

The Spiritual Danger of Pursuing Riches

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the importance of how we handle money and wealth, highlighting the dangers of being consumed by greed and the need to surrender our possessions to God. It delves into the biblical perspective on riches, urging believers to be generous, wise, and content with what they have. The message challenges listeners to lay a firm foundation for the future by using their resources to benefit others and store up treasure in heaven, ultimately leading to a deeper grasp of eternal life.

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:17, Luke 12:33, Hebrews 13:5, Psalms 27:13, Ecclesiastes 5:10, Matthew 19:21

Topics: "Stewardship", "Generosity"

Description

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Transcript

Brethren, it can be an uncomfortable thing to speak on money. You know, the Lord did not find it so uncomfortable. He had no problem.

Neither did Paul. And you know one of the verses that I never dealt with over the years? At least not any bit extensively. 1 Corinthians 6. 1 Timothy 6. So, let's go to 1 Timothy 6. 1 Timothy 6. Brethren, look, when you do inventory about where we're quenching the Spirit, you have to ask yourself about different categories of your life.

Like obviously, men. You want to hinder your prayer life? What do you do? Don't dwell with your wife in an understanding way. Isn't that what Scripture says? I mean, look, obviously, we have to go through the categories of our life.

We have to analyze these things. But it is not a carnal thing to analyze where you are at in your relationship with money and wealth and possessions. The Bible has something to say about where our treasure is.

So, 1 Timothy 6. What I'd like to do is read in verse 1. I really want to deal with v. 6-10 and v. 17-19. There's two chunks of truth here that have to do with riches and money. But you've got to build up the

context, otherwise you don't really get the drift of the end of v. 5 that leads us into v. 6. So, for context's sake, chapter 6, verse 3. If anyone teaches a different doctrine... So Paul sees somebody teaching false doctrine in the church.

He does not agree with sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness. He is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth.

You get people like that in the church. Obviously, this is being written to Timothy. This gets into the church.

But notice one of the things that can characterize false teachers. They imagine that godliness is a means of gain. And obviously, gain there is worldly gain.

It's carnal gain. Money obviously fits in that category. You get advantage.

Godliness brings advantage. That's what they imagine. They see position.

They see power. They see money. They see the collection.

And then, Paul says this, now there is, and I'm reading from the ESV, there is great gain in godliness with contentment. For we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these, we will be content.

Now, he's not saying that we all are. He's just saying that that's the way we ought to be. But those who desire to be rich, see, there are people who are not content.

They fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 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.

Now, jump ahead to verse 17. As for the rich in this present age, that's over against the age to come, 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're 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.

Now, I have no intention of doing some kind of money-raising clinic right now. That is not what this is all about. Brethren, we've got two chunks of truth here.

And you know what they tell me? They tell me about what money has the capacity to do to you and for you. This is very personal to you. What money does for me.

And as we heard in the first hour, the emphasis on the inspired Word, oh, brethren, we want to be biblical. It really doesn't matter what I think. You have the inspired Word of God.

Two chunks of truth that come from the very mind of God. This is His will for us. This is not just a convenient truth for GCC a week before we have our financial meeting.

This is what God wants. On the one hand, me and money, I'm using the two M's. Yes, money and I is more proper.

Me and money. We can embrace. We can get into bed together.

And what happens? I can embrace money to the place where it plunges me. That is the word the ESV uses. That is the word the New American Standard plunges me.

I imagine us in this hand just plunged down, down, down to where? Destruction. Money destroys people. And you see it right here.

Plunges. You know what it does? It causes people like you and me who once had a good testimony to wander from the path of faith. That narrow way that Jesus said we need to enter in.

Brethren, this is not fictitious. This is not just theoretical. There are guys like Demas.

There they were. Fellow laborer with Paul. Where are they by the end? Things attracted them.

Things lured them away. Or, listen to this, I get pierced with misery. But, but, on the other hand, this is going to be the second chunk of truth that we look at.

Me and money? We can have a relationship together which produces for me true treasure and a firm foundation. And for me, it gives substance by which I can take hold of that which is truly life. Or even the KJV and New King James say eternal life.

There's a textual issue there. But what is truly life? And you see what it's compared to. God gives us all things to enjoy.

Oh, but there is something that is a true life. You can enjoy things here and say, wow, this is living. But there is a true life and that is eternal life.

And Paul says such words about what we do with our money that has to do with eternal life in a way that I think some of you would be even hesitant to say. We're going to look more at it in just a second. But brethren, what I take from all of this is money is dangerous and money is glorious.

Now, some of you won't enter into this, but like Scott owns a .308. That's pretty glorious to look at. The thing is dangerous. You can kill yourself with that.

I mean, you have a rifle and you're around in the chamber and you have a full clip. Dangerous. Safety off.

Dangerous and glorious. You can shoot yourself. You can kill yourself.

You could also drop an elk. If you lived out in a log cabin in the Rocky Mountains, you could kill a big animal that you could actually use as a blanket and have enough food to feed your family through the winter. It's like a stick of dynamite.

You can blow yourself up with it. You can also blow up rock that exposes diamonds. That's the kind of thing we're dealing with with money here.

