

# 1 Timothy 6:9 Commentary

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GODLINESS AND PASTORAL CARE

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Another Overview Chart - [1 Timothy](#) - Charles Swindoll

| THE PASTOR'S PRIMER:<br>PAUL'S PRACTICAL PASTORAL<br>INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE LOCAL CHURCH |                                      |                                     |                                  |                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1 Timothy 1                                                                                  | 1 Timothy 2-3                        | 1 Timothy 4                         | 1 Timothy 5                      | 1 Timothy 6                             |
| <b>TIMOTHY'S<br/>CHARGE...</b>                                                               | <b>TIMOTHY'S<br/>INSTRUCTIONS...</b> |                                     |                                  |                                         |
| Concerning<br>Sound<br>Doctrine                                                              | Concerning<br>Prayer<br>& Church     | Concerning<br>Last Days<br>Apostasy | Concerning<br>Widows<br>& Elders | Concerning<br>Conflict &<br>Contentment |
| Danger of<br>False Doctrine                                                                  | Public Worship<br>Church Officers    | Antidote<br>for Apostasy            | Pastoral Duties<br>Toward Others | Instructions for<br>the Man of God      |
| Warning                                                                                      | Worship                              | Wisdom                              | Widows                           | Wealth                                  |
| Written in Macedonia<br>Circa 62-64AD                                                        |                                      |                                     |                                  |                                         |

1 Timothy 6:9: 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. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [oi de boulomenoi](#) (PMPMPN) [ploutein](#) (PAN) [empiptousin](#) (3PPAI) [eis peirasmon kai pagida kai](#)  
[epithumias pollas anoetous kai blaberas, aītines buthizousin](#) (3PPAI) [tous anthropous eis olethron kai apoleian](#)

**Amplified:** But those who crave to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish (useless, godless) and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction and miserable perishing. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ESV:** But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

**KJV:** But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

**Moffatt:** Those who are eager to be rich get tempted and trapped in many senseless and pernicious propensities that drag men down to ruin and destruction.

**NET:** Those who long to be rich, however, stumble into temptation and a trap and many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

**NLT:** But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** For men who set their hearts on being wealthy expose themselves to temptation. They fall into one of the world's traps, and lay themselves open to all sorts of silly and wicked desires, which are quite capable of utterly ruining and destroying their souls. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**TLB:** But people who long to be rich soon begin to do all kinds of wrong things to get money, things that hurt them and make them evil-minded and finally send them to hell itself.

**Weymouth:** But people who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many unwise and pernicious ways which sink mankind in destruction and ruin.

**Wuest:** but they that after giving the matter mature consideration desire to be wealthy, fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful cravings which are of such a nature as to drown men in destruction and perdition

**Young's Literal:** and those wishing to be rich, do fall into temptation and a snare, and many desires, foolish and hurtful, that sink men into ruin and destruction,

- **Those:** Ge 13:10-13 Nu 22:17-19 Jos 7:11 2Ki 5:20-27 Pr 15:27 20:21 Pr 21:6 22:16 28:20-22 Isa 5:8 Ho 12:7,8 Am 8:4-6 Zec 11:5 Mt 13:22 19:22 26:15 Jas 5:1-4 2Pe 2:15,16 Jude 1:11
- **Snare:** 1Ti 3:7 De 7:25 Ps 11:6 Pr 1:17-19 Lu 21:35 2Ti 2:26
- [1 Timothy 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **WILLFUL WEALTH SEEKERS**

A faithful man will abound with blessings,  
But he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished.  
-- Proverbs 28:20

**But (de)** introduces a **contrast** - always use this adversative conjunction as opportunity to pause and ponder, asking **what** is the author contrasting (Also - *why? when? who* is involved?, etc).

**Hiebert** says: With a contrasting "but" Paul shows what happens to people who do not have this attitude of Christian contentment but are determined to gain wealth. They have made the acquisition of wealth the considered aim and purpose of their lives. Their eagerness to amass wealth causes them repeatedly to "**fall into temptation**," the temptation to neglect the highest interests of the soul and to stoop to improper means to obtain wealth. Their striving becomes a "**snare**" or trap into which they fall, finding themselves held by "**many foolish and hurtful lusts**." They find themselves chained by lusts which prove to be "**foolish**," because they do not yield the promised satisfaction, and are positively "**hurtful**," because they destroy that which is noblest and best in them, making them envious, avaricious, and hardhearted in their unscrupulous dealings. (Borrow [First Timothy- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#) - excellent resource)

[Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) says: Paul contrasted the proper attitude of contentment with its opposites: the craving to get rich and the love of money--2 sides of the same coin.....Their spiritual fruitfulness has been choked off (Luke 8:14) by their concerns for riches. They are falling into the pit, into the thorns, into someone's hands. It is temptation and enticement.

