

Forbidden Love

by Derek Melton

This sermon emphasizes the dangers and consequences of loving money, highlighting how the pursuit of wealth can lead to ruin, destruction, and a departure from the true gospel. It calls for repentance, fleeing from the love of money, and pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness as the cure. The message warns against the deceitful allure of riches and the need to prioritize contentment in Christ over material possessions.

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:10, Luke 12:15, Philipians 4:11, Mark 4:18, 1 John 2:15, Proverbs 6:27, Luke 16:13

Topics: "Love of Money", "Pursuing Righteousness"

Description

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Transcript

Well, Lord, we're so thankful that we can go to the truth of Scripture today, that your word is alive, powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. It's instructive, Lord. It's corrective.

It gives us everything that we need pertaining to life and godliness. Lord, help us to be corrected where need be. Help us to be instructed where we lack.

Lord, help us to be humble and repentant, Lord, where we find a breach in our own heart, that needs repentance and grace. And so, Lord, speak to us, Lord, through this text in 1 Timothy 6. Lord, most especially, Lord, help us to be mindful of Jesus Christ through every month of the year, to be thankful for Jesus' birth in June as well as December, Lord, as January as well as in August. Lord, help us to be thankful, Lord, worshipful about the birth of Jesus Christ.

And Lord, help us to be good noble Bereans, to search these things out in Scripture to see if they are true. And Lord, that we will all go to the word of God to see what the preacher says is true or not and not just to take it at face value. Help us to be good students for the glory of an exalted Christ.

Amen. 1 Timothy chapter 6, if you will. Here at Grace Life Church, we believe in systematic exposition, continual lecture.

It's preaching verse by verse, book by book, chapter by chapter, book by book through the Bible. It's the only way that we can get a wholesome diet of the word of God. I realize that we're living in a day and time to where that style, if you will, of preaching has gone to the wayside, but not here.

We want to be rounded. We want you to have the full counsel of the word of God, and it's good that we would be forced to deal with the difficult passages of Scripture, not just the convenient ones. Starting in verse 6, Paul writing to Timothy who has been placed there at Ephesus to straighten out a church that had become crooked, not only crooked in the financial sense, but also in the doctrinal sense.

It needed to be lined out. Paul has sent Timothy there with apostolic orders to bring it back into compliance with apostolic authority and teaching. Starting in verse 6, the apostle writing says that godliness is actually a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

We've brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering with these, we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare in many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. This message is entitled, Forbidden Love, Forbidden Love.

I think it's the motto of the natural man, and I'm talking about those that are apart from Christ, to get as much money and to gain as many possessions as you can before you die. To get all you can. In fact, as one bumper sticker said, that the one who wins in the end is the one that has the most toys when he dies.

And while money and possessions are necessary to sustain life, they're not the purpose of life. And that's what the apostle Paul's saying here. Listen, money and possessions cannot satisfy the human heart.

And I'll say this a couple times in my introduction, that money and possessions have a sort of a psychotropic effect on us. The more we have of them, the more that we want, and we're never satisfied by them. Augustine, the third century scholar said, oh God, you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.

Charles Swindoll had a teenager that came up to him one time when he was preaching and handed him a poem that they wrote. And I thought it was kind of interesting but strangely applicable to this sermon, so I'm going to read it. Talking about how possessions and money don't bring you contentment, God's goodness does.

Listen to this. It was spring, but it was summer that I wanted, the warm days and the great outdoors. It was fall that I wanted, the colorful leaves and the cool, dry air.

It was fall, but it was winter that I wanted, the beautiful snow and the joy of the holiday season. It was winter, but it was spring that I wanted, the warmth and the blossoming of nature. I was a child, and it was adulthood that I wanted, the freedom and the respect.

I was 20, but it was 30 that I wanted, to be mature and sophisticated. I was middle-aged, but it was 20 that I wanted, the youth and the free spirit. I was retired, but it was middle-aged that I wanted, the presence of mind without limitation.

And my life was over, and I never got what I wanted. Listen, discontentment is both the cause and the effect of the fall of Adam. And the inordinate, that is, the ungodly pursuit of riches and the ungodly pursuit of possessions is driven by impulses that are fallen, Adamic impulses, they're evil.