This has to do with you. And you may say, I have no appreciation for guns. Probably nobody here, very few of us, have ever handled dynamite.

But I'll tell you this, not one of us can get away from the reality that we have to touch and handle money. You can't get away from it. You can't hide from this.

What's at stake, brethren? Your ruin? You're taking hold of that which is life. Wow! You talk about opposites. Don't ignore this loaded gun.

Because you undoubtedly have it in your pocket even if it's in the form of plastic. You have access to your accounts. And you're using it.

You're having to buy things. We live in a country where we have discretionary funds. That means funds you get to do with what you want.

You have to determine how you're going to use these things. It impacts each of us. Not a single Christian in this room can escape from this reality.

You cannot just say, well, I opt out. There's no opting out. And brethren, you know what we have to remember? These words are written to Christians, not the general public.

We can look out there and say, they squander their money. They do all sorts of things with their money. And you might just remember this, in Luke 16, Jesus says they use their money for their ends better than we do as a whole.

You ever come across that text? You know what that means? That means that what I'm about to deal with here is really applicable to us. I feel shamed when I come across that text that Jesus says basically the sons of this generation compared to the sons of light, they do it better than we do. Ouch! And especially as Americans.

You know, I kind of had this idea in my mind going to the U.K. that, well, they're pretty much like us. Speak the same language. A lot of us came from Wales and Scotland and England and Ireland.

You know, they probably pretty much make what we make. No, on average, they make... I mean, if you make \$100 an hour, on average, they are going to make \$66 an hour. I mean, that's how much less.

Americans really have a lot. And I know, we may not be in the ritzy place, and we may not have all the lawyers and all the doctors that some churches have and all the admirals and the generals. Not one of you can make the argument that you're not rich.

And we'll talk more about that in just a second. But there's no opting out of this. And this is given to the church.

You know why it's given to the church? Because the deceitfulness of riches is undoubtedly bewitching some of us in this place. Listen, it's not just some of us are going to be plunged to ruin and some of us are going to lay a firm foundation with money. It's also that even on the positive side, those of us that are using it somewhat correctly, Jesus says as a whole, the guy down the street here uses his money for his ends much more successfully than we use it for ours.

And I know I'm not at that text, and so some of you may not even be acquainted with it, but you know what it is. It's the parable of the unjust steward who basically says, yeah, I'm going to lose my job. And so he goes out and he starts arranging everything so that when he loses his job, he's going to be cared for.

And Jesus actually commends this unjust steward not for the sin, but because he's wise in figuring out what to do with stuff in his life for the ends that he has, which is that he's not going to have to go dig ditches or beg. He's going to be provided for. And how sad it is that Christians, the children of light, sons of light, that Jesus has to say collectively when you look at all of God's people through all of this age, that pretty much we have problems in this area.

Wow. So why this warning? Some will do so much good with their money. That's in the second part here.

But why the warning? Obviously, because there's real danger. And you can't think, well, I live in this sterile environment. You know what Scripture says? Sin's not going to have dominion over me.

I'm saved. So I'm safe. I'm born again.

I'm a new creation. So I'm good. So this doesn't touch me.

You don't want to think you're impervious to this and you can just be casual and careless. So, let's look at the negative. Let's dissect the negative part first.

And you see that at the end of 5, there are people, and undoubtedly, we have people here, a raise, an inheritance, a big surplus of money all of a sudden. That would be one of the greatest things imaginable to you. There are people like that.

They see gain wrapped around money. Verse 6, But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world.

But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. Now notice the words in v. 6. Great gain. So let me ask you this.

By God's standard, what is great gain? Great gain. You see, at the end of 5, it's gain. And that's man's perspective as to what is gain.

What is valuable? What is worth having? When God looks at you in your life and He knows the true estimate and value of something, what does He say is great gain? What is it? By God's standard. Most men think that wealth is, just like the guys in v. 5. But let me ask you this. What do you really think is the greatest gain? Now look, you know the right answer.

You know what you ought to say. But I'm asking you, just think about your own thought life. Think about how you measure things.

You know what? A lot of lost guys out there, they're constantly thinking what would happen if I won the lotto? They're always thinking about some venture that they're going to get rich quick with. What do you think about? What is really great gain? A raise? Not by God's standard. That's not it.

Something flows out of it. You see, it's godliness with. Something comes out of this godliness.

Something is with it. You see what it is? Listen, it's what makes a man or a woman rich. It's contentment.

I mean, what's God saying? You're truly rich when? What? You know, by God's standard, there is a person in this church that is the richest among us. By these texts, who would you conclude that is? Who is it? You're truly rich when what? You're satisfied. That is great gain.

And you know what? It is totally unrelated to how much you have. It's only related to how much you want or what you want. Satisfaction.

Oh, brethren, do you know what it's like to just, I've got God. He is my portion and I am good. What satisfaction! What wealth there is in that! Oh, brethren, I think about this text often.

Keep your life free from the love of money. Be content. Well, on what basis, author of Hebrews? For God said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.

