

A Christian Perspective of Wealth

Text : **I Timothy 6: 1-10 , 17-19**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. Even in the midst of this economic downturn the U.S.A. remains the richest country in the history of the world.**
1. In 2007 the U.S. composed only 4.6% of the world's population, but :
 - a. We accounted for 33 % of everything consumed on the planet.
 - b. We consumed 43 % of all the gasoline consumed on the planet.
 2. American houses are presently stuffed with more material possessions than have existed from the beginning of recorded history to the present.
- B. Many in the world are condemning us for being too rich. (*Also some among us*)**
1. These erroneously claim is that others are made poor by our riches.
 - a. Of course, this is fallacious thinking because it is based upon flawed premise.
 - b. Exploitation occurs, but wealth can be honestly created without exploitation.
 2. Their flawed theory is called "Zero Sum Economics."
 - a. This theory asserts that there is a fixed amount of wealth in the country/world.
 - b. They view the world's wealth as a pie so one can only get a bigger piece of the pie if someone else gets a smaller piece.
 3. Zero Sum Economics is a false premise and it is also not biblical.
 - a. **Deut. 8: 17-18** **Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' ¹⁸ But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is this day*.**
 - b. There is an infinite amount of wealth which can be created, not a finite amount.
- C. Jesus had a great deal to say about the use of money and material goods.**
1. He told several parables about the use of this world's goods.
 2. Much of the Sermon On The Mount discussed attitudes toward money. (**Matt. 6**)
- D. The Apostles taught much about the use of this world's goods. (*wealth*)**
1. The first discipline in the church (*Ananias & Sapphira Acts 5*) related to money.
 2. Our Lord's Apostle commanded Timothy to teach the brethren about it. (**Our Text**)

Therefore, we will take a few minutes to investigate a biblical view of riches.

I. First : It is not wrong to be rich. (Those who are rich need not feel guilty.)

A. In this country and in much of the world class rivalry is exploited.

1. Many of the “*have nots*” resent the “*haves*.”
2. Politicians exploit this animosity to get cause the poor to vote for them.

B. I Timothy 6: 10 is one of the most often misquoted verses in the bible.

1. It does NOT say, “*Money is the root of all evil.*”
2. It says, “**For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil.**”
3. Money is an inanimate object; it cannot instigate action.
 - a. All sin originates within the heart of man.
 - b. The fountain of sin flows from man’s desire to possess what he does not have.

C. Individually & collectively money is essential for survival, including for Christians

1. Christians are commanded to work to provide for their family’s needs.
 - a. **II Thes. 3: 10-13** ... Command : Work and eat from your earnings, do without.
 - b. **I Tim. 5: 8-** **But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**
2. Christians are commanded to earn more than they need so they can share.

Eph. 4: 28- **He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.**
3. Here the Lord’s Apostle clearly states the proper motive for seeking gain.
 - a. It was **not** to possess .. i.e., .. to increase your wealth.
 - b. It was **not** to provide a better life for one’s family. (*It could be too good now.*)
 - c. It was to enable giving. (*A physical expression of Christian love.*)
4. The Christian’s attitude toward resources is never to possess, but to use in God’s service and to His glory. (*Christians live to serve.* **Phil 1: 21**)

D. Some of the people that God most strongly approved of were rich men.

1. Job (**Job 1: 3**) (*God took his wealth and then gave back double.*)
2. Abraham (**Gen. 24: 35**)
3. David (**I Chronicles 22: 14, 29: 1-9**)

* **Deut. 8: 11-20** ... **God gives wealth so it cannot be evil in and of itself.**

II. Though wealth (money) is not wrong within itself, it is wrong to desire it.

A. This will be covered in a succeeding lesson so we will only briefly address it.

B. The desire to possess exposes one to many kinds of sins.

1. **I Tim. 6: 9-10** But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

2. The desire to be rich leads to covetousness. (**Exod. 20: 17**)

3. The desire to be rich indicates self-centeredness which is the opposite of love.

C. The desire to possess this world's goods is a rejection of God / Christ.

1. **John 17** ... Though we must dwell in this world, we must never become of it.

2. **Matt. 6: 33** ... Jesus demands that we put the advancement of the kingdom first.

3. **Matt. 6: 24** ... Jesus requires His followers to choose Him.

a. A clear choice is required.

b. The two are mutually exclusive. (**physical -vs- spiritual** , **earth -vs- Heaven**)

c. One cannot have his eyes looking up and down at the same time. **CHOOSE**

* **Therefore, to seek after riches is to reject Jesus as your Lord.**

III. When God places a blessing into your hands, He is assigning you a ministry.

A. This world needs rich people. (*The church needs some rich people.*)

1. In society, those with wealth have the ability to create wealth for others.

a. Someone must be able to purchase the goods or services of the poor.

b. The wealthy create jobs to employ the poor.

c. Not everyone has the ability to create wealth; those who don't must rely on others.

