

- **\*READ I Timothy 6:3-10\*** As Paul begins to conclude this letter to Timothy, he addresses those who would be active in teaching false doctrine and not agreeing with the sound teachings of Jesus. Paul states of these people that they are conceited and understanding nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in disputes and arguments that only lead to negative results such as envy, quarreling, slander, evil suspicions, and constant disagreements. He further states that such people are depraved and deprived of the truth. These descriptions are bad enough as they are, but then Paul takes things a step further when he states that these folks only seem to be engaged in these things because they believe that it will lead to financial gain.
- It is at this point that Paul begins to instruct Timothy on the dangers of greed and the griefs that are created when the love of money is present within the hearts of men. This evening, we are going to use our time of study to consider four different griefs, concerns, worries, difficulties, and problems that can pierce our lives when we lose proper perspective on the role that money plays within our lives as disciples of Jesus.
- It is well documented that financial instability is one of the key causes of unhappiness and unrest within American marriages and households. In fact, a study in 2014 by the British Journal of Psychiatry found that more than 10,000 suicides across the USA, Canada, and Europe could be directly tied to the financial crisis of 2008. This is such a sad reality to comprehend, but it is a reality of the world that we live in and the way that people approach finances. However, I am convinced that the instructions of Paul within this text can and will allow us to live without such devastating griefs and fears because we have adopted the financial peace that comes from following God's wisdom in financial matters.

## I. "Pierced themselves with many griefs."

### A. Fear of not having enough money.

1. The presence of monetary funds is simply a given in the world that we live in today, and one of the most common griefs that is present in this context is the fear of not having enough money to be able to do this or that. While there are some who legitimately are concerned on a daily basis as to whether or not they will have a meal to fill their bellies, there are others who have full bellies but are instead worrying as to whether or not they will be able to maintain their lavish lifestyle. They have money...but to them there just simply isn't enough.
2. Because of this mindset, these people are constantly thinking and focused upon what they do not have, so they can never find peace within their minds from a financial standpoint. It is one thing to be worried about providing the basics for ourselves and our families, but it is a whole different story when we're simply worried and fearful about maintaining a lifestyle.

### B. Lack of contentment with what we have.

1. That grief is closely associated with this second grief of never being content with what we have. I think first and foremost of the Rich Fool from **Luke 12:16-21**. This man was already abundantly wealthy for he is referred to as a rich man, but he wasn't satisfied with his current level of success. Therefore he decided that he would put on even more steam, tear down his barns, and build even larger ones to store even more crops. Unfortunately for this rich man, he never got to take his ease, eat, drink, and enjoy himself because his life was ended abruptly.
2. Instead of enjoying the abundance that he already possessed, this man desired more and more. My question is this, "When would that desire finally be sufficed?" That is the main issue with this man and others like him. They say that they need just a little bit more and more, but there never seems to be a place where they truly become content. What a difficult life to live never being sufficed with the blessings given by God. Well did the Preacher of Ecclesiastes state, "**The one who loves silver is never satisfied with silver, and whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with income. This too is futile.**" (**Ecclesiastes 5:10**)

### C. Willingness to do anything in order to obtain more money.

1. This lack of contentment might even lead us to the place where we are willing to do anything and everything to either obtain new or keep existing money or prestige. Ahab and Jezebel come to mind as people who were willing to do anything to obtain some financial good they desired. They were even willing to falsely accuse Naboth in order to acquire vineyard. (**I Kings 21**)
2. The core issue with this grief from Ahab and Jezebel's standpoint is the sin of being covetous. Ahab wanted something that someone else had and decided that he couldn't live without it. But it could also be that we are discontent with what we have, but determine that the easiest way to get more money would be to engage in the immoral pursuit of money by stealing or cheating others out of money that is rightfully theirs. Where does this lead many people who are engaged in such behavior? Many of them end up finding themselves without their freedom because they were caught and punished for their immoral behavior.

### D. Pursuing physical riches over spiritual riches.

1. This attitude of wanting and craving to be rich also puts us in a difficult situation because we all only have so much time and energy to devote to different portions of our lives. If our full attention is given to obtaining riches then what attention is going to be left over when it comes to building up our spiritual riches? If everything that we are about is tied up in material wealth, then what happens when those things are gone? We'll explore this question in more depth in just a moment.
2. Consider what Jesus clearly states in **Matthew 6:19-21**, *"Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* When someone participates in this type of lifestyle then they are setting themselves up for a very shallow form of happiness. This happiness takes great time to build up, but it could be taken in a moment. Surely this would lead people to live lives filled with much anxiety.

In every one of these instances of financial grief, one thing seems very clear to me. Instead of these people viewing wealth and financial goods as tools to be controlled and used...those afflicted by these griefs are being used and controlled by their wealth! Friends, this ought not be the case with us at all. Instead, as those who desire to live according to the wisdom of God, we ought to learn how to have complete control over our wealth and use it in such a way that God is glorified. I believe that Paul shares five solutions (four attitudes and mindsets followed by a set of actions) to these griefs within this text, and we will end by considering them together.