What a reason! My people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the Lord. What else can you ask? Oh, it is absolutely blessed contentment when somebody else runs off with the inheritance. Somebody else gets the raise you think you deserve.

And you know what? I'm not saying you won't be troubled over it, but your thoughts get brought down to reality on this truth. As you're thinking about it, how should I feel about this? You're feeling a bit offended or you're feeling a bit overlooked or hurt or whatever, and you begin to realize out of all the people on the face of this earth, God saved me. He gave His Son for me.

He gave the Holy Spirit to me. He's opened my eyes up to the Word of God. He's going to take me to be with Him.

Brethren, what is contentment? It's a great game. You see that. Brethren, isn't it just that sweet, inner quiet of the heart where I am resigned to have what God gives? Because God's given me Him and His Son and His Spirit and His Word and eternal life.

And you know what? When it comes to the things of the world compared to that, I can be pretty good whether I have a little or whether I have a lot. It's just that quiet and resignation to have what God gives. It's that grace that spreads itself through your whole soul where it produces that joy and that fulfillment and that satisfaction, that pleasure, because God is mine.

What else can you say? Whatever my financial situation. It's the ability to rest. You know what? When we chafe, when we complain and gripe and grumble, oh, brethren, what are we saying? We're not just pleased to have God and that that's sufficient.

Brethren, what happens when there's contentment and satisfaction of heart is we are okay just to be there submitted. The ability to rest under God's feet, under His authority, under His majesty, under His sovereignty, just submitted to God to make me rich or poor, taking pleasure in being at God's disposal to be what He wants me to be. And if I'm going to be the widow with my two mites, well, God, give me the grace to throw them both in there.

And if I'm going to be among the wealthy, well, you know what? They gave large sums out of their wealth, but let it be true that God's going to show us how to be wealthy, how to be poor, just taking pleasure in being at God's disposal. But you know what? Lovers of money, they are never content. Why? Because they're after something that they can never reach.

And you know what the Scripture says. Things like this, ecclesiastes, who he loves. Money will not be satisfied.

Those who love money are never satisfied. Anybody ever seen the story of Mully? Anybody know who that is? Got a hand here. Two hands.

Mully. Let me tell you about Mully. Well, see, a number of us visited Kenya.

This guy was in poverty. He was on the streets. He was homeless.

And they show right at the beginning of this documentary, Kibera, the slum where we went with Brother Sam. Yeah, this guy, you know what? This guy went from rags to riches. But he said no matter how much he made, it was never enough.

More and more and more and more until God really got a hold of him. But brethren, Psalm 27, Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied. Never satisfied are the eyes of men.

You'll never be satisfied. Who is the richest man or the richest woman in this room? And I was thinking about that as I was putting this together. There is one.

We could take the ten wealthiest people in this room. There are ten who are wealthiest. By God's standard, you know who you are? You are most resigned to God.

And take the most pleasure in Him regardless of your circumstances. Do you want to be in that ten? Anybody want to be in that ten? Anybody admit that there's seasons when you haven't been in that ten? Where you've just been... You're just not happy with God's providence and what He's brought. And other people have and you don't.

Well, okay, we've got to make some advance, but here's this proverb, verse 7. We brought nothing into the world and we cannot take anything out of the world. You know what? Sometimes we just need a good dose of common sense. Don't you love the proverbs? Common sense.

Here's a basic truth we know in theory. But the real question is, practically where the rubber meets the road, do we show that by the decisions we make, the actions we take, that we actually believe it? See, the problem is we know things like this. How many of you know that babies are born naked? Anybody doesn't know that? Any of your children popped out with full clothing and toys already? You know, brethren, sometimes you just have to stop and absorb the common sense of somebody.

Babies are born naked. And you know the Bible doesn't just say that in the New Testament and 1 Timothy. It says it various places.

Ecclesiastes. 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. That's the preacher.

Job says it. Naked I came from my mother's womb. Naked shall I return.

What a proverb. He didn't bring anything in, and you ain't taking nothing out. You like that? Brethren, that has implications.

And that's just some stupid, empty saying like well, if life gives you lemons, make lemonade or something. Brethren, look at babies. Look at newborn babies.

They're naked. You know what that ought to tell you? Wow! That's the way I'm going out. I didn't bring anything in, and I didn't bring anything out.

And I'm not going to take anything out. There it is. You're not going to take a single thing, not physical, not of this world, you're not taking it out.

And so, what's the point of it all? Brethren, the point is this. Don't invest in what's going to remain here. That's the point of it.

If you lay up treasure here, you die and you lose it. That's it. It's gone.

Lay it up here. Wait, what was that? That looked like a moth. You leave something outside and it gets wet.

Wait, there's a rust on the side of that vehicle out there. Where'd that come from? If you're on the east side, I can't talk about where you're at, but you ever notice there are thieves here and there? They've taken the stone blocks that they didn't have glued to my wall. Well, that was a bad investment.

The thieves carried it off. And here's the problem. When you lay it up here, and the moth comes and gets it, then it's gone.

You lost it. And then it's not like, oh, you can empty your pockets out on judgment day and like barter with God, we know this, riches do not profit in the day of wrath. Righteousness delivers from death.

