the current age. That word clothing there includes the idea of shelter. So Paul's giving us here the three essentials of life.

Food, clothes, shelter. We need those things and we are to think of the rest of it as let's travel light through the world.

That's our first point. Expose the lies, Timothy, behind money sickness. Secondly, Timothy is told pursue the true treasure of life with Christ.

Now it's striking as we get into the next bit how, from verse 11, how active Timothy is told to be. So verse 11, he's told to flee.

[18:03] You see that? But you, man of God, flee from all this. So don't dabble with the desire for more money, the love of money. Just run away from it lest it ensnare you.

Next he's told, pursue. Run after something different. Godliness in verse 11. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness.

As we heard in chapter 3 that Paul wants Timothy and those who Timothy teaches and influences to engage in discipline, spiritual training.

He says, physical training is of some value but godliness holds promise in this life and in the age to come. So in other words, run after being more like Christ.

Then he says, fight to Timothy. Fight the good fight of the faith. And we've heard in this letter what that means for a church leader. It's about guarding the true gospel with his teaching and it's like walking on a narrow ridge for Timothy.

[19:11] There's dangers either side. The danger on one side is to fall into legalism, a kind of preoccupation with rules and restrictions for how Christians should live. And on the other side you can fall into license or liberalism, a kind of cheap grace that just says, Jesus has done it all, live however you like.

And rather, Timothy has to walk that ridge. He has to fight to stay on the ridge with a ministry that's all about Jesus and God's grace to save sinners in Christ and that Christ did that.

He died for us that the life we would now live, we would gladly live for him. He set us free to serve him. That's true freedom. So Timothy's to fight for that and then verse 12 he's told, take hold, verse 12, take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

So all around you, you're going to see people who have made it, the thing they run after in life is financial gain. They are in a hurry to get rich because they think that money is the path to true life.

But Timothy, Christian, run with just as much passion and zeal in a different direction. Exert yourself because you realize that what the world is looking for from money, satisfaction, security, contentment, joy, you have all of it already in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[20 : 49] Appropriate it in him. Run after him. Life with Jesus is the life we were truly made for. So take hold of it. And it's life focused on the future with Jesus.

So in verse 14, Paul turns our gaze to the future. If you have a look there, he says to Timothy, keep the commandment, I think that is probably about the whole letter, keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time.

And then, it's as though Paul kind of gets carried away here as he wants to turn our gaze towards that day when King Jesus appears. So look at what he says, verse 15, he who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see, to him be honor and eternal dominion.

Amen. Paul wants us to picture the holiness, the majesty of heaven, unapproachable light. when we see Jesus in the glory he's in now, now risen, now ascended, now received by angels and adored, it will be a sight so radiant with the brilliance of God that everything that glitters today, everything that's been distracting us in this life, will all at once seem completely frivolous and remarkably dull.

And one of the things that draws us to money today is that we think money gives you power. We can be intimidated by people with lots of money, from the American billionaires who were all lined up at Donald Trump's inauguration to the wealthy of Glasgow who seem to have no restriction in their lives, they enjoy exclusivity in how they live.

[22 : 50] Money is power. So Paul is reminding Timothy here, people are actually very small, very small. However rich they are, they're still very small.

Verse 16, Jesus Christ is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. He has the power. He has the authority. He has immortality. He has unapproachable glory.

And we're on a collision course to meet him when God reveals him at the proper time. So don't get fearful and think you need more money.

True riches is in knowing Christ. So it's that future hope that Timothy is to impress upon the rich in his church. That's our final point.

We've heard, expose the lies behind money sickness, pursue the true treasure of life with Christ. Thirdly, charge those with money to be smarter investors.

[23 : 48] So who is this last section for? Well, look at how he starts. Verse 17, he says to Timothy, command those who are rich. And I know that not all of us here are rich.

That's certainly true. But it's fair to say that many of us here today are rich. And perhaps fair to say that many of us here today are rich beyond what Paul and Timothy could even have imagined when Paul wrote this letter to Timothy.

They would be bewildered by our wealth. So I take it these last verses have intense relevance for us today, for the Western church today.

Because for many of us, God has blessed us with money. So first then, verse 17, command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant, nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

What a verse that is. So first off, if you've got money, don't let it make you proud. You see that? If you've got money, it is so easy, isn't it, to think you are better than other people.

[25 : 09] Not because of your character, but because of your cash. And it's spiritually deadly to think like that. We all need to remember that spiritually, we are all equally valuable to God, however little or much we have.

