SESSION 6
LASTING INVESTMENTS

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-19

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out. 8 If we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. 9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11 But you, man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of eternal life to which you were called and about which you have made a good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 In the presence of God, who gives life to all, and of Christ Jesus, who gave a good confession before Pontius Pilate, I charge you to keep this command without fault or failure until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 God will bring this about in his own time. He is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see, to him be honor and eternal power. Amen. 17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share, storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of what is truly life.

EXPLORING KEY WORDS

A Meaning sufficiency or a sense that we need nothing more. Paul used “content” when he described what the Lord had taught him about how to live with wealth or in poverty (Phil. 4:11).

B To stumble unintentionally or “self-destruct” (The Message)

C Paul consistently warned believers about such desires (Rom. 1:24; 6:12; 13:14; Gal. 5:16,24).

D “Sorrows” (GNT; KJV); “live to regret it bitterly ever after” (The Message); “caused themselves a lot of pain” (CEV)

E “Timothy, you belong to God” (CEV)

F “Perseverance” (NLT); “patience” (KJV)

G Invited by God to live out his faith and God’s plan (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Pet. 2:9)

H Timothy clearly testified that he had given his life to Christ.

I Jesus “openly told Pontius Pilate about his faith” (CEV).

J The Roman governor of Judea who interrogated Jesus and gave the order to crucify Him (Mark 15:1-5).

K “At just the right time” (NLT); “He’ll show up right on time” (The Message)

L “Light that no one can approach” (GNT)

M “Enduring riches” (AMP)—the results of a faithful Christian who does good and is generous

N “The future” (AMP, GNT, NASB, NLT)
1. TRUE CONTENTMENT (1 Tim. 6:6-10)
   • Paul issued a warning against greed and depending solely on one’s wealth for one’s security.
   • Paul reminded Timothy that true contentment can only be found in godliness.
   • Explain that the issue was the love of money (greed) as opposed to having possessions.

2. TRUE RICHES (1 Tim. 6:11-16)
   • Paul reminded Timothy that true riches are found in lives that reflect Christ’s character.
   • He stated that Christians live in light of God’s promise of eternal life to those who put their faith in Christ.

3. STEWARDS OF GOOD WORKS (1 Tim. 6:17-19)
   • Paul addressed the wealthy, directing them to remember God’s grace and the responsibility that comes with that grace.
   • He directed them to focus on good works instead of their riches, seeking to be stewards of God’s gracious provisions.
   • Note: Emphasize wise stewardship of all possessions.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS
Believers should be motivated by the value of living a godly life as opposed to material gain.
• Believers find purpose and contentment by pursuing godliness.
• Believers are to live in light of the promise of eternal life.
• Believers are to use what they have to bless others.
FOCUS ATTENTION

What would most people say they need to feel secure?
- A steady job with good benefits provides most people with confidence in their economic security. Consistent, positive reports from a doctor contribute to a sense of physical wellbeing. Being surrounded by smart, competent, and responsible people makes us feel safe.
- Knowing our purpose in life helps most people, but especially Christians, to walk confidently into the future.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10

What barriers should we remove to achieve contentment? What bridges should we erect to reach it?
- Paul emphasized that contentment is a godly goal and the secret to true riches.
- Acknowledging the profound truth that our lives never depend on external or environmental trappings requires regular monitoring of our priorities for accumulating wealth and possessions.
- Sincere, daily thanksgiving to God for food and clothing naturally move us into a place of contentment, even when we’re initially reluctant to go there.
- Seeking God’s priorities for living through prayer and Bible study leads us “beside quiet waters” (Ps. 23:2) instead of into the rat race of life.

How do we measure our love of money, which the Bible warns is the root of all kinds of evil?
- Debt, especially accumulated for unnecessary things, may be an indicator.
- Well-paying jobs that regularly take us away from church and the community of faith may be a sign that we love money.
- Ecclesiastes 5:10 tells us that those who love money are “never satisfied.” Finding a place of contentment means we can live with less instead of more.

How does loving money lead to destruction?
- Scores of marriages and families break apart when someone chases wealth instead of relationships.
- The mountains of debt accumulated from the desire for material things threaten to leave people without resources.
- Those who end up in the lap of luxury often find themselves there without the deeper purposes of life to give them meaning.