Ezekiel says their silver and their gold are not able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord. Psalm 49 says truly no man can give to God the price of his life. The ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice.

Brethren, you know what it's basically saying? You do not want to trust in that which is going to fail you in the hour of your death. Don't go there. At the greatest crisis of your existence, can you imagine this? You are on your deathbed.

You are gasping for the last gasp of breath in this world. You are going out. And what you don't want to do right at that point, brethren, that is a crisis point.

If there is ever a crisis point for any human being, it is those moments right before they step into eternity. The implications. And what this is saying is at that greatest point of crisis right there, when you need confidence, when you need contentment in God, when you need some sort of safety, some sort of hope more than ever, what is your money going to be to you then? What is all the wealth you hoarded up? You know what you're going to enter eternity with? The level of contentment you had.

I mean, you found your content in God, and now you're coming up to that brink of eternity. You're not looking back over your shoulder like Lot's wife. Wow! I've got my planter back there and I invested all that time and this, that.

Brethren, if you die today, would you take with you a heart of contentment and satisfaction? You know what you don't want to be? You don't want to be that fool who right at that time, you step into the presence of God and there's just this empty hole right here where covetousness used to be. Because I'll tell you what, covetousness will fail you in your hour when you need the greatest help. And all there is is this empty hole.

A spiritual hole. Covetousness will fail you right at that point. Brethren, how wretched it is when our lives are constantly being measured and constantly being weighed and the value of our lives are constantly being put in the scale.

How wretched when it's stuff that matters. When stuff and things become necessary to us and God's gifts take the place of God Himself. What a horrible, monstrous substitution we begin to live for what God has given us.

His gifts. Brethren, let me tell you this. If you would know God in greater intimacy, you have to recognize this is huge.

Because oftentimes we get Christians and they're like, I want revival. I want more. But do you realize that one of the great paths to discipleship, to being a learner, to being close, to following, to nearness is renunciation.

Renunciation. You can't get away from that unless you forsake all that you have. You cannot be my disciple.

And you think what Jesus said to that rich young ruler. Yeah, you'll have treasure in Heaven. It's renunciation.

I want it all. And here's what I want you to go do with it. Give it to the poor.

And yeah, there's treasure. But you don't want to miss. And follow Me.

What? I get to be with Him? I mean, that's what Matthew... Matthew got up and he got to go with Jesus. Does that appeal to anybody? Could you imagine if he actually walked up here and he said, follow Me? What are you going to do? Hesitate? It's Him! It's the chief desire of my soul. Oh, folks, that man who has God for his treasure, Christ for content, satisfied, as death lays its cold grip, that man has it all.

Brethren, what fixes me? In becoming a Christian, what fixes me is not giving me a bunch of stuff. It's not that Jesus is blessing my business now. He may do that.

But you know what fixes us based on this? It's desire. It's removing of certain harmful desires. The desire for wealth.

Brethren, it's founded on a mirage. Because you know what the guy that's accumulating money, he wants security. People that are saving up.

Retirement. Retirement is a security-seeking device. That's what it is.

You could store it up in heaven. But you don't do it. You store it up here.

Why? Security. Brethren, it's a mirage. It brings no true security.

Not at all. It doesn't buy security. It doesn't buy health.

It doesn't buy love. It can't spare us from sorrow and death. Rather, it just plunges us into sorrows.

It's just the reverse. Look at v. 9. Temptation. You see that word? Snare.

Many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. Love and money is the root of all kinds of evils. Through this craving, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Now, it's often misquoted. Money is not the root of evil. You see what it's saying.

In fact, notice the words that are the tug of the heart here. You have desire. You see that? Desire to be rich.

V. 9, those who desire. But then, look at the next. Senseless and harmful desires.

And then you go to v. 10. The love. I mean, to love something is to desire that thing.

And then you get this word, craving. It is through this craving. You see, the issue isn't money.

The issue is how we feel about money. You get snared like an animal in a trap. Sinful entrapment.

It traps us. It's a lure. There's a trap there for the soul.

Oh, there is a fallen angel. He loves to trap people out there. But you know what he takes specific delight in? People that were once followers of Christ to get them in a trap.

Bunyan so cunningly captures this as Apollyon was trying to get Christian to come back to the city of destruction. The devil loves it. The devil delights in it if he can trap your soul.

Trap. Snare. Plunged.

Brethren, you can't think that this can't apply to you. Just think about life. What's really more important to you? Advancing in your job? Or your personal walk with the Lord? I mean, all you've got to think, what's your prayer life like right now compared to all your endeavors for money and advance in the workplace? I mean, brethren, it's not like this thing is hidden.

All you have to do is look around a little bit. What's your life look like? What you have here is pierced with many pangs. Literally, you know what that word is? Skewered.

It's impaled. I remember traveling to Romania and Vlad the Impaler, he would put people on poles and run them right through you. And he'd leave you on there and you would slowly fall and the point of that would come out of the people's mouths.

Yeah, that's a graphic picture, but that's the picture here. A love of money will skewer you. It will impale you.

