

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*Enjoying What We're Given.*"

On Sunday mornings we are in a series on covetousness and contentment.

Last week we began looking at one of the two main NT passages discussing contentment, and that's **1 Tim 6:6-10**. We're at **verse 9**, but let's back up to **verse 8** to briefly review...

**1 Tim 6:8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.**

We talked last week that this means God expects us to be satisfied w/ the essentials.

If we aren't content w/ the essentials it can lead to problems, which Paul warns about in the following verses. Last week I gave you an elevated of **verses 9 and 10**, but this morning we're going to unpack them.

Look at the beginning of **verse 9**...

**1 Tim 6:9b Those who desire to be rich** (which is to say those who aren't content w/ the essentials) **fall into temptation,**

This isn't worded the way we'd expect:

- We'd expect it to say **desiring to be rich IS** the temptation
- Instead it says **desiring to be rich [CAUSES US to] fall into temptation**

It's similar to **Jam 1:14 Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.**

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The question is...

Why does the desire to be rich lead people into temptation?

The answer is when people **desire to be rich** – or they **love money** as **verse 10** says:

- They'll do almost anything to get it
- They won't let anything stand between them and the money they want, and it introduces many temptations into their lives.

This is why **verse 10** says **the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.**

And this brings us to Part 1 of Lesson 1...

**LESSON 1: LOVING MONEY (PART 1) LEADS TO SIN.**

Listen to the way the Amplified words **verse 10**...

**1 Tim 6:10 The love of money [that is, the greedy desire for it and THE WILLINGNESS TO GAIN IT UNETHICALLY] is a root of all sorts of evil.**

The love of money can motivate most evils on the earth. It's hard to think of any sin people won't commit to be rich.

If you take just one moment to reflect on this you'll see it's true...

- Think about many crimes, and they're motivated by greed, or jealousy, or covetousness, or all of the above.
- The love of money motivates people to lie, cheat, steal, gamble, embezzle, and even murder.

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Briefly look back at **verse 6**...

**But godliness with contentment is great gain,**

People who love money lack contentment. If they were content they wouldn't love money.

But they also lack godliness...and the reason they lack godliness is their love of money leads to ungodly behavior.

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People who love money already broke the first two of the Ten Commandments, b/c they made money their god and idol. After that, it is only slightly more compromising to break the other commandments forbidding lying, stealing, adultery, taking God's name in vain, and murder.

We saw this illustrated recently in Gehazi's life...

He coveted the money Naaman offered, and he was willing to engage in numerous sins to get it.

- We saw another example when we discussed Achan: he was willing to steal and then deceive to get what he wanted
- Balaam is another example: he was willing to go against the expressed will of God to get what he wanted

In each of these cases their love of money led to many other sins.

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Consider this verse...

**Pro 15:27 (NKJV) He who is greedy for gain – or he who loves money – troubles his own house.**

There are multiple ways this verse is true...

First – as we've been discussing – people sin to get the money they want, and sin always affects more than just the sinner. In this case, the greedy person's sins affect his family.

Second, the greedy man troubles his house, b/c his pursuit of wealth causes him to neglect his family:

- How many people have sacrificed their marriages for their jobs?
- How many people have put the next promotion ahead of their children?

Third, greedy people trouble their houses b/c they fight over money:

- How many families have been destroyed when someone passes away and the relatives fight over the inheritance?
- Why does this happen?
  - People love money more than their families.
  - As a lawyer will tell you, “*Where there’s a will, there are relatives.*”

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Notice this next part, which is particularly interesting...

**1 Tim 6:9c Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare into many senseless (or foolish) and harmful desires**

**Snare** means trap...and this brings us to Part 2...

### LESSON 1: LOVING MONEY (PART 2) IS A TRAP.

This almost sounds like the previous part about heading into temptation, but it’s different.

The trap is that people love money thinking it will satisfy them, but instead it creates – as the verse says – additional lusts or **desires**:

- Instead of finding contentment, people find greater discontentment.
- They covet money, get money, and it makes them want more money...that’s the trap.