And despite the inability of riches and possessions to satisfy our hearts, we're prone to chase after them anyway. We know they're not going to satisfy us, but we chase them anyway. I said earlier that I was going to mention this several times, but this is somewhat psychotropic.

A psychotropic is a mind-altering substance. And the insanity of this is that we know that money and possessions can't satisfy us, but we pursue them despite it. It's this way with the love of money.

I've entitled this sermon, The Forbidden Love, because that's exactly what the text here teaches. The love of money is the root of all kinds or all sorts of evil. The Christian position concerning possessions and money is that they are amoral.

What I mean by that, amoral is a term that describes an object that is absent of moral or immoral qualities. Dr. John MacArthur said this about money, he said, it's like a gun. There's nothing inherently wrong with money, but like a gun, money can be used for good or it can be used for evil purposes.

Paul had, in verse 5, characterized those who were preaching a fraudulent gospel. And one of the characteristics of a false teacher is that they have an unbiblical view of both money and ministry, an unbiblical and unhealthy and inordinate view of money and ministry. They use religion as a means for financial, listen to this word, extortion.

Financial extortion. They're money-driven instead of scripture-driven. They're glory of man focused instead of glory of God focused.

And here in our text, Paul pits those who are hopelessly seeking after money against those who are seeking God and that are contented with God. And then the text finds high center in verse 10, if you'll look at it with me, where he says, for the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. The love of money is a forbidden love.

Let me say that again. The love of money is a forbidden love. And Paul here is arguing in the text to show and to teach and instruct and to affirm that true godliness brings about a contentment with it and nothing less.

That we're contented with God and that counterfeit religious purveyors in all of their illicit gains are unable to find satisfaction in them. They just don't satisfy. And the point that he's making is, is that the poorest godly man is richer and more satisfied than the riches of an ungodly man with all of his wealth.

He has all these things that he's not satisfied by them. And so Paul here is arguing in the text that godliness is in fact the most valuable resource for us this side of eternity. And the love of money is one of the greatest snares that Satan uses to capture souls into bankrupt them spiritually.

I said this, I've got this in my manuscript here, it's in hot, bold, all caps, that Satan's sharpest arrows are all dipped in pure gold. Listen to what J.C. Ryle said over a hundred years ago, let us all be on our guard against the love of money. The world's full of it in our days.

The plague is abroad. Thousands who would abhor the idea of worshiping juggernaut, that's a form of like Hare Krishna, are not ashamed to make an idol of gold. We're all liable to the infection from the least to the greatest.

We may love money without having it just as we may have money without loving it. It's an evil that works very deceitfully. It carries us captive before we're aware of our chains.

Once let it get the mastery and it will harden, paralyze, scorch, freeze, blight, and wither our souls. It overthrew an apostle of Christ and let us take heed that it does not overthrow us. One leak may sink a ship.

One un-mortified sin may ruin a soul. The Christian, verse 11, is commanded to flee these things. Oh man of God, flee these things.

There are three points I believe the text makes here. One, the cause of the love of money. Number two, the cost of the love of money.

And number three, the cure for the love of money. Let's look at the cause, verse six, with me. If you're okay, say amen.

But godliness is actually a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment for we've brought nothing into the world so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering with these, we shall be content. Listen, what is it? What is it that challenges our heart or incites our heart to love money in this kind of a damning way? What is it that causes us to want this so bad? Listen, all of us have known people that have been ruined by money and the pursuit of it, the love of it.

I'm talking about the inordinate love of money. I have personally preached several funerals of those that have become embondished to gambling, trying to get rich, and accrued so much debt they didn't figure there's any way out and have taken their own lives. My wife's been with me and I've preached some of those funerals.

Trying to hit the jackpot and the day never comes, wanting to be rich. And what is worse than that is that I've been exposed in my own personal life to a fraudulent religious system that masquerades itself as Christianity that has twisted or wrangled the scripture and invented a gospel of prosperity. False doctrine.

And the entire movement is empowered by human greed and discontentment with a lot that God's given them. But what is it that lies behind the love of money? What is the Bible here teaching? Number one, in verse five, I believe that the Bible tells us that one of the causes of the love of money is bad theology. Wrong doctrine.

Look at verse five. Talking about men of depraved mind, deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. That's what Paul's doing here.

He's pitting the godly against the ungodly. He's pitting the sufficiency of the gospel and living a godly life in possessing Christ, the most precious of all treasures, the pearl of great price, against these that teach a foul, bogus religious system for money's sake. For money's sake.