2. Communism / socialism has proven to be a system that does not work.

a. It does not work because the wealth creators are removed from society.

b. Everyone is brought to the level of those who have failed.

3. Communism / socialism also violates a biblical principle.

II Thes. 3: 10- For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

B. We know wealth is not sinful because God regulates it.

1. If being rich was a sin God would require rich people to give way their wealth.
2. **Read :** I Tim. 6: 17-19
3. In our text He warns the rich :
 - a. Don't think you are better than others just because you have more.
 - b. Trust in God, **not** in your wealth.
4. In our text He gives us instructions : (*assignments*)
 - a. Do good (cf – Galatians 6: 9-10 , James 1: 27 .. GO visit)
 - b. Be generous (cf – Acts 4: 32f)
 - c. Share (cf – Galatians 6: 6 , Hebrews 13: 16)
5. In our text He gives promises :
 - a. All that you give is being sent ahead for your eternal use.
 - b. Your faithful stewardship will secure your Heavenly home.

C. THUS, having wealth (as we do) is not a sin, it is a ministry.

1. Jesus told us how to know if we had chosen Him or were “of the world.”

Matt. 6: 19-21 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.
²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
2. ***The heart follows the treasure.***
 - a. Those who have a heart for God have invested in God.
 - b. Those who have a heart for evangelism invest in evangelism.
 - c. Those who have a heart for the poor have invested in the poor.
3. Where are our hearts ? We know where our heart truly is by :
 - a. What we think about the most.
 - b. What we spend the most time on.
 - c. What we spend the most money on. ***Hearts follow AFTER treasure.***

D. Our responsibility is in direct proportion to that with which we are entrusted.

1. **Luke 12: 48b-** From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.
2. This principle is also taught in the parable of the talents. **Matt. 25: 15f** (esp 29)

E. There are some to whom God has given the gift of giving. (*wealth creator*)

1. **Rom. 12: 6-8** Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷ if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.
2. The church needs those with every gift, including the gift of giving. **I Cor. 12: 18**
 - a. Man who founded Prudential Insurance ... 90% of income to church.
 - b. Alton Howard ... Lived a lower middleclass lifestyle and gave to God.
 - c. Aubrey Prince ... Worked long hours to give to missions.

IV. Wealth is one of the greatest temptations man can face.

A. Even Solomon was unable to stand against the temptations of wealth.

B. Being wealthy takes time and energy. (*competes with God*)

1. Those who achieve great success spend most of their time working at it.
2. Little time is left for God, for God's word, and for God's work.
3. Success occupies one's mind, consumes his energy and dominates his time.

C. Those who have achieved much tend to feel self-reliant

1. One who has resources tends to put his trust in what he has.
Prov. 10: 15- *The rich man's wealth is his fortress, ...*
2. Dealing with business trains a man to look to himself, rather than to trust God.

D. As one's wealth increased he tends to become increasingly self-centered and increasingly self-indulgent.

1. Love is focused outward.
2. The wealthy are accustomed to having what **they** want and insist on getting.
3. **Jesus solemnly warned us that being rich is an obstacle to overcome.**
 - a. **Matt. 19: 23-24** And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
 - b. Being rich does not make it impossible to go to Heaven, just very difficult.
 - c. Being wealthy people, we Americans have a difficult challenge before us.

CONCLUSION :

- A. It is true that we Americans are ALL wealthy. (99 %)**
1. However, we should not feel guilty for being a rich nation.
 2. We are enjoying the blessings of God.
- B. We must never forget that with our great wealth comes great responsibility.**
- Luke 12: 48b- From everyone who has been given much, much will be required;**
1. Our nation has the responsibility to help the poor nations.
 2. Help involves more than just giving them food for today.
 3. We have the responsibility to develop / train those who cannot feed themselves.
- C. As individual Christians we have a responsibility apart from the government.**
1. Every person stands before God as an individual.
 2. We give account only for that which we had the potential to accomplish.
 - a. The one who created us knows what we could have done for Him.
 - b. God knows every opportunity that was set before us. (*and how we responded.*)
- D. We are of all people most blessed,
but the greatest blessing of all is salvation in Christ.**
1. This blessing is available to all without financial cost.
 2. It requires great commitment :
 - a. It requires that we place all of our trust in Jesus for our salvation.
 - b. It requires that we commit our lives seeking after His righteousness.
 - c. It requires that we continually confess our faith in Him to those we meet.
 - d. It requires that we make our commitment public by being baptized.
 - e. It requires that we commit our lives to serving Him rather than ourselves.

INVITATION :

- A. Have you received the greatest blessing God has to give ?**
- B. It is offered to you right now.**
- C. Come**

Lesson Text :

I Timothy 6: 1-10 , 17-19

1 All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and *our* doctrine will not be spoken against. **2** Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these *principles*.

3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, **4** he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, **5** and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. **6** But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. **7** For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. **8** If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. **9** But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. **10** For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. **18** *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, **19** storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.