We can't see it. It is only going to be visible upon our death. And there are some people here right now, you can write it off, you can try to avoid it, you can try to dodge it, but death will not let you dodge this.

If there was a love for money in your life, the pangs, the sorrows, the piercing, the snaring, you want to destroy yourself? Love money. It's the root of all sorts of wickedness and evil. What do people do that want money? They'll cheat on their taxes.

You want to know if this fits you? Are you honest with your taxes? After you file your taxes and you figure out you did something wrong, do you redo them? You know what we find here? People will be false

preachers, false teachers for the sake of money. Have no problem saying lies and tickle people's ears because they want more in the offering box. They don't want to offend anybody.

What will people do? People will sell their bodies. People will murder. You find out when people hire hit men what it costs to get somebody killed.

People do all sorts of things for money. People gamble. You just think you don't help the poor.

You'll lie. You'll cheat. You'll bribe.

You'll deny people justice. Judges can be bought off. Debt.

What a contentment problem that is. Selfishness. Selfishness.

The desire for wealth. You know what it does? It just fixates a person's thoughts on himself. And other people just become means to help me advance? Or obstacles that keep me from getting what I want? Or how about anxiety? Because what happens? The more a man has, the more he has.

And the more he has up here, the more he has to think about. The more he has to lose. He's haunted by that risk of loss.

And look, if you want to continue the test, there's really like three things that jump out of the passage if you want to test yourself whether there's a love of money. Well, you believe money's the true game. That's at the end of 5. And when it really comes down to it, you can talk about going to church on Sunday and whatever, but you know what? You're ready to talk about how to make money and talk work way beyond anything you want to talk about the Lord.

It's there. It's at the forefront. It's what you're into.

You can have a glorious message and rather than being lofted away and wanting to get alone with the Lord, you're ready to talk shop right away. You're ready to talk how to make money. Or there's this, you'll do evil.

The love of this is the root of all evil. So, all you have to do is ask yourself, will you lie, cheat, steal, or do anything dishonest to get money or to keep it? And I mean, one of the evils is just not being rich towards God. You resent giving it.

And that's one of the stinginess evils that comes out of all of it. You just have a hard time prying out. This is a rich young ruler.

Real difficult time giving. And then there's this discontent because contentment obviously is a thing that's really being showered with praise here. You're just discontent.

You're never satisfied. It's just never enough. So how do we fight? Here's one thing.

Take this to heart. Any discontent. Brethren, I heard Ryan Fullerton say it one time.

You can't think that well, here's all these people out in the wilderness who were discontent and mumbled at God, didn't enter the Promised Land, and lost their souls because of their unbelief. And then here you are, discontent, mumbling, and grumbling, and you're just like them, but somehow the ends are going to turn out different for you. Let me tell you this.

Any discontent is a spiritual danger. And what you need to do is see it. Admit it.

Don't hide. Don't explain it away. Don't justify yourself.

Be honest. Be transparent with the Lord. Admit it.

Confess it. Repent of it. I mean, really confess it.

Lord, You see it. Because sometimes those things are hard to just walk. It's like, Lord, I know this is wrong, and it's in my heart, and I'm confessing it, and I need Your help.

Fix me. I'm not content in this area. And we've all been there.

Lord, please, I'm not content about this thing. And you know it. And just wear Him out.

Wear Him out. Because He's always got help coming. Two, look, one of the things, and we're going to get to this in 617 in just a moment, just consider how much God has given you.

He's given you all things to enjoy. But think about the things that He's given you. I mean, brethren, this is one of the things about being content that you find in Hebrews 13.

Because God has said, I will never leave you or forsake you. I mean, brethren, if that isn't a reason to be content, no matter what else may be true in my life, God's taken me to glory. I got eternal life ahead of me.

I'm saved. You're not going to deal with me according to my sins. You're not going to repay me according to my iniquities.

So just think about that. And three, consider this. You'll never use money the way that God intends if you are not living in light of the fact that the spirit of ownership needs to be replaced by a spirit of surrender.

Listen, when Paul's coming along giving us these verses, there's an expectation here that we're going to surrender to the things he's pressing us to do. When Jesus comes along and says, unless you forsake all that you have, brethren, there is a spirit of surrender that is pressed. You've been bought with a price.

You're not your own. You're a servant. You've been committed certain things by the Lord and He's gone on a long journey and He's coming back and He's going to take an account.

There just needs to be that spirit. Paul expects surrender here. Four, in all of this, you've got to find that God is your God.

I mean, that's what it says in 617 again. We put our hope in Him. I mean, He's got to be real to you.

He's got to be satiating to your soul. He's got to be worth setting your hopes on. The psalmist says you put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine have bound.

I mean, brethren, you've got to know something of that. Listen, if your religion is just dry and empty, and when you have money, that buys the stuff you can buy in this world, and wow, I can get a big screen TV and I can watch the sports and I can watch this and that. Brethren, what really brings... what really... I mean, the thing is, God has designed us and He's designed us to be satisfied with Him.

And I'll tell you, once we've tasted, taste and see that the Lord is good. You've got to be there. You've got to be where... I may not be exactly in the best place right now.