And so here we see Paul contrasts being **content** (arkeo in 1Ti 6:8) with a wish to get rich. As [Patrick Fairbairn](#) puts it Paul now presents us "the opposite class of characters to the preceding, having their hearts set upon the superfluities of life, large possessions." The implication is very clear that getting **riches** does not equate with being **content**! Indeed, enough is never enough! A Wall Street Journal said that money is "*an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and as a universal provider of everything except happiness* (**Ed**: I would change "happiness" to "contentment")." Measure wealth not by the things you have, but by the things you have for which you would not take money (cp Lk 12:15+) **Billy Graham** once said that "There are two ways of being rich—have a lot, or want very little. The latter way is the easier for most."

Focus on what you have,  
not on what you don't have.

**Those who want to get rich** - Literally this reads "they that **will** to be rich" ("men who keep planning to get rich" = Williams). "They that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare." This person continually (present tense) makes a deliberate choice (middle voice = reflexive) to accumulate more and more material things in order to be happy and feel successful. This seeking of "more \_\_\_\_" (fill in blank) is the aim and purpose of their lives! Please do not misunderstand for it is not wrong to possess money and material riches, but it is wrong to trust in these things and to let them possess you! Someone has said that much trouble is caused by our yearnings getting ahead of our earnings.

The **Wuest paraphrase** indicates that this desire is not a mere whim or chance choice but that in fact "they that after giving the matter mature consideration desire to be wealthy." This is the purposeful life choice - pursue gold, not God!

**Albert Barnes** adds that "There is more emphasis to be placed on the word **will** ("want" in NAS), here, in the phrase, "will be rich," than might be supposed from our translation. It is not the sign of the future tense, but implies an actual purpose or design to become rich—*oi de boulomenoi*. The reference is to those in whom this becomes the object of earnest desire, and who lay their plans for it. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

**Demarest** says: Note well that the issue is not having wealth, but desiring it. The very desire is the trap. The desire for wealth has a way of becoming all-consuming. As a pastor for nineteen years in an affluent suburb, I witness this daily. I see people all around me for whom the drive for wealth is nothing less than an obsession. (BORROW [The communicator's commentary. 1, 2 Thessalonians. 1, 2 Timothy, Titus](#))

**Matthew Henry** rightly reminds us that the "want to get rich" issue affects all social classes for "Poor people are as much in danger from an inordinate desire towards the wealth of the world as rich people from an inordinate delight in it."

**J C Ryle** said it this way "We may love money without having it, just as we may have money without loving it."

**Warren Wiersbe** comments that "materialism can enslave the will (Mt 6:24). We cannot serve two masters simultaneously. Either Jesus Christ is our Lord, or money is our lord. It is a matter of the will. "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare" (1Ti 6:9). If God grants riches, and we use them for His glory, then riches are a blessing. But if we will to get rich, and live with that outlook, we will pay a great price for those riches...People say that money does not satisfy, but it does satisfy if you want to live on that level. People who are satisfied only with the things that money can buy are in great danger of losing the things that money cannot buy. (Borrow [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Want** (1014)(**boulomai**) refers to a settled desire, one born of or springing from **reason** and not from **emotion**. To will, to wish, to will deliberately, to intend, to have a purpose, to be minded. **Boulomai** expresses the idea of the deliberate and specific exercise of volition (an act of making a choice or decision). Stated another way **boulomai** conveys the sense of more than simply wanting a desire or wish to be fulfilled. It conveys the stronger sense of choosing one thing over another or of preference of one thing before another. **Boulomai** (want) refers to a settled desire, one born of reason, not emotion, and describes clearly those guilty of the sin of greed. The

**Boulomai** is in the **present tense** which indicates the **continuing wish** of these individuals is to get rich. It is their driving passion, their "reason for living", their life purpose, etc

**David Guzik** - Significantly, the desire for riches is far more dangerous than the riches themselves—and it isn't only the poor who desire to be rich, it is the rich who want more riches. i. Poor does not mean godly and rich ungodly; nor is it true the other way around. There were many remarkably godly men in the Bible who were almost unbelievably rich, such as Abraham, David, and Solomon. But the godly rich have the heart like the Psalmist in Psalm 62:10: If riches increase, do not set your heart on them. This desire for riches tempts our heart away from eternal riches, and ensnares us in a trap few can escape—always dreaming of riches, and always setting one's heart on them.. The desire to be rich can really only be satisfied in Jesus Christ, and satisfied with spiritual riches rather than material ones. Everything else falls short.