Wrong theology reinforces a fallen man's appetite for power and prosperity. Wrong doctrine. Bad theology.

Because here's what a sinful man wants. Listen, he's the autonomous sovereign of his own life. He wants prominence and he wants control.

He wants to be large and in charge. He wants to be a sovereign. And money is the vehicle that transports him to that destination to give him what he wants.

Power, prestige, preeminence. So to be a sovereign. John in 1 John 2 wrote, do not love the world or the things that are in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life is not from the Father, but it is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lust, but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Another translation says it this way, do not love the world or the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you, for the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything that we see, and a craving to have pride in our own achievements and possessions. Paul's writing here to tell us that these false teachers were in it for the money. They were using religion as a means for their own financial gain.

And their false and wicked desire for riches set the format for their doctrine. And because of this, it's uncertain that there was an early form of the prosperity gospel developing in the early church. Titus mentioned them.

Listen to what Titus says, for there are especially rebellious men, empty talkers, and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they're upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. For money's sake. Now listen, this is a two-edged sword.

Wrong theology emboldens greed, and greed empowers wrong theology. Let me say it again. Wrong theology emboldens greed, and greed empowers wrong theology.

That whenever a huckster, a false teacher, takes this scripture and wrangles it, twists it from its own context to feed their fallen desires for wealth, this is an abomination to God. It's an abomination to God. And these, what I call rancid doctrinal positions, bait others that are driven by those same fallen passions.

Listen, the prosperity gospel is only an enticement to those that are greedy in their heart. Those that want to gain more money, and more power, and more possessions. So that whenever the scripture is being used to garner support for health, wealth, and prosperity, listen, we as Christians are to denounce it outright.

We're to denounce it, and we are to declare that it is wrong. Wrong theology is an accelerant for illicit desires, and sound theology is a mortifier of illicit desires. Right theology will thwart, challenge, convict illicit desire.

We need good theology, and good theology will not sleep well, if you will, with those foul desires. The second thing is, we're talking about the cause for the love of money. We're doing this from the text.

The second is wrong ambitions. Wrong theology, and wrong ambitions. Look at verse 6. But godliness is actually a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment.

Look at verse 9. But those who want to get rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction. If you're with me, wave at me. Let me see if you're tracking this morning.

Listen, ungodly and degenerate, if you will, ambitions are the driving force behind the love of money. And these affections do affect false doctrine. It's a heart matter.

It's an issue of the heart. Godliness is characterized by, what, contentment, but discontentment is the driving force behind the love of money. It's a matter of the heart.

A discontented heart testifies that temporary possessions and finances are more valuable to them than the pearl of great price, or the treasure hidden in the field that has been found. That is this, that the lordship of Jesus Christ is, in their hearts, subservient to the lordship of man and all the trinkets that he loves and desires. The word here, in the original contentment, or *tequila*, means to be content with one's circumstances or lot in life.

It's a state of having what is adequate or sufficient. Can I have someone go get me a water, please? We're talking about wrong ambitions, something wrong in the heart. This is rooted in two soul-destroying maladies, two of them.

I want you to think of this. Number one, these ambitions are rooted in worldly hearts instead of spiritual. Worldly hearts instead of spiritual.

This is really the crux of the matter. A worldly heart covets worldly treasures. A godly heart covets heavenly treasure.

You see? Jesus said in Luke 12, 33 and 4, sell your possessions and give them to charity. Make yourselves money belts which do not wear out. An unfailing treasure in heaven where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.

For where your treasure is there, your heart will be also. This is the driving force and momentum behind the charismatic, name it, claim it, health, wealth, prosperity gospel. That a covetous man will propagate and participate in this cursed misrepresentation of Jesus Christ.

That their hearts are worldly and they're using religion to feed that discontented appetite. Do you see that? Second, not only worldly hearts instead of spiritual, but discontented with the providence of God. Discontented with what God's given them, what God has made available to them.

And this second is a poisonous root that is discontented with what God has granted in providence. And simply put, here's what providence is. It's the provision of God's hand for your life.

That whenever we're discontent with what God's given us, we begin to set ourselves to cultivate something more than what God's given us. Paul, I read from Philippians earlier when we were giving, but Paul said in Philippians 4, 11 and 12, not that I speak from want for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means.

