

Warnings and Wisdom for Worldly Wealth

- Smtms reason J's hard sayings are hard, bec hard undrstd. I.e., today, shrwd mngr: is J commending dishnsty, saying okay cheat boss? Or 2 wks ago, to be disc: hate fr/mthr/fam; really, litrly hate them? What mean? Pretty deep; hard undrstd! But smtms reason J's hard sayings are hard, not bec hard undrstd, but hard to do, live, put into prctc. Carry cross; walk way/righteous – I know what means, just hard do! And today we have anthr hard lesson for lives/Xians: **“No one can serve 2 mstrs... you cannot serve both God & \$” (Lk 16:13)**. And I undrstd exactly what saying. But man, it's hard let God have final say over my finances. Of all areas/life that God has authrty over (behvr, lang, hlth, life), can't he just keep nose out my chckbk? Can't my \$ just be my bsns, w/o God telling me what do? We may nvr say that out loud, but all feel, bec in sinful nature we hate it when God tells us what to do w/our \$. But prob is: ours hrts are not big enough for both. Either Lord'll be our master, or \$. So all-imp qstn today: whom will we serve? Will we serve \$ over God; or God w/our \$? Today we turn to 1 Tim 6, one of clearest & most applicable psgs in Bbl re dangers of serving \$ and re blessings of serving God w/\$. And here God gives us WWW.
- We have very clear warnings: **vs. 9-10**. What a grphc string/warnings, not vs having \$ but being consumd by having \$! Pic here: walking along path/life, but eyes shut, concentrng so hard on \$ (gotta make more \$). As walk, don't see trap in road: deep pit w/brnchs covrng. But so consumd w/making \$, fall in, get stuck, trapped. **Vs. 9a; b-desires**. Desire: longing of hrt. **“Love Lord God all hrt.”** But when hrt starts love \$ (& all stupid, trivial junk \$ can buy) more than Lord (who loves, redmd, proms etrn life), then you fall into **vs. 9ab**. Why foolish/hrmfl? Bec **vs. 9c**. Plunge: violent wrd! Pic: smone grabs you by neck, forces under water, drown/die. So, if you are consumd by \$; if #1 concern: wrkng, paychcks, big bank acct; if hrt longs for luxury cars, fancy clothes, expnsv vacas; wrldly possessns; if you're prideful of what do have, greedy for what don't have; if find self-worth in net worth – it will **plunge you...destrctn**. Destroy life, here on earth: often wlthiest ppl, most misrbl; \$ ≠ satsfctn; and \$ still #1 cause marital strife/divrc; it can ruin margs, fams, frndshps. So, destroy life here on earth; and destroy your life for etrnty! **Vs. 10b fr faith**. So you can actly lose your faith/Xp over \$. Can hap in 2 ways: 1) you don't have much \$, so resent God, turn away fr him; or 2) have lot \$, don't thank him; think earned it self; leave God comply out life. In either case, \$ becomes god. And if talkng warnings, isn't this ultmt warning: you'll go to hell if finances more imp faith, and \$ becomes your god. **Vs. 10b griefs**. Another trrbl pic: like holding dagger in hand (good, pwrfl tool – like \$); but instead using dagger for good, you thrust into stomach, **pierce...griefs** – like dissatsfctn, like broken rels, lost faith/salvtn. So w/all these warnings, can you undrstd what means: **vs. 10a**. And I don't want anyone here today to think: this talking re smone else, not me. Ev one us loves \$; and the roots of that love/\$ run deep and wrap selves all arnd our hrts; and have very real pwr to ruin our lives, destroy our faith. Strong warning!
- Just like Slmn, in Eccl: **“Whvr loves \$ nvr has enuf; whvr loves wlth is nvr satsfd w/their incm” (5:10)**. Just like J in Gos: **“You cannot serve both God & \$.”** And few wks ago J warned: **“Watch out! Be on your guard vs all kinds/grd; life does not consist in an abndnc/possessns” (Lk 12:15)**.
- And this warning is esp imp for us bec we are wlthy ppl. Rdnng talks re those **“rich in present wrld.”** Do you consider self rich? Maybe if compare self to wlthiest/billnrs, no. Consider this: ev yr, gov't sets what's called Fedrl Povrty Lvl (FPL); based on income and on #/ppl in houshld.ⁱ I took my fam (2,3). Acc to 2022 FPL, pvrtty line for fam like mine = \$32k+. Explain. However, if compare that to income stats fr arnd wrld, a fam at \$32k is wlthier than 79% of wrld's popltn.ⁱⁱ That's over ¾ planet! So what I'm saying: you may not think self as wlthy; but even if live under FPL, still far wlthier than most/ppl in wrld, for most/hstr wrld. **Vs. 17a**. That's us; no way getting arnd!
- And let's be clear: not sinful/wrong be wlthy or have \$. It's not \$, root; it's love/\$, root! That's a very imp distnctn to make! **Vs. 17c, God richly...** And Slmn, one of wlthiest ppl in Bbl: **“When God gives smone wlth & possessns, and the ability to enjoy them...this is a gift/God” (Ec 5:19)**. So \$ is gift/God; it comes from him. But w/it come strong warnings re WW.