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And it says **many** of these **desires** are **senseless and harmful**.

This reveals another way money is a **snare** or trap. People expect money to do something good for them...but pursuing it is **senseless and harmful**.

Here’s what I mean...

We live in a world that treats money like it’s a god:

- People love it, sacrifice for it, and think it can do anything for them.
- Their minds are filled w/ thoughts about it, and their lives are controlled by having more of it.

When they get it, they experience a greater sense of security.

What faith in the Lord is for believers, money is for unbelievers:

- They view money the way they should view God.
- They see money as the solution to almost every problem...and that’s the trap!

Money doesn’t do what people expect.

Here are a few examples:

- Money can't buy peace: **Proverbs 15:16-17 Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure with trouble. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted calf** (which is to say, wealth) **with hatred.**
- Money can't buy a good name: **Proverbs 22:1 A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.**

So this is also how money is a trap, people look to it to do certain things...but it can't do it!

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And there's another way loving money is a trap. Look at the rest of **verse 9**...

### **1 Tim 6:9c that plunge people into ruin and destruction.**

Imagine that: people love money b/c they think it's a great thing, but this is what it leads to!

The words **ruin and destruction** are synonymous. Paul says the same thing twice to drive home the devastating consequences of loving money...and this brings us to Part 3...

### **LESSON 1: LOVING MONEY (PART 3) IS DESTRUCTIVE.**

The Greek word for **plunge** is *bythizō* (pr: boo-theed-zoe), and it means to plunge into the deep, or sink, or drown, which is how it's translated in the KJV and NKJV.

There's only one other place it occurs in Scripture, and it's **Luke 5:7**. Remember when Jesus caused Peter and the disciples to experience the miraculous catch of fish...

**Luke 5:7 They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink (*bythizō*).** The same word for plunge.

Paul is painting a picture of a covetous person drowning under the weight of their love for money.

The form of the Greek word *bythizō* is a continual action, which means they keep sinking or drowning. As long as they desire to be rich:

- They keep falling into a snare...
- They keep being tempted...

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The question is, what sort of **ruin and destruction**?

- Is it referring to this life or the next?
- Temporary or eternal?

You can find commentators on both sides.

I think it's this life and the next...and here's why...

We know people suffer in this life from loving money:

- Think about Gehazi, Achan, and Balaam.
- Their earthly lives were ruined by their love of money.

But there can be eternal consequences too...

- **1 Cor 6:10 (NKJV)** says **[the] covetous...will [not] inherit the kingdom of God.**
- We even have one example in Scripture of someone who loved money and went to hell, and that's the Rich Man in **Luke 16.**

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If you look at Paul's words in **verse 10** he describes how people's love for money leads them to hell...

**1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some HAVE WANDERED AWAY FROM THE FAITH and pierced themselves with many pangs.**

We're saved by faith. If you leave the faith, you can't be saved.

Let me explain the imagery...

Faith is a path that people walk off – and they find themselves in thorn bushes – which is why it says they **pierce themselves with many pangs** – or some translations say **sorrows** – referring to the suffering their love of money causes them.

Think of the Rich Young Ruler:

- He had to choose between Christ and his money.
- He **wandered away from the faith**, b/c of his love for money.

So we see the destructiveness the love of money has in this life and the next.

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There's one more place in Scripture that talks clearly about **[loving] money** and I want to look at it too. Please turn to **Ecc 5:10**. We won't turn back to **1 Tim 6**. Toward the end of the poetical books: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes.

These verses share some strong similarities w/ the verses we read in **1 Tim 6**.

As you probably know the theme of Ecclesiastes is the futility – or vanity – of this life when it's experienced apart from the Lord. The following verses are specifically about the futility of wealth when it's experienced apart from the Lord.

Take a look at **verse 10**...

**Ecc 5:10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.**

Hopefully you see the relationship:

- **1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils...**
- **Ecc 5:10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money.**

This verse is making the same point we've discussed many times: money doesn't satisfy. It doesn't matter how much you have. It will never be enough, which is why it's vanity.