I may not be where I've been in the past. Oh, I've tasted. I've seen that the Lord is good.

Yes, maybe some temptation. Maybe I'm being pulled away. Maybe there needs to be repentance.

Maybe there's some discontent that I need to confess. But brethren, listen, one other thing here. One of the main weapons that we use against covetousness and greed is the Word of God.

So when covetousness begins to raise its greedy head in your life, you know what you've got to do? You've got to preach the Word of God to yourself, which means you take verses just like we're looking at right here and say, you know what? This is the root of all kind of evil. It is the root of anxiety. It's the root of selfishness.

It's the root of not trusting God, but trusting money. There's all sorts of wickedness that will come through this. But, you need to hear also, the glorious promise is calculated to give great contentment to the soul, which brings me to this part.

Very quickly, brethren, look at this. The positive. V. 17, as for the rich in this present age, now look, I'm going to tell you this.

Would you consider somebody that had ten times as much as you to be rich? Probably most of us would say, I mean, they're ten times more well-off than me. They're ten times richer than me. We would tend to look at somebody like that.

Somebody who's driving a vehicle worth ten times what yours is and living in a house ten times what... But brethren, back yourself off of this thing. How much of the world do you think looks at you and you live ten times above them? How much of the world? Estimate. Okay, you're not ready to do that.

What do you think you have to make to be in the top 1% of the income earners in all of the earth? That's very close. That is very close. \$32,400.

American Christian, what are you going to say to that? How many of us in this room are in the top 1% of the wealthiest people? So, be done with saying I'm not rich. Go out into the west of Nepal. Just have a look around.

Like I say, even go to the UK and have a look around. Brethren, there's money here. So, we're going to write that off right there.

As for the rich in this present age, so nobody's dodging this. "...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're to do good. Now get this, good.

That is agatho ergoio, which means to benefit others. You're to do good. You're to benefit others.

And to be rich in good works. Now that good is kalos, which means beautiful, wise. So, do good and benefit others.

Be rich in the kind of beautiful, wise works. I love that. Beautiful.

And wise. To be generous and ready to share. Why? Because by doing it, you thus store up treasure for yourself as a good foundation for the future.

Now, that's glorious. But listen to this. So that... You have a conditional clause here.

"...So that they may take hold of that which is truly life." Like I say, KJV, New KJV, there's a textual issue here. But it says eternal life. Would you say that? It's like we don't talk that way.

We're afraid to talk that way. Do you fight covetousness and strive to be generous in order to lay hold of eternal life? Do you? Because that is what is truly life. Do you talk that way? Would you tell somebody that? Do we admonish one another that way? Brother, be generous.

Be given with your money to give lots of it away. In fact, give most of it away. In fact, you know what, if you gave all of it away like the woman with her two mites, don't hardly think Jesus would fault you.

I'm not here to raise money for the church. And I'm not here to talk about what is going to happen in the business meeting and specifically what you give the elders. The different guys.

That's not the issue. Brethren, look at this. This is very personal.

"...so that you may take hold of that which is truly life." We don't talk that way. We simply don't. What would somebody do to take hold of eternal life? Well, somebody might say, trust the Lord.

Well, you know what? I find it there that I'm supposed to put my hope in God. Don't set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God. That would be the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

But you know what you don't want to do? Minimize v. 19 and what it says. Yes, it's God we hope in. But the God we hope in designed eternal life to be laid hold of.

Do you hope for eternal life? Look, if you tell me you do, then I'm going to tell you lay hold of it. You say, well, that doesn't square with my theology. Well, then change your theology.

If you say to me, wait, I thought eternal life was something I had like the first moment I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and I've got it. And since I've got it, I've got it. They say, what are you talking about here? Well, brethren, no! It's not what I'm talking about.

It's what Paul's talking about under inspiration. I'm not making this up. This is in your Bibles.

How do you lay a certain foundation? You know what that word foundation is? It's that which is firm. The stuff in this life is not firm. Why? Because there's thieves and laws.

It's not firm. You want firmness under your feet? Then what you do with your money matters. You want to lay hold on eternal life? It's like the God we hope in has designed this thing so that somehow by our money, we reach out and we grasp eternal life.

And it makes my grip on it more firm. And you say, I don't believe that. Well, it's not me you're not believing.

It's Paul. And you see, we don't like to talk this way. Brethren, I'm telling you, there is such... Oh, brethren, we bank our souls on God not repaying us for our iniquity.

Our doctrine is founded on justification by faith. But brethren, you have to recognize that the God that justifies us by faith, He would have us so live by faith and so put our confidence in Him and trust Him and not put our trust in money. And there is a way that He has designed into all of this that eternal life is something that we are to lay hold of.

We are to be rich in good. And that's what it says. And listen, if you tell me that's not what it says, then words don't have meaning.

There's no passivity allowed here. And brethren, there are things in the Bible we just don't like to talk about. I mean, you've got Cornelius.

Yeah, I challenge you. You know what? The angel told Cornelius that there's a guy coming to preach to you by which you and your family are going to be saved. Well, I don't know how you read that, but I read that as he's not saved yet and Peter needs to come and preach the Gospel and then he will be saved.