I also know how to live in prosperity and in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of abundance and suffering. What is he saying? I've just learned to be content with what God hands me, with where God has me. That God, we better understand, we're a grace

church.

We believe in the absolute sovereignty of God and everything. That God orchestrates our lives and that we as Christians need to learn to be contented with what God in his grace and in his providence has handed to us. First Samuel 2, 7, listen to what it says.

The Lord makes rich and poor. He brings low and he exalts. Now I want to be balanced.

This is not to say that all ambition to advance is inherently wicked. It's a matter of the heart. That God does in fact open doors for advancement.

God does indeed enable and empower prosperous business dealings for the good of his church. But this is speaking about the heart's desires and the longings of the heart that we're talking about and we're talking about being contented with godliness. The godly are content and happy because they possess the most important treasure that can be possessed and that's Christ.

The third thing I want you to see as a cause is that they're just the wrong master. They're just the wrong master. It says in verse 10, the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil.

And some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. In short, now listen to me, the driving force behind the love of money is a root problem. The longings are simply the fruit that comes from the root.

And the roots are embedded in an enslavement to sin. Jesus said in Luke 16, 13 that no servant can serve two masters for he will hate the one and love the other or else he'll be devoted to the one and despise the other. And here's the context, you cannot serve both God and wealth.

The wrong master. And I think the crux of what Jesus is saying in that text was that the love of money is rooted in an enslavement to the wrong master. That you're subordinate to Satan.

That these lusts are simply the servitude to Satan, the wrong master. Now let's look at verses 9 and 10 and see the cost. We've looked at the cure.

Pick up in verse 9 with me, that those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. But the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil. Some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

The love of money is not all gain, friends. There's staggering losses here. This is a forbidden love mentioned here.

And here in our text what Paul is doing, he's unveiling the often hidden and ugly costs of this illicit love. The world that we live in want to show all the glamour but they don't show you the ugliness of it. The Las Vegas commercials don't show us the suicides committed, the divorces caused, the children that are hungry and they don't have clean diapers.

They don't show that side of it. There's a cost. There's a cost.

Number one, it ensnares the heart. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare, a snare. The cost of the love of money is that it snares the heart.

That word snare comes from the Greek word pogis, not haggis, Patrick. I know what you're thinking. The pogis, it's simply a device that's used to catch animals.

It means that which brings sudden danger. And snares, think about this with me. Those of you country boys that've set snares before, you've got to hide them.

They're discreet. They're not something that is out in the open. The natural eye just can't behold them.

They kind of lay, if you will, underneath the surface. A snare does. It's meant for trickery and deceit, to catch something unawares.

And Jesus used this very taut terminology in the parable of the seed and the sower, and in fact in Mark 4, 18, but the worries of the world and the deceitfulness, apathe, the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in. And that's what it does. It chokes out the word.

The eternal, sovereign, beautiful, instructive, saving words of God, it ensnares and chokes them out. It says, and it becomes unfruitful. That word there for deceitfulness that Jesus used in this text, apathe, it means to cause someone to have misleading or erroneous views concerning the truth.

It means to mislead. It means to deceive. It means deception, and it means lusts that are excited by deceit, lusts that are excited by deceit.

Listen, a snared animal never sees its danger until it's too late. And those who love money are endangered, and they don't even feel any sense of the danger until it's too late. You think of Judas Iscariot and the example that he set, the son of perdition.

He was in the immediate presence of Jesus Christ for three and a half years in the best seminary that has ever been on earth. He is in the presence of the Lord. He heard the teachings, the sermons of Jesus Christ.

He saw the miracles. He was with him. He ate and drank the same bread.

But all the while, he was stealing money from the money bag. And eventually, he found 30 pieces of silver more enticing than the king of glory, and he sold them out to the Romans and the Jews. And then whenever Jesus was speaking in John 13, 22 of a traitor that was among them, Judas Iscariot had no idea that he was the man.

That's how deceitful it is. The reason that snares are effective is because they're discreet. The reason that they work is because they're hidden.

The reason that they're used is because they're destroyed suddenly. Listen, don't think for a moment that you can play with this fire and not be burned by it, Proverbs 6, 27. The love of money is a forbidden love.

