

# 1 Timothy

## I. Introduction

A. **1 Timothy 6:7-11** . . . 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. [11] But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

## B. Prayer

## II. The threat to godliness of wanting riches and what it can buy

A. [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.

1. To be rich is to have an abundance of material possessions – which means all of us here today are rich. However, the focus of **vs 9** is not who is or isn't rich, but who **wants to get rich** – and the fact that those who want to get rich make their lives worse, not better.
  - a. Without question, being rich has its own set of problems and temptations. And as we shall see in **vs 17-19**, riches can pose a threat to the spiritual health of any Christian.
  - b. However, **wanting to get rich** creates even greater problems and temptations, and it is an even greater threat to our spiritual health than being rich.
  - c. Why? Because **wanting to get rich** puts the Christian in the place of trying to serve two masters – God and riches – and Jesus said it can't be done (**Matthew 6:24**).
  - d. The reality is, wanting to get rich comes from a mindset, attitudes, longings, and a way of life that believes money and possessions are a greater good than God and godliness, and that riches are a better source of security and a more dependable means of provision than God and godliness.
  - e. Therefore, you cannot want to get rich without pushing God aside as the first and foremost focus of your allegiance and love,

and the first and foremost source of security and provision – and that act alone opens the door to loving the world and the things of the world, to taking matters into your own hands, to incorporating the world’s ways to help you go your own way, and to making choices that, though seemingly wise in the moment, add trouble and forms of destruction to your life.

2. **Vs 9** lists the troubles and destruction as:
  - a. Falling into temptation
  - b. Falling into a snare
  - c. Falling into many foolish and harmful desires which plunge (*to drag down or drown*) men into ruin and destruction.
3. The first thing to notice in these three outcomes is that those who want to get rich **FALL** into temptation, a snare, and many foolish and harmful desires.
  - a. The point is, wanting to get rich creates its own set of temptations and snares, as well as foolish and harmful desires. And these temptations and snares, and foolish and harmful desires are not pushed upon us from the outside, we push them upon ourselves. They are not the devil’s doing, they are our doing.
  - b. In other words, wanting to get rich takes us down a path of self-destruction.
  - c. James shows the progression of this kind of self-destruction in **James 1:14-15**, “But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. [15] Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”
4. To tempt ourselves by wanting to get rich is to **entice** ourselves to do evil. It is to **lure** ourselves into erecting the idol of greed and worshiping it. It is to **urge** ourselves to serve riches instead of God. It is to **seduce** ourselves into believing that the demands and ways of riches are worthy of our allegiance while the demands and will of God are unworthy, and therefore okay to be ignored.
5. To ensnare ourselves by wanting to get rich is to put ourselves in a situation or a set of circumstances that entangles and traps us in a self-destructive way of life.
6. And as a result of tempting ourselves and ensnaring ourselves in these ways, we make choices and behave in ways that encourage and feed foolish, inadvisable, and self-destructive desires which, when gratified, end up ruining and destroying us.

- B. **Vs 10** explains why wanting to get rich is so self-destructive: [10] For the love of money (*not money itself, but loving money*) is a root of all sorts of evil, and **some** (*not everyone, but definitely enough to require this warning*) by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.
1. To see how bad loving money is, consider this short and incomplete list of evils driven by the love of money.
    - a. Greed, dishonesty in business, stealing, cheating on income taxes and/or business taxes, taking more than your allotted share of an inheritance, insurance fraud, property tax fraud (*i.e., home repairs without pulling a permit*), mortgage fraud, credit card fraud, workman's comp fraud, S.S. fraud, ponzi and pyramid schemes, embezzlement, forgery, money laundering, frivolous lawsuits for financial gain, patent infringement, car theft, identity theft, home invasion, producing/selling inferior products, bribery, drug dealing, extortion, kidnaping, murder, hoarding, employers paying less than a livable wage, and religious scams that swindle money from naive and immature Christians.
    - b. I suspect you could add to this list, but the point is, the love of money and wanting to get rich is damaging and destructive to our character, our conscience, our beliefs and values, our family, the church, Christianity, the community, and the nation.
  2. But most destructive of all is the probability of wandering away from the faith, that is, wandering away – be it ever so slowly – from God, trust in God, obedience to God, allegiance to God, fellowship with God, and a life of godliness, which results in inflicting ourselves with troubles, unhappiness, sorrow, and pain.
  3. In light of all this, it is possible that poverty might be better for the Christian in that it puts us in a situation that presses us toward God, toward calling out to God for help, toward depending on God to meet our needs – with the result that we develop a keenly dependent and trust-based relationship with God that is personal and intimate, and that produces the unequalled joy of walking hand-in-hand with God.
- C. Because loving money is so self-destructive, **vs 11** exhorts us to “**Flee** from these things, you man of God, and **pursue** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.”
1. The two words, **flee** and **pursue**, describe deliberate, purposeful and ongoing actions that are intended to protect us from what we