Isn't that how you read it? And I'll tell you this, before he gets Peter in his house preaching to him, you know what the angel said? Your alms have come up as a memorial before God. What does that mean? Does that mean it had any sway with God? Brethren, you ever read things like this? Blessed is the one who considers the poor. Why? Well, wait, we're justified by faith.

It doesn't matter if I consider the poor or I don't consider the poor. No, blessed is the one who considers the poor in the day of trouble. The Lord delivers him.

The Lord protects him and keeps him alive. Keeps him alive. There's life there.

He's going to keep him in the realm of life. Why? He considers the poor. And look, you have to read it in the order that it's given to us.

Are you afraid to talk like the Bible talks? Brethren, and you know what? As rich people, don't be haughty. We're to be the humble rich. The New Testament just relentlessly pushes us to not be haughty.

And you know what? It's very haughty for you to have the ownership mentality. Well, that's mine. No, that's not yours.

That is the Lord's. All you have, all on this earth, the fullness thereof, it's all His. And so, the hallmark of pride is the spirit of ownership.

Brethren, I come back to this again. There has to be a spirit of surrender. Brethren, what does God want you to do with your money? Not lay it up here.

Jesus says, make for yourselves money bags. Do you talk like that? Do you exhort one another? Brother, I want to see you with money bags. Not here.

This doesn't mean that you can't own anything. But what does it mean? That within the realm of ownership, and you recognize the kind of ownership that I'm talking about, it means you're free. You are free to make radical decisions with the Lord's money that He has made you steward of.

There's so many passages aimed at making the wealthy uncomfortable just to live in this world and amass stuff. Scripture relentlessly is pushing us with eternity stamped on our minds to be thinking that way. Brethren, what does that mean? To use our property to lay hold of true life? What you do with your wealth

can make eternal life what? What is it that may take hold of it? Of that which is take hold? Remember, KJV knew KJV.

They say take hold of eternal life. But that which is truly life, as the ESV says, it's that. It's that eternal life.

What is this saying to us? Brethren, I'll tell you this. What you don't want to do is write this off. It is saying that the way you use money and the way you use riches right now, it is going to have impact and it is going to have bearing on what this true life looks like.

Somehow there is an ability to make it more life. More lively. More vibrant.

More colorful. More deep. More rich.

Just more. Being generous. Brethren, you know what this is saying? Take hold of eternal life.

Get a grip on it. Close your fingers around it. And squeeze.

Hold it tight. There's something that giving freely and lavishly, abounding in good and being generous that gives you a strong, tight grip on eternal life. And you say, I just haven't thought this way before.

Okay, that's okay. But think that way now. Think that way based on this text.

Don't get away from it. Jesus said sell your possessions. Give to the needy.

Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old. Do that. Brethren, I hope you hear Me.

Do I want to see sufficient funds for the spread of the Gospel? Yes. Do I want to see sufficient funds for the care of the orphans? Absolutely. Do I want to see support for the missionaries? Definitely.

But brethren, the God of Scripture is beckoning to you. Jesus calls to you. Paul calls to you.

I call to you. Use your own money to lay a firm foundation. Look, this is not a fundraiser.

You can give to this church if you want to. You can give aside from this church. There are many ways to not let your left hand know what your right hand's doing.

Brethren, you're saved. You're followers of Christ. He who had nowhere to lay His head.

And He looks at His disciples and He says, you can't be My disciple unless you renounce all that you have. Okay, now that you've renounced it and you've submitted to Me as owner of it all, here's what I want you to do with it. In Luke 12, He says sell your possessions.

By the way, that is not to the rich young ruler. That's to all of us. And what I'm saying to you is this, this is the call.

Think about life. Life! To have it. To hold it.

What is life? Life is all about knowing God. Listen, you think there's a connection between what we do with our money and the infamously that I have with God? I was just reading Psalm 11 this week and this verse jumped out at me. The Lord is righteous.

He loves righteous deeds. The upright shall behold His face. You see the connections there? Righteous deeds, what you do with your money.

And those people shall behold His face. This is life, brothers and sisters. If a man's wealth ministers to nothing but his own pride and riches nobody but himself, it's going to be his ruin.

It's only going to be a wreck to his soul. But if he uses it to bring help and comfort to others in becoming poorer, what happens? He becomes all the richer. And God loves this and God says that person is going to behold My face.

Wow! I want that. Take hold of it. You may find, you remember what Jesus said, life and life more abundant.

You may find that as you part with your money and that spirit of renunciation more and more takes hold of you and a contentment settles on you, you may find an abundance of life even before death in this lifetime that you never thought imaginable. And if you've never made a connection with your money in that reality, brethren, I would just say, you're missing some of the things that Scripture says. And so that's my appeal.

I want you to be rich. Brethren, you remember this. It is easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the kingdom.

Because most men will not renounce. Most men are like the rich young ruler. And even though you have come into the church and you haven't visibly denied Christ and walked away like He did, in your heart you have.

You're here bodily, but your heart has taken the same road with the rich young ruler. That's not the road you want to be on. I'm just going to say this, look, any discontentment, you get it out there on the table.

