

## Warnings and Wisdom for Worldly Wealth

### Introduction

- Last Sunday: “**Exercise thyself rather unto godliness**” (1 Tim 4:7, KJV). Godliness: awesome respect for God – believe & do right thing; doctrine (all along) & putting faith into action, practice.
- Today: vs. 6; lesson talks re exercising faith in way use money. Has a lot to do with money. Taboo; easy to accuse church, “always talk money.” Don’t think accurate or fair; do think throughout Bible, God a lot to say re money. 1 Tim 6 one of clearest in Bible re money, in context of Christian believing/doing right thing, exercising faith. So today we have warnings and wisdom from God for how exercise faith, use ww.

### Warnings

- We have clear warnings: vs. 9-10. Progressive string of warnings, not vs having money but vs loving money, being consumed with having money. Follow progression: **Vs. 9-trap**” (walking “gotta get \$” path, pit or net, then stuck); -“**desires**” (heart, desires shift from loving God to things); -“**plunge people**” (forced under water); -“**destruction.**” Know what gets destroyed when love money? Marriages; families (inheritance); friendships. Bad enough; much worse: vs. 10b: people can lose faith in God over money. Two ways: don’t have much, resent God, turn from him, make life’s focus to make more; or do have \$, don’t thank him, think earned themselves, leave God out of lives, turn from him. In both cases: money becomes God. Talk warnings – this is ultimate warning: in heart, lift up money above Lord, as idol, as god. When that: vs. 10b, “**pierced;**” knife, dagger into self many griefs. Understand what Paul means: vs. 10a (not money itself, but loving it). Loving money will ruin life, destroy faith. Strong warning.
- Certainly not only place God warns vs loving money. When money is God, breaks 1<sup>st</sup> Com, “**No other gods**” (Ex 20:3). Jesus himself said, “**No one can serve two masters...You cannot serve both God and money**” (Mt 6:24). \$ leads to idolatry. Jesus also: \$ leads to greed. “**Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions**” (Lk 12:15). OT lesson, same: “**Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income**” (Ec 5:10). So throughout Scripture, consistent warning vs loving money, being greedy.
- Warning for us, esp because we’re wealthy people. Vs. 17a. Do you consider yourself rich? Maybe if look around at wealthiest in community or country (in luxury), no. Consider this: if your annual income > \$4k/yr (\$350/mo or \$80/wk), wealthier than 75% world pop.<sup>1</sup> Diff number: every year, Fed gov’t sets poverty line, based on number in household. 2015, family of 3, poverty line \$20k.<sup>2</sup> But if you make \$20k, top 4% of wealthiest people in world.<sup>1</sup> Saying: you may not think you’re wealthy; but in reality, far wealthier than most people in world, for most of history of world. Paul, vs. 17a, that’s us; no way getting around that. We are financially wealthy people, living in wealthiest country in world.<sup>3</sup>
- Not evil thing; not sinful to be wealthy. Vs 17c, “[God] richly provides...**enjoyment.**” Blessings come from God; wants us to enjoy them. “**When God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them...this is a gift of God**” (Ec 5:19). God has richly blessed us with ww; dare never forget. Yet with that ww (God himself gives), also gives very severe warnings not to fall into trap of loving money, which plunges into ruin, destruction and eventually destroys faith. That’s warning here!

### Wisdom

- At same time, God also gives wisdom for how to use money he gives. After warnings in lesson, Paul speaks words of wisdom for ww. 3 pieces of wisdom. First, be content. Vs. 6-8. Christian contentment: not being so enamored by wealth, possessions, rather happy, satisfied with of blessings God gives, and appreciate them. So when God gives, we thank; when decides not to give, still satisfied, content. Contentment: opp of greed, which longs for more. Greedy person takes blessings for granted, not thankful. But content person is thankful for everything; takes nothing for granted.
- First wisdom: content. Reason we can be: we’ve been given so much! In Christ, have everything. “**You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich**” (2 Cor 8:9). We rich because Christ poor.

Savior left glory of heaven, where angels praise him in presence of God; came to live with us, greedy, selfish people; not just live with but die for us. On cross, sinless Son of God, by giving his life, gave forgiveness for our greed and promise of life eternal in mansions of heaven. Jesus goes from top to bottom to bring us from bottom to top. See: we are wealthy in Christ, with riches from heaven. When we know, believe, cling to that, who cares how much money we have, what stupid things we own. None of that stuff going to heaven; we are! So we can be content with whatever we have here, because we know what we'll have there. That's wisdom: godliness with contentment.

- Second wisdom: put hope in God, not in wealth. **Vs 17ab**. Know who did? In Gospel, Laz. Re ww: everything, luxury vs nothing, poverty. But when died: angels carried Laz to heaven; rich man to hell. Laz put hope in God; rich man put hope in wealth. Between two, who really richer? Better to be a Laz than rich man. True wisdom to put hope in God (carried to heaven by angels) than in wealth.
- Finally, third wisdom (where really put faith into action): be generous. **Vs. 18**. And since already said spiritual riches we have in Christ far more imp than ww, then what better way is there to **vs. 18** than to share our wealth to spread saving Gospel of JC? If we use ww to share spiritual riches with spiritually poor; if we give money to give people good news of salvation, that's Christian generosity, and what God's commanding us here to do. God calls on us to be generous so that others can know Jesus.
- Lot of ways. Two. First: church offerings. Giving offerings to church is fruit of faith. When you give offerings to this church, money used to carry Gospel into our hearts and into community through church, school, worship, Bible studies, called workers, congregational outreach efforts. This week, Stewardship Committee sent you offering statement in mail (everything given this year), not to guilt us into giving, but to guide us in our giving, the way 1 Tim 6 guides us. So use statements to evaluate your giving compared to your income, because offerings to congregation are one way to **vs. 18**.
- Another way: support synod. WI synod is our national church body. Allows us to do things we as cong want but can't do on our own: send missionaries, train pastors and teachers, publish materials. But there's about 1300 congregations in WELS, so together we can. Synod recently resolved to eliminate financial debt, because if we have no debt, means more mission work, Gospel outreach. After church, WELS Con. Synod Pres will explain program details. In mailboxes and table, envelopes, "One In Christ: Moving Forward in Ministry." Look it over. I encourage, as you pray for synod to also consider supporting your synod in debt elimination campaign.

### *Exercising Godliness in the Area of Finances*

- **Vs. 6**. God has given us ww in lavish abundance; also warnings and wisdom for how to use that wealth. If we "**exercise [ourselves] unto godliness**" in area of finances, then **vs. 19**. In Christ we have that life; we have firm foundation for coming age, which makes us wealthier than anyone in the world. So let's exercise our faith in this age by heeding God's warnings and following his wisdom for worldly wealth.

### **1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19**

<sup>6</sup> But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup> For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. <sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. <sup>19</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.globalrichlist.com](http://www.globalrichlist.com)

<sup>2</sup> <http://aspe.hhs.gov/2015-poverty-guidelines>

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_GDP\\_\(nominal\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal))