

1 Timothy 6
New King James Version
Honor Masters

6 Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. ² And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

Error and Greed

³ If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, ⁴ he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, ⁵ useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

⁶ Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The Good Confession

¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³ I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴ that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, ¹⁵ which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Instructions to the Rich

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Guard the Faith

²⁰ O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and ^[f]idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— ²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.

The Second Reading

Luke 16

New King James Version

The Rich Man and Lazarus

¹⁹ "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and ^[h]fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹ desiring to be fed with ^[i]the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

²⁴ "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

²⁷ "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' ²⁹ Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹ But he

said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' ”

Sermon on Wealth and Philanthropy

This sermon is about a weighty issue that often confuses people.

IF you study two of the verses in our reading today, it should help you to decipher what Paul is saying regarding wealth, and what is Christ's requirement for those who acquire it.

First verse 10:

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The second verse is 17 - 19:

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

What Christ and later Paul are both saying is that evil is LOVE of money, valuing money more than God, more than love of family, more than loving one another, especially those in need.

A careful study of Christ's life on earth will show that there were numerous individuals whose "wealth" sustained Christ and his disciples in their ministry. Ultimately, the same was true for Paul.

Several of those whose wealth assisted Christ and the disciples were women. Several of whom had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's business

manager; Susanna; and others who contributed their resources. Luke 8:1-3.

Others might include Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, both of whom were thought to be members of the Sanhedrin.

The Twelve, were mostly young. But the women, are generally regarded as older, middle-aged women who had husbands and families. These women were not poor. In fact, the text specifically says they were wealthy. They had money to fund the ministry of Christ.

So contrary to the supposition that this was a meandering group of Neer-do-wells traversing the Galilee, they had resources, donated by the love and dedication of others.

Would Christ have been offended by such support?

Matthew 19: 16 - 26 will help us ONLY when we read the entire segment of this discussion between Christ and rich young man:

Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

"Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments."

"Which ones?" he inquired.

Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself."

"All these I have kept," the young man said.

"What do I still lack?"

Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier

*for a camel to go through the eye of a needle
than for someone who is rich to enter the
kingdom of God.”*

*When the disciples heard this, they were greatly
astonished and asked, “Who then can be
saved?”*

*Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is
impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

If we only read verse 24, we might conclude that the wealthy cannot enter heaven, however when we read verse 25 and 26, you realize that Christ is again stating that we cannot EARN our way to heaven through our endeavors.

John 3:16 is explicit here from Christ’s words:

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one
and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall
not perish but have eternal life. For God did not
send his Son into the world to condemn the
world, but to save the world through him.
Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but
whoever does not believe stands condemned
already because they have not believed in the
name of God’s one and only Son. This is the
verdict: Light has come into the world, but
people loved darkness instead of light because
their deeds were evil.*

This is the key point of Christ’s ministry; this is the point upon which both Paul and later Martin Luther built churches.

This is the concept of GRACE through FAITH.

Whenever we don't make God, and our fellow man, the central focus of our Christian lives, we are erring by placing others over our love of God and his commandment to love one another.

Wealth and money aren’t the only things that we could error by making more important in our lives than God and others, maybe money is just the most obvious.

It could be anything, hobby, or livelihood, for whom our obsession is so strong we forget God and others.

We can enjoy these things, but we must prioritize faith and love in our lives.

It is also important to note, that just as Christ himself was able to be sustained by the generosity of others, so are our churches, charities and missionaries.

Here are just two examples of many many more we could talk about, who acquired great wealth, and gave away large portions.

Foster Friess

Foster Friess grew up in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, a first-generation college graduate. His mother dropped out of school in eighth grade to pick cotton to save the family farm in Texas.

Forbes magazine named him among the ten most successful money managers of this generation. Foster and Lynn devoted over \$500 million to philanthropy.

Lynn and Foster gain their philanthropic inspiration from Galatians 6:2: “When we carry one another’s burdens we fulfill the law of Christ.” From supporting families of disabled children in Wyoming to assisting victims of Hurricane Katrina and the Haitian earthquake, Lynn and Foster engage in a wide scope of philanthropic activities.

David Green

David Green is the former owner of the famous arts and crafts store Hobby Lobby. However, he insists that he’s not the true owner of his billion-dollar chain, but rather God is. “If you have anything or if I have anything, it’s because it’s been given to us by our Creator,” says Green. “So I have learned to say, ‘Look, this is yours, God. It’s all yours. I’m going to give it to you.’” Green gives back so much of his fortune that he is the largest individual donor to evangelical causes in America. When asked how he keeps his work and business separate, he said he doesn’t: “You can’t have a belief system on Sunday and not live it the other six days.”

We should evade envy and greed, of those who obtain wealth. Let us always remember that it is not for us to judge others but for God.

Let us be thankful for what we have been blessed with, and generous in our giving to those who are in need, and for the ministry of our faith.

In your name we pray:

Lord,

I pray for a heart that can truly rejoice with others.

Help me celebrate their successes and blessings with genuine happiness. Remove any trace of envy or bitterness from my spirit. Teach me to be a source of encouragement and support, reflecting Your love and grace. May my heart be filled with the joy of shared happiness, honoring You in all my relationships.

I pray for a spirit of deep contentment. Help me to see and appreciate the blessings You have already given me. When envy tries to creep in, remind me of Your faithfulness and Your perfect provision. Teach me to be grateful for my own journey and to find joy in Your will for my life. May my heart overflow with thankfulness, silencing the voice of discontent. Amen.