

# Step 16 on Love of Money or Avarice

by St. John Climacus

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*St. John Climacus explores the dangers of avarice, emphasizing the need for true love and generosity over the love of money.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:3, Luke 21:2, Acts 20:34, Ephesians 5:5, 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 1 Timothy 6:10

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Materialism"

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## Description

St. John Climacus preaches about the dangers of avarice, describing it as a form of idol worship, a manifestation of unbelief, and a hindrance to spiritual growth. He emphasizes the importance of selflessness and generosity, contrasting it with the selfishness of those who love money. Climacus highlights the deceptive nature of the love of money, warning that it can lead to a lack of compassion and a neglect of true charity towards the poor. He encourages a life of simplicity and humility, where one's focus is on spiritual richness rather than material wealth.

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## Transcript

1. Many learned teachers treat next, after the tyrant just described, the thousand-headed demon of avarice. We, unlearned as we are, did not wish to change the order of the learned, and we have therefore followed the same convention and rule. So let us first say a little about the disease, and then speak briefly about the remedy.
2. Avarice, or love of money, is the worship of idols,<sup>2</sup> a daughter of unbelief, an excuse for infirmities, a foreboder of old age, a harbinger of drought, a herald of hunger.
3. The lover of money sneers at the Gospel and is a wilful transgressor. He who has attained to love scatters his money. But he who says that he lives for love and for money has deceived himself.
4. He who mourns for himself has also renounced his body; and at the appropriate time he does not spare it.
5. Do not say that you are collecting money for the poor; with two mites the Kingdom was purchased.<sup>3</sup>
6. A hospitable man and a money-lover met one another, and the latter called the former unintelligible.
7. He who has conquered this passion has cut out care; but he who is bound by it never attains to pure prayer.

2 Cf. Ephesians v, 5.

3 St. Luke xxi, 2.

8. The beginning of love of money is the pretext of almsgiving, and the end of it is hatred of the poor. So long as he is collecting he is charitable, but when the money is in hand he tightens his hold.

9. I have seen how men of scanty means enriched themselves by living with the poor in spirit, and forgot their first poverty.<sup>1</sup>

10. A monk who loves money is a stranger to idleness<sup>2</sup> and hourly remembers the word of the Apostle: Let an idle man not eat,<sup>3</sup> and: These hands of mine have ministered to me and to those who were with me.<sup>4</sup>

This is the sixteenth struggle. He who has won this victory has either obtained love or cut out care.

1 Cf. St. Matthew v, 3.

2 'Accidie'. Cf. Step 13: note 187, p. 52.

3 2 Thessalonians iii, 10.

4 Acts xx, 34.

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