And we are all equally needy before God. And in Glasgow, certainly where I live, and in lots of places in Glasgow, money sickness has led to terrible spiritual sickness.

Why? Because the money people have leads them to think they don't need anything from anyone. Their money has immunized them from seeing that spiritually they are bankrupt and they need a savior, the Lord Jesus.

He stands ready to save them and they ignore it because they don't think they need help from anyone because in the financial area of life, they're not in need.

That's the tragedy. So Paul says to us, Christian, if you're a Christian here and you've got money, don't be proud because you've grown rich. You only have what God has given to you.

[26 : 20] You may well have worked hard for it, but everything that got you there, the education, the qualifications, even the drive and motivation you have, God gave all of it to you.

Do not be proud. Next he says about your money, don't put your hope in it. Do you see that? That's what people do all around us. They think, if I've got more money, I'll be secure.

Their hope is in their money. But money really is so uncertain, isn't it? As Paul says there in verse 17, it is so uncertain. And we've seen that, haven't we, in recent years.

If war breaks out somewhere in our connected world or the wind just blows a ship so that it gets lodged in the Suez Canal and no one can get their deliveries. Or a bank somewhere in the US buys too many subprime mortgages.

Or a virus mutates. The markets come crashing down. Money is no place to put your sense of security. If you do that, you'll be in a bad mood whenever the markets change and it makes you a really boring person.

[27 : 27] It's true. And even if your investments grow, you'll still be boring and they won't save you from your biggest problem because money cannot make you right with God. So what's the alternative?

Well, Paul says in verse 17, instead, put your hope in God. And when you do that, you'll find, now I love the way he finishes this because I thought he'd say, God who richly provides us with everything that we need.

but he says he richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. God is completely dependable and he's richly generous to his children.

He wants us to enjoy good things from him. So how do people see that your hope is in God and not in money? Well, we teach ourselves and demonstrate that we don't have our hope in money when we are generous with it, when we give it away.

Verse 18, could be saying the same thing three times. Verse 18, command them, that's the rich, to do good, to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share.

[28 : 41] Having money, in other words, gives you a God-given opportunity to do something really good, to make a genuine difference with the money as you give towards gospel work so that people hear of Christ and grow in Christ and to help people who are in need financially, to look after them.

C.S. Lewis wrote this about our giving. I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I'm afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements and so on is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little.

If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable giving excludes them.

and I've mentioned already that a real encouragement in the past year for me has been to be at meetings and conversations with Tim as he and I have shared news about the church plant with people and we've met people who have experienced themselves the blessing of delighting in partnering with us as a church in giving very generously towards the church plant project because they passionately see that Glasgow needs more gospel churches because more people in Glasgow need to hear of Christ and they're being blessed in that generosity.

Could you make it your ambition to be rich in good deeds? Well, how do we do that? Future hope is key to doing that. Look at verse 19.

[30 : 28] In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Again, such a striking phrase there, isn't it? At the end of verse 19. What do you think is the life that is truly life? Is it traveling for you?

Is it going to watch more live music? Well, if only we could take in what Jesus Christ has in store for us in the coming age, we can use our money now in a way that sets our hearts on that future with him so that what we're yearning for is to take hold of the life that is truly life.

So as we come into land at the end of the sermon, what we're all going to do now is we're all going to pick up our phones and we're going to open our banking apps and we're going to pass them to the person along from us in our role and they're going to look through no, obviously we're not going to do that but let me encourage you to ask yourself if someone did an audit of all that you have and all that you receive and all that you spend would they be able to see your hope is in God or do we still have money sickness?

Our money sickness makes us think I've got to hold on to money and we even feel this is trying to get me to be generous with my money I can't do it I can't do it I'd be miserable I need more of it and God wants this morning to set us free from that so that we are glad to be gospel generous so he promises us when you put your hope in him you will find he richly provides for your needs and he provides for your enjoyment richly and you can be content as you pursue the riches you have in Christ life with him and your future hope is absolutely secure let's pray together father god we thank you that you are a good father a generous giver a rich provider may you impress more deeply on our hearts what great joy there is in knowing Jesus

[32 : 49] Christ and what unimaginable treasure awaits us when he appears shining like the sun lord that we would anchor ourselves securely in your promises for the future and may the fruit of that in the lives of us your people here today be an open handed generosity that we would be a people rich in good deeds and through that would you advance the gospel bringing many more around us to the saving truth of Christ crucified for we ask in his great name amen happy happy happy happy happy happy happy happy happy happy!

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