

ONWORD

A weekly publication of the Enterprise Church of Christ

Surviving Financial Stress

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Sundays

Bible class, 9 am
 Morning worship, 10 am
 Evening worship, 5:30 pm

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Midweek Bible study, 7 pm

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Surviving Financial Stress: Riches and Glory

By Jay Tidwell

The books of First and Second Timothy and Titus are a set of Paul's writings that address the organization and development of churches. Paul gave each of his co-workers to whom he wrote the books specific instructions on the subject matter which should be emphasized in their teaching. In **First Timothy 6**, Paul stressed the need to teach about dollars and sense in the life of a Christian.

► **Contentment is worth more than currency (verse 6).** One of Jesus' integral concepts about material wealth was that His followers understand that *"a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"* (Luke 12:15).

► **Material wealth is time-limited (verse 7).** Paul's point is that we cannot take any of our material things with us into the next life. James rebuked some who were wealthy who continued to be preoccupied with hoarding more wealth at any cost (James 2:1-6). Jesus warned about the danger of trusting in material things in His parable about the foolish farmer who had been very successful but who forgot about the brevity of life and rule of God (Luke 12:15-21).

Extra Credit: Is Your Money Any Good?

We are blessed by God to be a blessing to others. Those who are blessed with material wealth are called by the Lord to “do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tim. 6:18 KJV). These four directives are also translated: “do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share” (ESV), and “do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share” (NKJV).

“The man who is rich in money may become rich in good works, if he follows out the instructions Scripture lays down. The money must not be given to be seen of men but as unto the Lord. Nor as from an owner, but a steward who administers the Lord’s money, with prayer for His guidance. Nor with any confidence in its power or influence, but in deep dependence on Him who alone can make it a blessing. Nor as a substitute for, or bringing out from that personal work and witness, which each believer is to give. As all Christian work, so our money-giving has its value alone from the spirit in which it is done, even the spirit of Christ Jesus.” (Andrew Murray)

► **We should adjust our definition of “needs” (verse 8).** Jesus taught that our “needs” - food and clothing- would be sent by God as we lived by His plan for our lives (Matt. 6:24-34, esp. v. 25).

► **Chasing wealth leads to heartbreak and other tragedies (verses 9-10).** Craving riches (v. 9) and loving money (v. 10) is the source of every kind of wickedness. Solomon warned, “*So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof*” (Prov. 1:19), and in the process ruining his own.

► **Having lots of material wealth can affect our thinking - about ourselves, and what wealth can ensure for us (verse 17).** Moses similarly warned the ancient Israelites about how prosperity can make us indifferent and insensitive (Deut. 8:10-18). Wealth can deceive us to “*say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth*” (Deut. 8:17).

► **The rich are expected to be good stewards (verse 18).** Paul gives four specific activities to which financial wealth should be applied. “Money makes a powerful tool, but a poor master.”

► **Great wealth gives us the opportunity to make greater investments in heaven (verse 19).** In Jesus’ Sermon on the Plain, He taught the importance of making heaven our ultimate goal: “*Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*” (Luke 12:32-34).