

Message #16

I Timothy 3:3e

“Free From the Love of Money”

There is greed in the human heart that can cause people to do and say anything. This particular greed can cause a woman to give away her virtue. This particular greed can cause a man to commit murder. This greed can cause one man to destroy another man’s reputation. It is a greed that can cause one to cheat, lie, and steal. It is a greed for money!

Money is a god to many people. Some will so bind themselves to the dollar that they will sell out their families, friends, and themselves. If the Christian is not careful, he can find himself in the same worldly mold. If the child of God does not regularly check himself in light of the Word of God, he can soon discover that there isn’t much difference between his goals and the world’s goals.

In the last verse of I John, the Apostle John wrote: “Little children, guard yourselves from idols” (5:21). There is no bigger idol than the idol of money. For a leader in God’s church, the issue of money is something which “must” be addressed because the leader must be free from the love of money. This qualification is about dollars and sense (not cents). It is about the leader’s attitude toward money.

**IF A CHURCH IS TO BECOME A PILLAR AND SUPPORT OF THE TRUTH OF GOD, IT NEEDS MEN AS ELDERS AND DEACONS WHO DO NOT LOVE MONEY.**

Those who love money will pierce themselves and the church with many troubles. All sorts of evil things happen when leadership has a primary passion for the dollar (I Tim. 6:10).

**QUESTION #1** – What is the authority for how we think concerning money?

The final authority for how we think concerning the issue of money is not our own feelings; it is not the world’s views from Wall Street; it is not books that are written on the subject of finances; it is not our present financial status—good or bad. It is the Word of God!

**QUESTION #2** – Is it wrong for a leader to think about the financial needs of him and his family?

**Passage #1** - Luke 22:35-36

In this passage, Jesus Christ personally tells His own apostles that from now on, in light of Him leaving, they would be responsible to care for themselves. While Christ is physically absent from this world, it is the responsibility of the disciple to, in many ways, physically care for himself. The disciple can have confidence in the sovereign protective care and provisions of God, but he must think in terms of caring for himself.

**Passage #2** - I Timothy 5:8

The context of this is clearly physically caring for one's own family members. God expects a man to provide for his family, and if he doesn't he "...is worse than an unbeliever."

When we examine Biblical texts such as these, we must conclude that we cannot say, "free from the love of money" means "free from thinking about the financial needs of self and family."

**QUESTION #3** – What does it mean that a leader is to be "free from the love of money?"

Most commentators have come to understand that this means a leader in God's church cannot be one who makes money his primary passion in life. George Knight called this "...the insatiable desire to get rich" (p. 160).

The word for "love" is the Greek word that has to do with a very emotional type of love. The idea would be to love something so emotionally that you make it the pursuit of your life.

One who leads God's church must be one who does not have his emotions fixed upon the acquisition of material and monetary things. He must keep the temporal in proper perspective. His primary love cannot be money if he is to lead God's church. It has been well said that a leader must be an example of what men should be, not an example of what men are.

Now apparently, in the church of Ephesus, this was a real problem for some. There were apparently some in the church who were dangerously flirting with an improper perspective of money (I Tim. 6:10, 17-18). A person may have money, but if money is the primary passion of his life, he may not have a leadership role in the church.

**QUESTION #4** – What should be the proper attitude one has toward money?

**Fact #1** - A love for God or a love for money is an either/or decision. Luke 16:13

When it comes to this issue, the choice is simple; either the primary passion of our life is God, or it is money. There is no in between. One either loves God first or money first.

**Fact #2** - A trust in God and a contentedness with what we have is a key to having a proper attitude toward money. Heb. 13:5; Matt. 6:25-33

In the context of challenging believers to "be free from the love of money," the writer of Hebrews writes: "being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you, so that we may confidently say, "The LORD is my helper, I will not be afraid" (Heb. 13:5-6).

Matthew basically says the same thing when he writes concerning God's care of birds, lilies and grass. The point is if God cares for these things, how much more He will financially take care of those seeking to do His righteousness (Matt. 6:25-33).

**Fact #3** - It is not wrong to work hard expecting to be compensated for work. James 5:4;  
Prov. 12:11; 13:11; 14:23

The truth is if a believer works hard and the employer withholds one's pay, such action cries out to God and, in fact, can bring severe judgment of God. Every person who labors expects to be paid. This is not wrong; this is a key motivation for working. Working to make a living is not greed and cannot be classified as a passion for money.

**Fact #4** - It is wrong for a believer not to pay his bills. Rom. 13:8

God classifies not paying one's bills as stealing. Someone has said a man should have a healthy detachment from his money, but should not have an irresponsibility with his money.

**Fact #5** - It is wrong for a believer not to pay his taxes. Rom. 13:6

God has ordained government and demands that we pay our taxes.

**Fact #6** - It is wrong to give money to a man who will not work. II Thess. 2:10

There is nothing wrong with helping someone who needs help. If a man loses his job, it is a real ministry of the church to step in and help whenever and however they can. However, there is something definitely wrong if a man continually refuses to work. In such a case, he should not eat. Such a man needs to be put to shame (II Thess. 3:14), and God's church needs to cut off fellowship (II Thess. 3:14).

God has much to say about a man who will not work. He will have poverty (Prov. 6:9-11; 24:28-34) and he is shameful (Prov. 10:5). God has nothing positive to say about a lazy sluggard and the church should not support a man who continually refuses to work.

**Fact #7** - It is not wrong to save some money. Prov. 6:6-11; 10:5

Saving some of what one makes is not wrong; it is the mark of wisdom.

**Fact #8** - It is wrong to hoard money. Luke 12:16-21; I Tim. 6:17-19

It is very foolish for a person to fix their entire perspective of life on the dollar. The day one gets before God, a hoarding spirit will be tragic.

**Fact #9** - It is not wrong for a minister to expect to receive pay. I Cor. 9:7-14; I Tim. 5:17-18

Just as Paul said, "So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel" (I Cor. 9:14). The church does have the responsibility not to muzzle the ox when the ox is cranking out the work.

**Fact #10** - It is wrong for a minister to demand pay. I Cor. 9:15-18

No minister should ever demand pay for services.

**Fact #11** - It is right for believers with much money to think in terms of using it and sharing it with others in a generous way. I Tim. 6:17-19

This was a major mark of the early church; a communal sharing and helping each other (Acts 2:45).

**Fact #12** - It is right for a believer to believe that God's blessings to him will, in part, be determined by whether he faithfully and generously gives to the church. II Cor. 9:6-11  
Prov. 3:9-10

There is a sense in which our faithfulness in giving determines God's blessings to us. There are both spiritual and financial implications to these Biblical statements. We do not teach a prosperity gospel which says give everything to the church and you will become rich. But we do say there is a sense in which God honors us financially in accordance with how we honor Him with our finances.

**Fact #13** - When it comes time for us to die, our money won't mean anything; but our righteousness will mean everything. Prov. 11:4; Luke 12:30

Money will never cause one to escape the wrath of God.

The truth is at death, our whole thought process concerning money will be "Did I use it for the glory of God?"

If the church is to become a pillar and support of God's truth, it needs leaders and people who have a sound Biblical perspective of money. Where one's treasure is, that is where the heart is. Is your treasure God, or money?