Brethren, we all need to do inventory. Where are we at with this? We ought to be one of the most lavishly giving people on the face of the earth. What can we do? Brethren, we have resources among us.

Let's band together and do what we can do. Let's band together and reach the ends of the world. Let's band together and reach the poor among us.

Let's help one another. Let's help beyond our walls and out to the uttermost parts of the earth. Brethren, we have resources.

What a gift that God has given us to be able to enjoy. And the best way that you can enjoy the riches and the wealth that He gave you is to lay a firm foundation for the future. Because then it's eternal joy.

There is true treasure to be had. Jesus is saying, look, there is treasure in heaven to be had. Don't squander the opportunity.

We only give one life, folks. You don't get two. You don't get three.

And we are in one of the wealthiest nations that has ever existed in the history of mankind. If God has given us these resources, then we have a responsibility. Father, I pray that You'd help us.

Help us to truly lay hold on eternal life and to lay this foundation and to be wise with our money. Lord, we don't want to grieve the Spirit. We don't want to grieve the Spirit with selfishness.

We don't want to grieve the Spirit with stinginess. We don't want to grieve the Spirit with a preoccupation of all the stuff and the toys and the trivialities. We read what it says.

It cares of this world. Just being absorbed with riches. It strangles.

Keeps us from being fruitful. Causes people to wander. Causes them to be plunged into places they don't want to go and we don't want to go and I don't want to go.

Yet on the other hand, there is treasure and there is foundation and there is life. And it is attached to wealth and it is attached to what we do, what we rich Americans do with it. Father, I pray, help us.

Help us break us. Help us to be resigned. Help us, Lord, to be a people that have that spirit of resignation rather than a spirit of ownership.

Grip us. Father, I pray, oh, I look forward to a day of judgment and just seeing some of the brethren who give so much, just being lavished with well done and with the treasures that come with it. And us just looking at each other absolutely staggered and bewildered that the grace of God should do such a thing in our life to not only save us, but then to give us all these things.

It's like David said when he gave to the temple. He only gave what you gave to him. He gave from what was yours.

And that's what you've allowed us to do. You've allowed us to take what you've given us, to give from what is yours, and then to actually have some sort of benefit eternally. Lord, we don't want to be like those foolish sons of light that don't live up to what the sons of this generation are capable of and doing to achieve their ends.

Lord, please, we want to be wise. Help us to be wise. Help me to be wise.

Lord, we can't relive the past, but I pray You'd help us to live the future. Help us, Lord, to be wise. We've got this meeting next week.

Lord, we want to be led by You. Not by anything carnal. We don't want there to be division and disunity.

Lord, we want to be united, shoulder to shoulder for the sake of the Gospel and for the sake of what money can accomplish in the kingdom and being rich towards God and laying up treasure there and selling our possessions and living in light of eternity. Lord, help us to not get our eyes stuck on the stuff here, but to ever have eternity before our eyes. Please, Lord, help us to be a determined people.

Help us to lay hold on eternal life in all the way that You mean for us to do it there. In 1 Timothy, Lord, we're needy people and we're given to discontent. We admit it.

There are things that come into our lives that make us discontent. Lord, we want to be contented. We want to be satisfied with You, with Your glory, with Your fullness, with Your closeness.

Oh, help us, Father. We want to be permeated by God. Lord, we want revival because we want a sense of Your presence here.

We want an awareness of Your presence. Lord, we know that it can't be bought and yet some way You do say that when we help the poor and we're liberal and we're generous, that such people will behold Your

face and such people who renounce all our disciples. Oh, the rich young ruler, to walk away from the Lord Jesus Christ because of his money when he could have followed Him and followed in His footsteps and seen the glory, even as John recounts it.

Oh, there is such glory. We want to see more. Lord, we don't want our money to come between nothing between our souls and the Savior.

We don't want money to dull our run, to slacken the pace, to cause us to not see the fullness of glory we might otherwise see. We don't want to be distracted. We don't want the anxieties.

We don't want the selfishness. Lord, please, we're a people... Oh, we know the country we live in and we see that it's so difficult for the rich to find their way to heaven. Lord, it ought to cause us to tremble probably more than it is.

How many of us will fail? How many not trembling right now will tremble then because it's too late? Lord, please, free us from the stuff the world lives for. The love of the things that the world loves. All that shines and all that glitters and all that enamors and all that is like gold and silver.

Lord, please, we know our time is short. We pray for the grace of God to help us run while it's day and to work while it's day and to give while it's day. And to be generous while it's day.

And the good, all the beautiful works, the wise works, help us to be wise, Lord. Help us not to be fools. Help us to be rich towards You.

Lord, we need something in us fixed. Something that possessive. That thing in us that says, Me, Mine.

Oh, such a possessive, self-protective, self-oriented root of carnality that's attached to this flesh. Lord, we want to break free. We look forward to the day when we can fly away and be at rest.

No longer in the battle. No longer in the struggle. No longer the tensions.

Lord, while there is a battle now, we pray that You give us such grace to be victorious in this battle. And I pray it all in Christ's name, Amen. You are dismissed.

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