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Look at the first part of **verse 11...**

**Ecc 5:11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them,**

We tend to think money solves problems, but this is about money causing problems...and it brings us to Part 4...

### **LESSON 1: LOVING MONEY (PART 4) BRINGS PEOPLE FOR THE WRONG REASONS.**

Up to this point we've talked about spiritual problems associated w/ money, but Solomon discusses the physical problems...and this is one of them.

**When goods** – or riches – **increase they increase who eat them...**or lots of people start showing up!

Some of the people are friends and relatives, but:

- They're not showing up b/c they love you and want to spend time w/ you
- They're showing up b/c they love your money and want some of it...they want to **eat [it]**.

They enjoy your hospitality:

- They're eating your food.
- They're using your stuff.
- They're taking advantage of you

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Listen to this verse...

**Proverbs 19:6 Many entreat the favor of the nobility, and every man is a friend to one who gives gifts.**

In other words, people love you when you're rich.

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When it says **they increase who eat them** you can think of the government too:

- One of the people who shows up is the tax agent.
- Make more money and the IRS wants more of it.

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The more you have the more other people want to take it from you too:

- Nobody sues a poor person.

- But become rich and watch how many lawyers you need.

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Guess who else shows up?

Criminals!

Nobody robs poor people!

- Thieves don't break into shacks, but they do break into mansions.
- How many poor people live in fear of being kidnapped?
  - But greater riches increase physical danger.
  - This isn't my opinion: **Pro 13:8 The ransom of a man's life is his wealth, but a poor man hears no threat.** In other words: the rich have the money to pay the ransom for their lives if they're kidnapped, but poor people won't even be threatened in the first place.

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Look at the rest of **verse 11**...

**Ecc 5:11b and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?**

Solomon asks a good question: since riches bring problems, **what advantage [does the owner] have?**

Sadly, not much!

He says all you can do w/ your stuff is look at it.

You get your friends together and say:

- *Look at my new car.*
- *Look at my new house.*
- *Look at my new shotgun.*
- *Look at my new golf clubs.*

Henry Ford said, "*You can only wear one pair of pants at a time, and look at the rest.*"

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And it gets worse!

Look at **verse 12**...

**Ecc 5:12 Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.**

The verse looks like it's saying rich people eat too much and are kept awake by upset stomachs. But we can be sure Solomon was using a physical illustration to make a spiritual point.

The point is this:

- The man who works hard sleeps well, whether he's eaten little or much.
- But the rich man is filled – not w/ so much food – but w/ anxiety that keeps him awake.

So if you want to sleep well, the verse tells you what to do!

Work hard.

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So here's what's interesting...

The common laborer sleeps better than the common rich person...and this brings us to Part 5...

## LESSON 1: LOVING MONEY (PART 5) PRODUCES ANXIETY.

Few things are as satisfying as a good night's sleep.

Some people think money provides security that allows people to sleep at night, but the Bible says the opposite:

- People who love money are prevented from sleeping!
- Possessing wealth is no guarantee that nerves will be calm and sleep will be sound, b/c there's an amount of anxiety associated w/ having wealth.

People worry:

- *Do I have enough money?*
- *I'm upside down in this big, expensive house I can't afford.*
- *Why did I buy that extra car?*
- *I can't afford my mortgage or my car payments.*
- *Why did I buy that big flat screen television?*
- *That payment plan sounded so good at that time, but now it's giving me nightmares.*
- *Did I really need that extra set of...and then fill in the blank.*

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Who can tell me what next Friday is?

Black Friday?

Why is it black?

Because it plunges people into the darkness of more debt!

Just please do me two favors...

1. First, please tell me you will not increase your debt. If you're going to buy something, make sure you have the money for it.
2. Second, please remember all you can do is...LOOK AT IT!

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Look at **verse 13**...



**Ecc 5:13 There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt,**

This is pretty odd, isn't it...keeping riches to the owner's own hurt?

This is referring to hoarding, which is how it's translated in many Bibles, such as the NIV, NLT, and NASB...and this brings us to Part 6...