- At same time, God also gives wisdom for how use WW he gives. After the warnings in 1 Tim 6 come 3 pieces/wisdom. 1st, be content. **Vs. 6-8**. Xian contntmnt means being happy/stsfd w/blessings God gives, & thanking him for them. A greedy, lover/\$ takes blssngs for granted, doesn't thank God. But a content prsn is thankful for evnthng, takes nothing for granted. And reason we can be content: in Xp we have evthng! 2 Cor 8: **“You know grace/LJC, that though rich, yet for your sake became pr, so that you thru his poverty might become rich” (9)**. We: rich bec of J! Our Sav left glory/hvn, where angels praise him in presence/God; came to live w/us, greedy, selfish ppl; and to die for us – for all our sins of \$-loving & greed. There on cross, J gave us: his life; forgvnss/grace; prom etrn life; riches/hvn. So in Xp we have evthng; we're wthy beynd imagntn! And when we know/bel that, who cares how much \$ we have?! It's not going to hvn w/us anyway! So we can be content w/what we have here, bec we know what we have there. The 1st wisdom fr God is this: **vs. 6**.
- 2nd wisdom fr God is this: put hope in God, not in wlth. **Vs. 17ab**. Wlth is uncertn! You can lose: job (means income); lose hlth (means job); invstmnts/retrmnt in down economy; car in accdnt; home in fire/flood/tornado; savings by theft/fraud; evnthng in hrtbeat, bec wlth is uncertn. But what is certain, what can never lose: proms/God. J loves you, died, rose; done evthng save you; always w/you; never leave; prepng home/hvn for you. WW'll always be uncertn. But our hope in J: always absltly certain!
- Finly, 3rd wisdom fr God (and really, call/action): be generous. **Vs. 18**. Since you're not only fincly rich but also sprtly rich, then use those riches to be rich in good deeds! Ps 23: my cup runneth over. Let run over onto others! Put your faith into action by using your \$ to share Gos. That's what J tchng in prbl shrewd mngr: not to steal fr boss, but be smart w/\$, and use it in a way that other ppl come to know Xp, and are thus welcmd, w/you, into **“etrn dwllngs” (Lk 16:9)**. When you give reg, genrous, %-based offs to ch, that \$ is used spread Gos – here in worship; there in Bbl study; to online viewers arnd wrld; to chldrn in schl; to our comnty thru our cong's outreach efforts; and to a wrld of lost souls (remem last wk: lost sheep, J went out, found) thru mission wrk of our ch body, WELS. You cannot undrstmt pwr ch offs have to carry Gos to wrld, and to **vs. 19 lay up** (whole lot souls). As a Xian, you have that life! Xp has changd your life. So share that life. **Vs. 18**. Be generous.
- Smtms J's hard sayings are hard to undrstnd; othrtms, you know exactly what saying; just hard to do. Maybe following J's will in area of finances is hard to do. Or, you know what: maybe it's not all that hard, after all! J has given you hvnly riches, and WW! Your cup runneth over! So don't serve \$; serve God w/\$. Heed the warnings and follow the wisdom for WW Lord is giving you today.

1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹Those 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. ¹⁰For 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.

¹⁷Command 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. ¹⁸Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹In 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.

ⁱ <https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/federal-poverty-level-fpl/>
<https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>

ⁱⁱ <https://howrichami.givingwhatwecan.org/how-rich-am->

[i?income=32000&countryCode=USA&household%5Badults%5D=2&household%5Bchildren%5D=3](https://www.census.gov/hhes/income/32000andcountryCode=USA&household%5Badults%5D=2&household%5Bchildren%5D=3)