## II. Paul's Solutions To These Griefs

### A. Embrace financial contentment. (**I Timothy 6:6,8**)

1. Paul's first solution is for us to embrace a mindset of contentment. *"Godliness with contentment is great gain"* is what we find Paul writing in **I Timothy 6:6**, and this wisdom can go a long way in helping for people to be able to live at many different levels of financial wealth.
2. There are some people who are blessed to be in a position to work a job where they are high compensated. Those people should thank God for His blessings and be content with such things. But then there are some who might work jobs where they aren't paid nearly as well. The question then becomes, are they able to live off of such wages? What is the standard by which we ought to judge whether or not to pursue greater employment? I think there is certainly much personal judgment that goes into that, but Paul would state that if we have food and clothing then we ought to be content with such things. (**6:8**) I believe the bottom line would be this...let us all work hard to make what is needed, but let's also learn to be content with the level of God's blessings that we are able to enjoy wherever we might find ourselves. We must seek balance.

## B. Remember that we can't take anything out of this world. (I Timothy 6:7)

1. Sandwiched between these two verses is an all important reminder to each of us concerning the wealth that we are able to acquire in this life...none of it can be taken with us. I have always heard the funny saying that you don't see U-Haul trailers being pulled along behind a hearse, but it only took that first picture of someone actually doing something similar to this that has caused me to be slower in sharing such a joke.
2. However, we recognize that this truly isn't something that we can do. Jesus even quotes God as saying in **Luke 12:20** to the Rich Man, *"You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared — whose will they be?"* This is our reality...when we are gone we can no longer use those riches that we have accumulated. So how will we respond to that truth? I would think that this reality would lead us to do at least a couple of things.
3. Firstly, it might stop us from thinking that we need so much stuff. Secondly, it ought to lead us to loosen the reigns over our money just a tad. Instead of being a ridiculous tightwad, maybe we could find opportunities to loosen our grip on some of wealth in a way that will bless someone. We'll talk about that more here in just a moment, but suffice it to say at this juncture that hoarding wealth will do us no good because we can't take it with us anyways.

## C. Do not be arrogant with our riches. (I Timothy 6:17)

1. Additionally, we need to be sure that we are not using our wealth as a status symbol by which we become arrogant. If God has blessed us with an abundance of financial wealth then we ought to be sure that we don't allow for that wealth to go to our head. It can be easy for us to be tempted to measure ourselves against others simply by comparing who has more money, the nicer car, the bigger house, or the greater ability to do good works.
2. However, we must keep in mind the example of the poor widow of **Mark 12:41-44**. *"Sitting across from the temple treasury, he watched how the crowd dropped money into the treasury. Many rich people were putting in large sums. Then a poor widow came and dropped in two tiny coins worth very little. Summoning his disciples, he said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. For they all gave out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had—all she had to live on.'*" From this text we learn that our ability to do good with our finances isn't dependent on how wealthy we are. Instead, it is determined by the love that we have come from our heart and a desire to do good unto others. It doesn't matter how much money we have in the bank to determine whether we are great in the eyes of God. What is most important is the amount of love that we have in our hearts. In that way we are counted as great in the eyes of God.

## D. Don't set our hope on the uncertainty of riches. (I Timothy 6:17)

1. Why were there so many people who committed suicide during the financial crisis of 2008? It was because they saw no life for themselves once their riches were gone. They had spent all of their time building up this great fortunes of riches, but in a moment it was gone and they had nothing to fall back upon. They had built their lives on the sand of riches and the storms of the financial crisis was enough to cause them to crumble to the ground.
2. Again, I can't imagine living a life where everything I have and am is tied into things that could be destroyed or stolen, but that is the way that many people live their lives. As people of God who recognize that this life is only temporary, we must build lives that reflect our spiritual richness towards God. We must be able to stand before the Lord in the last day and show Him that our heart rested not in riches in this life, but that it rested in Him and spiritual things. Our riches could be gone in an instant because sometimes they are outside of our control, but there is nothing outside of our control that can separate us from the love of God. (**Romans 8:38**) We cannot allow for our riches to control our happiness or future hope.

E. Do what is good, be rich in good works, be generous, and willing to share. (I Timothy 6:18,19)

1. Finally, all of these good attitudes and mindsets need to be shown in our actions by our willingness to practice good wealth management by being a generous people who are constantly using our financial blessings to be a blessing to others.
2. Throughout the Bible, we can find examples of people who were good and generous with the wealth that they had been blessed with by God.
  - a) The Israelites were more than generous in giving to the work of building the tabernacle in **Exodus 36:1-7**. They were so generous that Moses had to tell them to stop bringing supplies.
  - b) The church in Corinth is commended in **II Corinthians 8 & 9** for assisting disciples in their time of need, and they had never even met them before.
  - c) The Good Samaritan is a well known story of a man showing generosity to a man who had come across the worst of times. (**Luke 10:25-37**)
  - d) The Centurion of great faith in **Luke 7:1-10** is noted as having used his own money to build a synagogue for the Jews.
3. These and other examples could be given to show that God greatly approves of those who use their blessings to be blessings for others. But in this instance I am simply preaching to the choir because this is a very generous collection of people who has never shied away from an opportunity to do good unto others who are in need. For that you are to be commended, and I'd also like to remind you that in doing such you, *"are storing up treasures for yourselves as a good foundation for the coming age, so that we may take hold of what is truly life."* (I Timothy 6:19)

There are far too many people who are living miserable lives because they are allowing for their finances to control them and lead them down paths of fear, pain, misery, and griefs. May we humble ourselves to consider the inspired teachings of Paul in this text so that we might not experience these same griefs. May we instead be a people who are thankful for every good gift given by God, and may we use them to bless others every time we have opportunity to do so.