The second danger is that it fans new evils into flame. Look at verse 10. For the love of money is a root of all sorts, plural, of evil.

Here's the literal Greek, the sentence structure, and if I read it in Greek, you wouldn't understand it, neither would I. For a root of all the evils is the love of money. You think about in the former verse in verse 9 of chapter 6, Paul said, those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. Listen, Grace Loft Pryor, the love of money is

a gateway that leads to innumerable other kinds of sins and vices.

It's a door that opens a Pandora's box, in other words. The love of money is not just a standalone sin. This sin, now listen, is pregnant with all kinds of other sins and will give birth to all sorts of evil in our lives.

And this is not even directed to the rich. It's directed to all of us. It's a heart matter that is pandemic and widespread that the poor, in fact, have as many ambitions for riches as the rich do and possibly worse.

You don't have to be rich to be one that loves money. In fact, you can be broke and have the love of money. And it's a gateway drug.

It leads progressively to further and more multiplied sins, the love of money, the love of money. What a curse, what a curse to be, we're to be just so enthralled with Christ that he's everything and enough for us that with godliness comes contentment. You think about how Hollywood itself characterizes this truth.

You think about all the famous and rich people that are in the movie industry. These actors and actresses are all known by every single one of us in this room to be people of vice, to be people of vice. It's not uncommon for us to hear about these sorts of people that love money and riches and power and fame and preeminence and fortune, but how they're addicted to drugs.

They're involved in every sort of sexual dysfunction named among men. They're married and divorced multiple times. They're in and out of rehabs.

Their lives are simply marked out by havoc and misery. And now I said in the opening of this message that it's somewhat psychotropic because we can know that, we can see that on the news, that those that have this craving for riches fall into these devices and that we go out and pursue the same thing thinking the outcome is going to be different. It blows my mind.

Oh god, don't let it be me and you, right? The point that I'm making is that there is a cost to loving money and that cost is expensive. And this kind of sin gives birth to multiple sins and this leads to destruction and it leads to ruin. Listen, it dishonors the great name of Jesus Christ and the sufficiency and the worth of his wonderful name.

And the third and I think probably the most gross and the most offensive of the costs of loving money is that it separates the heart from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Look at verse 10 with me. The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil and some by longing for it have what? Wandered away, definite article, the faith, the gospel, the definitive truth, the apostolic message, the body of doctrine given to us by Jesus Christ, that they have wandered away from the gospel of the glory of God that shines through the face of Jesus Christ.

That our heart is captured by and in love with something of this world that leads us away from a contentment gazing upon being satisfied in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. This has to be the most costly cost of loving money that it so dopes our soul up that we choose the fallen over the exalted. Some have long Paul says to be rich in by doing so they have drifted from the gospel.

Listen, this is either doctrinal or it can be practical, it can be by the way that we live or just by our doctrine what we embrace as truth. Obviously that Paul here has in mind verse 5 with the false teachers have embraced a lie of false gospel that have been driven by money and success and the greed for these fallen things and that the love of money has empowered a divorce from the true gospel for the appeals of an

aberrant gospel. They've been divorced from the true gospel for the appeals of an aberrant gospel.

This is the world that we live in today that marks this out most especially. And listen church, there is a danger for those who love money to abandon the true gospel of grace for the false promise of the gospel of prosperity. It's the abandonment of the truth for that which is false.

But there's another fearsome reality here that I want to touch upon for just a moment. There are those that intellectually confess the true gospel but their hearts and their lifestyles preach another gospel. And this is one of the most dangerous and disastrous of all.

Those who are surrounded by brothers that are godly in Christ Jesus that love the true gospel that are part of the true church and these that come into a place like this and week by week and hear the gospel of Jesus Christ through pure gospel exposition and they blend into the crowd and in their day-to-day life though they live in such a way that they deny the true gospel that they hear and they proclaim the false gospel that they intellectually do not agree with but they do it by the way they live. They're in the midst of the people that love the true gospel but something is wrong on the inside to where we shake our head at the true gospel and that by our lifestyle through the week we proclaim by the way we live a false gospel. On Sunday we sing that Jesus is Lord and on Tuesday we live in a way that money is Lord.

Our possessions. And we project a different gospel than we intellectually give assent to. That on Monday through Friday or Monday through Saturday we covet, pursue and give ourselves the pursuit of wealth, the love of money to the neglect of the biblical gospel and then on Sunday we amen the gospel being preached that is true.