### **LESSON 1: LOVING MONEY (PART 6) PRODUCES HOARDING.**

God calls hoarding a **grievous evil** that **[hurts] the owner.**

Have any of you ever watched the show, Hoarders?

If you have, you know how true this is! Their lives are ruined by their possessions.

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Again, we've got to think of our culture:

- I doubt hoarding is a problem in third world countries
- But our problem is having too much stuff.

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The next three verses make a point that we've already discussed, so I'm going to give you the lesson, then read through the verses pretty quickly...

### **LESSON 1: LOVING MONEY (PART 7) IS VAIN.**

Loving money is vain, b/c it disappears. That's the point of these verses...look at **verse 14...**

**Ecc 5:14 and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand.**

People lose wealth through **bad** business decisions, or some other misfortune...such as an accident, a fire, or medical bills. Then they're right back where they were before w/ **nothing in [their] hand** to leave for their children.

**Pro 27:24 Riches do not last forever; and does a crown endure to all generations?**

Wealthy people have to wonder if they'll be able to pass their wealth to their children...but if you don't have much wealth, you don't have to worry about this.

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Look at **verse 15...**

**Ecc 5:15 As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. 16 This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind?**

We've talked about this so much you're probably like, *"Is this really another verse teaching we're not taking anything w/ us?"*

Yes, it is, b/c apparently God really wants us to remember this!

If you don't lose riches through some misfortune, then you lose them when you die.

Solomon says there's no **gain**, which is why it's [**toiling**] – or grasping – **for the wind** b/c we leave it all behind...and this is why it's vain!

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Look at the next verse, which is very important...

**Ecc 5:17 Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.**

There couldn't be a more depressing description of someone's life...and this brings us to Lesson 2...

**LESSON 2: IN THIS LIFE, LITTLE IS (PART 1) WORSE THAN HAVING GIFTS YOU CAN'T ENJOY.**

When Dad was receiving radiation on his throat, they gave him a feeding tube b/c he couldn't swallow.

From a taste standpoint, it didn't matter what food went in the tube. It could've been the fanciest, most expensive, delicious food, but it wasn't any better than the cheapest, blandest, most boring food, b/c Dad didn't have the ability to enjoy it.

I mention this, b/c this is what life is like for people who don't know God. They can't enjoy the gifts He gives them.

The man in **verse 17** is rich, but:

- **He eats in darkness.** This could be referring to physical darkness, but I think it's a metaphor for the gloom in his life, and especially the spiritual **darkness**:
  - He doesn't know the Lord
  - The light of the Gospel hasn't shined on him
- He experiences **much vexation** or frustration
- He's [**sick**] and [**angry**]

He's miserable!

His terrible existence reveals he's unable to enjoy his wealth and possessions.

What good is it to have a bunch of stuff if you can't enjoy it?

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Do me a favor and look at the next chapter...

**Ecc 6:1 There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind:**

What might you expect the **evil** to be? Murder, adultery, homosexuality?

These are all **evil**, but look at **verse 2**...

**Ecc 6:2 a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires** (he has everything he wants...), **YET GOD DOES NOT GIVE HIM POWER TO ENJOY THEM, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous evil.**

Could anything be worse than having everything you want, but not having the **power** to enjoy it?

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Look at **verse 3**...

**Ecc 6:3 If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many,** (He has 100 children – an unimaginable blessing and sign of prosperity – and he [lived] **many years** – has a long life too...) **but HIS SOUL IS NOT SATISFIED WITH LIFE'S GOOD THINGS** (he's still covetous versus content), **and he also has no burial, I say that A STILLBORN CHILD IS BETTER OFF THAN HE.**

How terrible is it to have all these great blessings, but still not be **satisfied**?

Solomon says it would be better not to be born at all, b/c these people experience a discontent, miserable life.

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The question is...

How can we enjoy the blessings we have?

The answer is in **chapter 5, verse 18-20.**

Let me explain these verses:

- In **Ecc 5:12-17** and **Ecc 6** you have the misery of the rich person who can't enjoy his riches.
- But sandwiched between these two passages are these three verses that teach that those who have a relationship w/ God can enjoy the gifts He gives them.

