

1 Timothy 6:3-10, Is money the root of all evil?

Having addressed how Christian slaves (and by implication) masters should behave, which forces both of them to see each other as individual human beings whom they should respect and love and not as property or property owners, God next addresses some unscrupulous individuals who think religion is a great way to get rich, as He points out just what a bad idea it is to crave wealth, to see it as the answer to all your problems—this attitude towards wealth doesn't fix problems, it creates some very devastating ones.

6:3-5, “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, . . . and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is the means of gain” the individuals in Ephesus were teaching things that were divisive and contrary to what Jesus Christ actually said—and notice that the Bible contains the Lord's words, His voice. What Jesus taught was sound, healthy, and correct (including His teaching on slaves and slavery in 6:1-2); it corresponded with “godliness,” which is a giant issue in 1 Timothy, 1:5; 2:2, 10; 3:16; 4:7, 8. Jesus' goal in teaching you His truth is so that you will have a very different outlook, so that you will be driven by love that is grounded in a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith, 1:5. Those who teach otherwise, have none of this. Instead, they are proud, know-nothing, argumentative, envious, contentious, slanderous, and suspicious. They are men who constantly argue, have a corrupt mind, and whom Satan has robbed of the truth, 4:1-2. These men recognize godliness but only see it as something that will make them rich; religion is therefore a way to gain wealth not live godly before the Lord. And this reminds us of the qualifications God set for elders and deacons, two of which speak directly to God's argument here, “not greedy for money” and “not quarrelsome” 3:3, 8. It also reminds us of the individuals now in Ephesus who fit this description to a T and those they've infected, 1:3-7, 19-20; 2:8-15; 4:1-3. And what's God's prescription when dealing with such people? Avoid them; to argue with them would be pointless. We must constantly be on the lookout for Satan's schemes because he wants us to engage such argumentative people; but God says, “Avoid them.”

6:6, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain” many people around the world wish they were happy. Is happiness supposed to be our goal in life or is the goal something else? What does God say is great gain in this world? Godliness, 1:5; 2:2, 10; 3:16. In fact, He's already told us just how profitable it can be not only in the here and now, but in the afterlife, 4:7-8.

6:7, “For we brought nothing into *this* world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” why does God say this, what does it have to do with His statement about godliness and happiness? It speaks directly to what many think is the answer to all their problems: money. Many think that if they only had money, they could fix all their problems. But with this one statement God reveals the limits of money. It can do great things for us, but nothing at all in the afterlife. In fact, we can make as much as we want, but we can't take any of it with us. He's revealing the proper understanding of wealth and possessions; they have their limits (Luke 12:13-21).

6:8, “And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content” how in the world can anyone be content with just food and clothing/shelter? This seems counterintuitive to the way life and the world work. The key, the answer is godliness; when you have godliness, you have a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith and you can handle anything and everything, no matter what state you're in, 1:5 (Philippians 4:10-13). The one who walks in the Lord's godly truth knows he/she has nothing to worry about (Matthew 6:33) which brings about tremendous peace and happiness (Philippians 4:6-7). This is how those who only have food and clothing/shelter can be content; it's not the food or the shelter but the Lord who provides both and the peace of mind that goes with them.

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6:9, “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare” what does God say happen to those whose life focus is chasing wealth because they think it will solve all their problems? Instead of solving all your problems, it creates even greater ones. Chasing riches can destroy your life (may even keep you from heaven, Matthew 19:16-22).

6:10, “For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil*” many get this saying wrong; they think the saying is, “Money is the root of all evil.” But that’s not what God says. There’s nothing wrong with money or wealth, in fact, wealth and the ability to enjoy it is a gift from God (Ecclesiastes 5:19). The giant problem with money/wealth is that many fall in love with it. If your life’s mission is to be richer and richer, then it will lead you into many sorrows. It can even lead you to walk away from God. Your eternal salvation is secure; it was yours the second you simply believed in Jesus Christ, 1:15-16, but your life will be filled with sorrows.