- know is evil and keep us involved in what we know is right and good.
- a. To **flee** is to run away from a real or perceived threat – as from danger or evil. For example:
    - (1) **1 Corinthians 6:18**, Flee immorality.
    - (2) **1 Corinthians 10:14**, Flee from idolatry.
    - (3) **2 Timothy 2:22**, Flee youthful lusts.
  - b. In this context, to **pursue** is to chase something or someone with the goal of overtaking them. For example:
    - (1) **Psalms 34:14**, Seek peace and pursue it.
    - (2) **Romans 14:19**, Pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
    - (3) **1 Corinthians 14:1**, Pursue love.
    - (4) **2 Timothy 2:22**, Pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.
    - (5) **Hebrews 12:14**, Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.
2. Returning to **vs 11**, to **flee from these things** is to flee from conceit, an interest in controversial questions, disputes about words, envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and the love of money – along with the evil, self-destructive thinking, desires, and activities that result from loving money.
  3. But fleeing evil is only half of what is necessary to prevent us from being self-destructive in relation to wanting to get rich and loving money. The other half – which is equally important – is to pursue those ways of thinking, qualities of character, and godly attributes that not only put us on the path to spiritual health, but keep us on that path day after day.
  4. Therefore, **vs 11** exhorts us to:
    - a. **Pursue righteousness**: In the Bible, the word righteousness is most often used to define or describe the way we are to treat those around us. Therefore, to pursue righteousness is to be thoughtful, careful, and persistent in doing what we know the Bible says is **right** and **just** in any given situation and with any individual or group of people.
    - b. **Pursue godliness**: Godliness is Christ-likeness in character, thought, attitude, word, and deed. It is the expression of all that is pleasing to God in our interaction with Him, in our life choices, in our behavior, in our interaction with those around us, and as a representative of God in the world. Therefore, to pursue

godliness requires (1) learning what Christ-likeness looks like, (2) and then diligently working at being Christ-like in character, thought, attitude, word, and deed.

- c. **Pursue faith:** The word faith primarily speaks of what we believe in and rely on with the result being that we live accordingly. In other words, our repetitive thoughts, attitudes, choices, words, and deeds are the most accurate reflection of what we believe and who we trust.
- (1) For the Christian, God and the Scriptures are to be the dominant objects of faith. To this end, our thoughts, desires, attitudes, words, and deeds are to reflect our trust in God and His word.
  - (2) As with the pursuit of godliness, so with the pursuit of faith. We need to learn **what** we are to believe and **who** we are to trust, so that we can work at ordering our thoughts, words, and deeds accordingly.
  - (3) However, the pursuit of Christian faith is easier said than done, because we like being in control of situations and the outcome of those situations.
    - (a) Christian faith requires trusting God to be in control, and trusting Him to bring good out of any situation we encounter, and continuing to trust Him to bring about a good outcome even when the outcome is nowhere in sight.
    - (b) And Christian faith requires trusting God to take care of us so that we feel safe in continuing to live according to God's will and His word in spite of the threats to the contrary.
  - (4) Regardless of what some Christian's claim, this kind of faith is not natural, nor does it come upon us as if by magic. This kind of faith must be pursued and nurtured and reinforced and fed.
- d. **Pursue love:** Love grows out of a mindset, values, attitudes, words and deeds that seek the good of everyone who is in any way effected by our choices and behavior.
- (1) Love is outward focused. For example, it is focused on giving rather than receiving, on serving rather than being served, and on helping rather than be helped.
  - (2) Though wanting to be loved is natural to our human nature, loving out of a pure desire to seek the good of those around us is not natural. Therefore, love, genuine love, God-like love, must be pursued and nurtured if it is to become a natural part of our life.

- e. **Pursue perseverance:** Perseverance is patient endurance, that is, not giving up, but rather pressing on even when it looks as if pressing on is not producing the hoped for results.
- (1) Perseverance, or not giving up is especially necessary when pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith and love – because acquiring and then living according to each one of these qualities requires a prolonged and tireless effort on our part.
  - (2) The reality is, there is no quick path or short cut to growing in godliness and Christian maturity. The journey is long, the road is challenging, and the effort is demanding. You cannot glide downhill into godliness, it is an uphill climb that you are likely to abandon after a time if you lack perseverance.
  - (3) And the same is true when waiting for God to save or heal or bring good out of whatever it is that needs good being brought out of. A difficult situation can feel like forever, and without patient endurance, you are likely to give up trusting God and living according to the word of God as you wait for circumstances to change.
  - (4) Therefore, for the Christian, perseverance is a necessity that must be intentionally pursued, because it will not show up on its own.
  - (5) Yet like the previous four qualities, perseverance has its own rewards. The longer you persevere, the more you are conformed to the likeness of Christ, and the more you see truth in God's word, and the more you enjoy fellowship with God, and the more you have inward peace and joy regardless of the circumstances or the kind of people you are dealing with. Those rewards are real, and once you taste them, you too will agree perseverance is worth pursuing!
- f. **Pursue gentleness:** The Greek word for gentleness can also be translated meekness – which is a combination of a humble and mild disposition regardless of the circumstances.
- (1) In other words, the gentle person is not easily provoked or irritated, even when mistreated or suffering through a trial.
  - (2) The gentle person is not proud, vain, haughty, angry, or resentful, but rather quietly and peacefully long-suffering.
  - (3) Obviously, this quality is not natural to our human nature, which is why it must be thoughtfully and deliberately pursued if it is to become part of our new nature.

### III. Conclusion

- A. The way of God works if we will work the way of God until it becomes our way as naturally as the evils we had to flee from were our natural way at one time.
- B. And may we never forget that putting off and fleeing from selfishness and sin is only half of what is required to become godly and grow toward Christian maturity. The other half is putting on and pursuing those Christ-like qualities that make us godly and bring us into Christian maturity.