So we preach a false gospel by our false desires through the week and we hide ourselves among the elect otherwise. In either way the love of money separates the heart from the gospel of God's grace. I've witnessed it here.

I've witnessed it in this church. Those that come in for a season, those that are in proximity to the gospel, they seem to be a people that embrace the true gospel but soon they leave and join up with falsehood. We've seen it.

I've seen it. I can pull out a list of names that were part of this congregation that have defected and that are right now this morning sitting in a church that's preaching a false gospel and loving every minute of it at a time in their life that are coming here and hearing the gospel of grace of the preeminence of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ and amen possibly louder than you and me. But here now some years later they've rejected the gospel.

They have walked away from a true church that loves the gospel of grace and are sitting in a prosperity church hearing a false doctrine, living a false life and all the while holding on to what they believe is orthodoxy. I remember some time ago there was a man, I'm not going to mention his name, some of you would know him. He had come here for a year or two with amen to sermons and I remember one Sunday he captured me right back here about where Chief is sitting.

He said, brother, sit down for a minute. He said, somebody here told me that you don't believe in the prosperity gospel. I looked at him and I said, brother, no.

It's not biblical. It's not true. It's heretical.

He just looked at me and said, you don't believe that God wants all of us to be financially prosperous? I said, brother, I don't believe that God wants our hearts to covet possessions. He wants our hearts to covet him. He said, we're leaving the church.

I want you to listen to me. The love of money, talking about that inordinate love of money and possessions and the biblical gospel can never be reconciled together as friends. They can never be reconciled together as friends.

They come from two separate masters and that, listen to me, any mishmash of the two creates a two-headed monster that's full of aberration, full of error, heinous, unbiblical, heretical, mingling the two, the love of money and the love of God. I can serve two masters. No, you cannot.

There's a high cost affixed to the love of money. In closing, and most quickly, let me just give you the cure in verse 11. The cure for the love of money, the flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and joyous.

Most expositors end the pericope, this bracket at verse 10. But if you leave it there, you have no hope. You have no cure.

You have no instruction as to what you do if you find that your heart is coveting the wrong thing. Here's the cure. Number one, the desires for the love of money, number one, they've got to be fled.

Look at the text of verse 11, the flee from these things, you man of God. Flee from them. You've got to flee, run for your life, beg God of grace to deliver you from this snare, the love of money, the root of all sorts of evil, the soul-destroying melody of the heart.

This is not some light thing. Listen, this causes hell to be populated by religious church-going people. Flee these things, you man of God.

Paul is instructing Timothy, who is obviously at eye level with this epidemic that is coming to the church, people that are coveting money, desire to be rich. There have been elders of this local church in Ephesus that have defected from the truth of God, from the apostolic gospel for the love of money, and they've embraced heresy. And Paul is exhorting Timothy to flee from these things.

The word flee comes from the Greek word phugo. It simply means to escape. It means to avoid danger.

It means to run away. That means that everything that is characterized by a false teacher is to be fled by a man of God or a woman of God or a child of God, especially the love of money. Here's how we flee them.

One, we don't embrace them. Number two, we do not tolerate them. Number three, we do not practice them.

Number four, we do not desire them. And number five, we have no fellowship with those who do. The love of money is infectious.

Did you hear me? It is infectious. And our fallen frames have abandoned them by virtue of their fallenness to lean towards these kinds of things. And there is a sort of rancid propensity in all of us that makes us or necessitates that each one of us in this room, everyone that names the name of Christ, take a daily trip to the cross to have these vices mortified daily.

Daily. We've got to be cautious about flirting with these kinds of vices. We've got to be very cautious.

Listen, you've got to understand, church, that vices are enemies that are to be fled. They're to be fled because they are dangerous. They're to be fled because they are detrimental.

They're to be fled because they are disastrous. Look at the text. Look what Paul says.

He says, these are harmful, foolish, and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. Some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. When we are tempted to love money, all of us as godly men and women are to be biblically reminded of the destruction these kinds of inward sinful cravings and longings will ultimately lead us to.

Destruction is to be fled, not flirted with. We're not to nudge to the edge of hell and see how close we can get without getting the stink on us. We're to flee, men of God.