Look at **Ecc 5:18**...

**Ecc 5:18 Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot.**

Our lives are short, but God says three things are **good and fitting** during the time He's given us:

1. First, experiencing simple blessings, such as **[eating] and [drinking]**. This life isn't about money, extravagance, and lavishness, but it is about enjoying simple pleasures.
2. Second, **[finding] enjoyment** in our work. We spend much of our lives working, and it's a blessing to enjoy that work.
3. Third, viewing these blessings as gifts **God has given [us]**.

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Keep this in mind and look at **verse 19**...

**Ecc 5:19 Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God.**

Money has sounded so bad at times, you could ask: “*Are we talking about money or leprosy?*” You might want to go home and get rid of all your **wealth and possessions** and stay as far away from them as possible.

But the verse says **God has given wealth and possessions**.

The point isn't that **wealth and possessions** are bad. They're gifts from Him.

What's bad is trying to enjoy them apart from the Giver:

- God actually prevents us from enjoying gifts He's given us, if we attempt to enjoy them apart from Him:
  - This is the case w/ the man in **verse 17**
  - This is the case w/ the man in **chapter 6**
- God makes these people miserable to drive them to Him.

It's actually one of God's graces that we can't enjoy His gifts apart from Him, b/c that would allow us to be content w/o Him.

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At the end of the verse, look at the words **this is the gift of God**. It's important to understand this correctly...

**Wealth and possessions** are gifts, but that's not the gift he's referring to at the end of the verse.

**The gift** he's referring to is the gift of being able to enjoy the gifts He's given us...and this brings us to the second part of Lesson 2...

**LESSON 2: IN THIS LIFE, LITTLE IS (PART II) BETTER THAN HAVING GIFTS YOU CAN ENJOY.**

Read **verse 19** one more time, and notice **the gift** is being able to enjoy the gifts He's given us...

**Ecc 5:19 Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—THIS IS THE GIFT OF GOD.**

The gift of God is the power – or ability – for three important things in life:

1. First, **enjoying the wealth and possessions** He's given us.
2. Second, **accepting [our] lot** in life. If you write in your Bible, circle these words and write, "contentment," b/c this is what it means to be content: you accept your lot in life.
3. Third, **rejoicing in [our] toil**, which is to say: enjoying our work.

To have these three things is to be a very rich person...and God is the only One who can give us this gift.

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Look at our last verse...

**Ecc 5:20 For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.**

When it says **he will not much remember the days of his life**, this must be interpreted in light of the book of Ecclesiastes, which teaches life is vain:

- **Ecc 6:12b While he lives the few days of HIS VAIN LIFE...**
- **Ecc 7:15 In MY VAIN LIFE I have seen everything...**
- **Ecc 9:9b All the days of YOUR VAIN LIFE that he has given you...**

God will keep us **occupied with joy** – or gladness – **in [our hearts]** so we don't reflect on the vanity of life.

Listen to the way the Amplified words it...

**For he will not often consider the [troubled] days of his life...**

When we have a relationship w/ the Lord, we're so busy enjoying the gifts He's given us we don't have time to think on past hurts and struggles.

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Let me show you a powerful contrast:

- You've got the unbeliever in **verse 17 Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.**
- You've got the believer in **verse 20 For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.**

Quite a difference, isn't it?

My hope and prayer is that you can enjoy the gifts God has given you, b/c you know the Giver Himself. You've been reconciled to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.

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Let me conclude w/ this...

We should love the Lord, be content w/ our lot, and enjoy the gifts God's given us:

- If we focus on the gifts more than the giver, we're guilty of idolatry, and we won't be able to enjoy the gifts.
- If we accept the gifts, but covet more, we're guilty of covetousness, and we won't be able to enjoy the gifts.
- If we hoard the gifts and fail to share them w/ others, we're guilty of indulgence, and we won't be able to enjoy the gifts.

But if we submit to God and use what He gives us for His glory, we can enjoy life and experience contentment.

Let's pray.