1 TIMOTHY 6:11-16

What significance do Paul’s descriptors of running and fighting tell us about the goal of achieving true riches?
- Running and fighting, even the good fight, imply proactive effort, not just sitting back and waiting for it to come to you.

SUMMARIZE & CHALLENGE

How does your budget show trust in God?
- While salvation isn’t earned by our good works, taking hold of eternal life suggests that we must lay claim and cling to God’s blessings in our earthly existence.

What do we understand about the context for setting earthly goals, even godly ones?
- We must never lose sight of the big picture. We strain to lead godly lives on earth in light of the promise of eternal life.
- Paul directed Timothy’s attention back to Jesus Christ, who remains our inspiration. Without Him, all of our pursuits would be misguided or empty.

1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

Understanding that wealth in itself isn’t inherently evil, how do Paul’s warnings for the wealthy apply in everyday life?
- Acknowledging that God provides everything, even wealth, will help us to remain humble as we achieve success and accumulate material goods.
- Sharing with others from our abundance helps keep selfish desires in check even while we enjoy what He has provided.
- Just as our neighbors see where we live and the cars we drive, they also should be able to observe the way we live—in faith and service to Christ.
- Generosity includes service and performing good works, not just giving money to a cause.
- If we have visible means of support, those who are rich in worldly goods also must also bear witness to their invisible support found only in Jesus Christ.

Personal Challenge: Record your financial goals for active participation in good works. Include the steps you need to get there. But instead of making it a to-do list, make it your prayer list and go back to it frequently to see where you’re going—and how far you’ve come.
A TREASURED COIN OR PIECE OF JEWELRY

Identify an object in your home that you bought because you wanted it even though it had a low intrinsic value. This could be a piece of jewelry not worn, a coin not circulated, or a treasured item that wasn’t expensive but has meaning to you.

Show the group the object. Share the story of how you acquired the item and why it has value to you. Encourage the group to share their own stories of valuable but worthless possessions.

Say: Wealth is a lot like that; it’s nice to have around, but it’s not the end goal. And sometimes, it may even cost you to keep it. Note that there’s nothing wrong with owning something of value, but it’s important to keep such items in their proper place of importance.

Ask: Have you ever made the mistake of placing the wrong emphasis on acquiring worldly wealth? When it happens, it means we may miss out on the more valuable godly life or even destroy what we have. We could end up with something the world has deemed valuable, but sooner or later we’ll realize it really isn’t. Like the item in this object lesson, we’ll figure out in time that it lacks the power to make us content or give us purpose.

Draw attention to the memory verse (1 Tim. 6:10). Say: Loving the right things in this world is important. Loving money has the power to destroy us. Help us, Lord, not to get the two confused.

HE’S COMING BACK

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus made a promise to His disciples that one day He would return for them (John 14:1-3). The disciples took Jesus’ promise seriously, and they lived with the awareness that He would come again for them one day. The promise of His return filled their lives with victorious hope. But equally important, it nourished within them the eagerness to serve Him faithfully. They wanted nothing more than to please Him with their service when they had the opportunity to see His face and worship Him in heaven.

The reality of Christ coming again filled Paul’s mind and heart as he engaged in one missionary journey after another. He told believers about the promise of Christ’s return, and he urged them to allow His promise to shape their lives, clarify their ambitions, strengthen their faith, and determine their service. For instance, Paul encouraged Christians in Rome to see themselves as perishable vessels that held the imperishable treasure of eternal life through Christ. He went on to urge them to embrace the reality that they would see Christ again (Rom. 8:18-25). He shared the same encouragement in his letter to the Philippian church (Phil. 1:20-21).

Wise believers today take to heart the promise about seeing Jesus return. We look forward to being with Him in heaven. As we wait for Him to take us home, we find that our greatest satisfaction comes from living according to His ways and carrying out His Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). When we read about the fruit of the Spirit, we want to display the cluster of character traits that allow people to see Christ in us (Gal. 5:22-23). Paul’s warning to Timothy about craving money reminds us about sinful priorities that can’t satisfy us for long. Quite the contrary, they can be dangerous distractions from our calls to serve Him.

However, when we live in light of Christ’s return, our ambitions shift to whatever pleases Him. Likewise, our actions show that we want to extend His kingdom to more people who might receive His gift of salvation and grow toward maturity in Him. Serving Jesus with His return in mind fuels our intention to make Him, His ways, and His kingdom our highest priorities (Matt. 6:10).