Run away. Run away from it. Repent of the desires to be rich, the inordinate appetites that we have that crave money and things that never will satisfy your soul.

They'll only damn it. Not only are they to be fled, they're to be replaced. Look at verse 11 again.

And here's where we end. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Paul tells us here that fleeing the love of money is not enough.

It's not enough for victory. You can flee from the love of money, but whenever you arrive at your destination, your heart's still with you. Your fallen propensity is still in you.

Those rancid desires are still ordering you. And then what do you do? I hear from so many young men that have been entangled with drugs. I just got to get out of this town.

And you up pluck and you move to Wyoming, and guess what you find when you get there? You. And guess what else is there? Drugs. Reminds me of the story of the guy that read the statistic that 95% of all people are killed within two miles of their house, so he moved.

The problem is in us. And so it's not just a removing from. There must be a replacement of the desires.

They've got to be replaced. There's got to be a change of the heart that radically, listen to me. I'm about finished.

There must be a change of heart that radically redirects what we pursue, what we long for, what we love, that maybe at one time in our life that we did, we were a pursuer of money that we once loved, but now we pursue the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus said, do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth where moth and rust destroy, where thieves break in and steal. But listen to this, but store up for yourselves treasure in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is there your heart will be also. Oh God, do something in me. Flee from these things, replace with these things.

And there cannot be a replacement until there's a change of heart and desire. And we have no, listen, we have no power to change our own desires. But God does.

We come to Him humbly and broken that I can't fix myself. I can't deliver myself from the love of money. I can't cause myself to love Jesus Christ enough.

God, do something in me to where the pearl of great price is worth more than all the world. Jesus said, if you gain the whole world and lose your soul, what have you gained? What have you gained? The love of money is the root of all sorts of evil. Paul here, once again, is pitting godliness and how a godly man is content against those who pursue riches and are never content.

And the only viable solution is that this, that God would work in us powerfully and change our desires so that you and I might pursue righteousness, that we might pursue godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. And that it's in the apprehension of these gospel graces that you and I will find contentment and by that contentment honor and glorify God. Listen, the love of money is the greatest and the most effective and the most powerful tool in the toolbox of Satan.

The luster of riches and the love of it will never last and it will never satisfy. And to quote Augustine one last time, you have made us for yourself, oh Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you. Forbidden love.

The love of God forbids one love and that is the love of money. And the reason that God forbids it is because it is false. The reason God forbids it is that it's false.

It is not real. It is not true. It's a damning love.

It's self-love in essence. It's self-love. Flee from these things, oh man of God, and pursue righteousness.

Flee from these things, oh man of God, and pursue righteousness. Lord, this is an important message for all of us, including myself. That the dangers and the ensnares of loving money, it is forbidden in your word for us as your sons and daughters to love money.

We're to be lovers of God. We're to be lovers of Jesus Christ, the truth. Lovers of the church, lover of the brethren, but not the lovers of money.

Lord, help us to see this as an opiate of the soul. Lord, help us to tremble. Help us, oh God, to flee these things and to pursue godliness in Jesus Christ.

Lord, I pray, Lord God, that this word will be like an arrow that comes from the Lord that pierces us through, that helps us, that instructs us, that forms and shapes our worldview. And Lord, where we've been lovers of money, oh God, give us repentance that we might be lovers of God instead. And Lord, help us not think that we can walk down both paths, to love God and to love mammon, because your word, your son, has given us, says that you cannot serve two masters.

Help us to yield to the truth, not to try to improve upon it, to try to get around it. But Lord, help us to repent of our sin, to see the wickedness of our own propensity, the natural bend and inclination of our own fallen hearts, and to flee these things and to pursue you, and only to be contented by Christ. Thank you for your word.

It's timeless and true. It's helpful. It's certainly painful.

But Lord, it wounds and then it heals. And I'm thankful for it. Thank you for Grace Life Church and these precious saints.

Thank you for the desires and their hearts' longings for Christ and Christ alone, their love for true doctrine. Help us, Lord, to not be those that when we come here, we consent and we shake our head to the truth of this doctrine, this teaching. Help us to be not those that go out and then to live against what we consented to when we walk out these doors.

Lord, help us, Lord, to be content with the providence that you've granted us in Christ and to find that contentment is in Godliness and not in the pursuit of money or the possession of things. And may your son be glorified by our lives. In Christ's name, we ask this.

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