

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

1 Timothy 6:1-10

Money. We all have to deal with money. It's a dangerous thing. In our study today we're going to learn the Christian way to earn money and the Christian way to relate to money.

The Christian Way to Earn Money

1 Timothy 6:1-2

At the time the Apostle Paul wrote Timothy in 64-65 A.D., it is estimated that half the Roman Empire was made up of slaves. Most slaves were conquered people enslaved by the Romans. Many were educated and cultured serving as lawyers, doctors, teachers, and tutors. Many slaves were treated well and essentially became members of the family. But at the end of the day, they were still slaves. Many slaves came to faith in Christ along with their masters, some on their own.

In addressing slaves and masters, the Apostle Paul was not condoning slavery; he was teaching Christian slaves how to live godly lives in the midst of their cultural reality. The Apostle Paul's challenge to Christian slaves was to serve their masters with respect whether believers or nonbelievers. In this context, *respect* is the meaning of the Greek word translated *honor*.

In the case of an unbelieving master, a Christian slave was to serve with respect in order that his or her life would be a positive witness for Christianity. In the case of a believing master, the Apostle Paul challenged Christian slaves to serve their masters with respect in order to bless their brother and sister in Christ.

The employee-employer relationship today is the closest application to what Paul was teaching. The same principle applies, the Christian way to earn money is with respect for our employer. And it's for the same reasons: to be a positive witness to our unbelieving employer and to be a blessing to our believing employer. What does that respect look like? Giving your employer an honest day's work, being on time, doing quality work and having a good attitude are some key ways to show respect. As representatives of Jesus, we should be the best employees our companies employ.

The Christian Way to Relate to Money

1 Timothy 6:3-10

The Apostle Paul deals with false teachers and then makes application to believers. In chapter 1, Paul attacked the means of false teaching – allegorizing Scripture and misapplying the Law. Here the Apostle Paul attacks the attitudes and motives of the false teachers.

The false teachers Timothy faced in Ephesus were characterized by *conceit* – they were puffed up and full of themselves. They were *ignorant* – they didn't really understand what they were teaching. These false teachers had *an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words* – they liked to argue. Finally, these false teachers saw "ministry" as a way of getting rich financially – *a means of gain*.

In our day and age, greed is the primary characteristic of false teachers against whom we contend. How many thousands have been deceived by the "Health, Wealth and Prosperity Gospel" of Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Benny Hinn, and TD Jakes? These false teachers con people by tapping into their desire to be rich. The Christian life does not guarantee health, wealth and prosperity; it more often brings persecution as the Apostle Paul points out in 2 Timothy 3:12. But that isn't to say that the Christian life isn't without benefit; just the opposite: freedom and peace are experienced when we content ourselves with the basics of life.

So what is the Christian way to relate to money? Respect. It is respecting the fact that money can be a tool for good. And it is respecting the fact that money can ruin your life. Money is like electricity. If you respect it and work with it correctly, it can energize your home. If you disrespect electricity and work with it foolishly, it can kill you.

Money can be a tool for good. It can provide shelter, food, clothing, transportation, medical care, education. Money helps us to teach God's Word here at Grace and to send families to the mission field. Money can be a tool for good if we are content with the basics of life and if we keep our priorities straight – love God, love others, make disciples.

But money can ruin our lives if we love it, if we crave it. The opposite of contentment is the drive to get rich. The desire to get rich is a trap. Money is not the problem; money is morally neutral. It is *the love of money* that is the problem. This can happen to a person who has little or much. It is quite possible for a very poor person to make money the object of their affection as well as the rich.

Whatever becomes the object of our affection determines our priorities. There is a great difference between the desire to become rich and the desire to serve God with riches. The desire to become rich focuses our affection on the riches, not God. It is certainly okay to be rich, but we are told by God, who understands our affection well, that the rich man should not boast in his riches (Jeremiah 9:23). Jesus made it clear that riches are deceitful (Mark 4:19). They are deceitful concerning what is security, what is value, what is purpose in living, and what will last for eternity.

Money. We all have to deal with money. It's a dangerous thing, but as we learn today, money gives us opportunities. Earning our money gives us the opportunity to be a great witness of Jesus to our unbelieving employer or it gives us the opportunity to bring blessing to our believing employer. Likewise, money gives us the opportunity to secure housing, food, clothing and other necessities of life and to give to the ministry of our church and our missionaries, investing in those things that are eternal. Let's keep our priorities straight and love God and others and use money to do good.

GRACE NEWS AND NEEDS

- ***Church Business Meeting, TODAY, 4PM, Childcare provided.***
- ***Walk for Life sign-ups on the patio.***
- ***Monthly Missions Meeting, Next Sunday, April 30th, 11:30A, Modular. Everyone Welcome!***
- ***Women's Tea & Luncheon, Saturday, May 6th, 1-3PM, Sign-Up on Patio!***
- ***VOM Needs for April: financial donations to purchase needed items.***