**Lawrence Richards** - When we **desire** anything other than, or more than, wanting to do God's will, a terrible conflict is created (ED: AND IN EFFECT THAT OTHER THING BECOMES AN IDOL!). Only if we abandon our desire for riches can we be free of the danger of making a wrong or sinful choice in hopes of obtaining them. This does not mean we need to abandon riches, should God choose to give them to us. Riches can be used for good, as can any other resource (1Ti 6:17-19). What we are to abandon is the **desire** for riches, so that there will be nothing to distract us from our commitment to do God's will. (Borrow [Bible Reader's Companion](#))

**Thomas Watson** writes "The covetous person sells his soul for money. It is said of a lawyer, "He has a tongue that will be sold for a fee." So the covetous man has a soul that is sold for money. Achan sold his soul for a wedge of gold. Judas sold his soul for silver, and cheap at that! For thirty pieces of silver he sold Christ, who was more worth than heaven, and his own soul, which was more worth than a world! How many have damned their souls for money! (1 Timothy 6:9-10) If you mix these earthly things with your souls and let them lie too near you, they will in time consume and undo your souls. ([The Preciousness of the Soul](#))

**John MacArthur** has some interesting thoughts on money - Perhaps the most telling statement in all of Scripture related to money are the words of our Lord, "Where your treasure is there shall your heart be also." (Mt 6:21+) To put that into common language, "Show me where your money is and I'll show you where your affections lie." To make it even more mundane, "Go through your checkbook and find out what you really care about." Your spiritual life can be measured probably better by what you do with your money than any other single thing. Experts tell us that the average person thinks about money 50 percent of his or her waking time. Amazing isn't it? How to get it, how to keep it, how to save it, how to spend it, how to find it, whatever it might be, we're tremendously occupied with the matter of money. Jesus in saying where your treasure is there your heart is also tells us that what we do with our money is the measure of our hearts. ([The Danger in Loving Money](#))

**To get rich** (4147) (**plouteo** from **ploutos** = wealth, money, possessions, abundance <> related to **polus** which means much) means to be rich or have an abundance, especially of material or outward possessions.

The NT writers use **plouteo** literally of those who are "relatively high on a scale of opulence" (BDAG) (Lk 1:53, here in 1Ti 6:9, Rev 3:17, Rev 18:3, 15, 19) Figuratively **plouteo** means to be rich in something in the sense of having much of it or abounding in it (Lk 12:21). Paul uses **plouteo** to speak of spiritual riches (Ro 10:12, 1Cor 4:8, 2Cor 8:9, 1Ti 6:18, cp Rev 3:18)

**NIDNTT** writes "The word-group associated with **ploutos** is related to **polus**, much, and means initially abundance of earthly possessions of every kind. Later its meaning divided in two directions. In the one it meant riches in a technical and material sense. In the other it was more general, and occurs with a qualifying word, generally in the gen., e.g. riches of wisdom, honour, mercy, etc. All the words in this group can bear this double meaning: **plouteo**, be or become rich; **ploutizo**, make rich; **ploutos**, possession of many goods, super-abundance of something, riches; and **plousios**, as an adj, wealthy, rich and as a noun a rich man."

**Plouteo** -12x in 12v - Translated (NAS) - abounding in riches(1), become rich(4), become wealthy(1), get rich(1), rich(5).

Luke 1:53+ "HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; And sent away the **rich** (literally those being rich) empty-handed.

Luke 12:21+ "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and **is** not **rich** toward God."

**MacDonald asks a poignant question:** We might well ask ourselves the question, "If Christ should come today, whose would all my possessions be?" How much better to use them for God today than to let them fall into the devil's hands tomorrow! We can lay up treasure in heaven with them now, and thus **be rich toward God**. Or we can squander them on our flesh, and from the flesh reap corruption. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Earthly riches often keep us  
from going after heavenly riches

Romans 10:12+ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in **riches** for all who call on Him;

1 Corinthians 4:8+ You are already filled, you have already become **rich**, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you.

**MacArthur Comment:** In a severe rebuke, Paul heaps on false praise, sarcastically suggesting that those Corinthians who were self-satisfied had already achieved spiritual greatness (" you have already become **rich**"). They were similar to the Laodiceans (see Rev 3:17). Cf. Php 3:12; 2Ti 4:8; Jas 1:12; 1Pe 5:4.

**MacDonald adds:** The Corinthians had become self-sufficient; they were already full. They prided

themselves on the abundance of spiritual gifts in their midst; they were already rich. They were living in luxury, comfort, and ease. There was no sense of need. (Ibid)

2 Corinthians 8:9+ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He **was rich**, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

1 Timothy 6:9 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.

1 Timothy 6:18 Instruct them to do good, **to be rich** in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

Revelation 3:17± 'Because you (Church at Laodicea) say, "**I am rich**, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, 18-[note](#) I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become **rich**, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Revelation 18:3± "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have **become rich** by the wealth of her sensuality."

Revelation 18:15± "The merchants of these things, who **became rich** from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning,

Revelation 18:19± "And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea **became rich** by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'

**Plouteo** - 50x in the **non-apocryphal Septuagint** - Ge 14:10; Ex 21:33; Jdg 15:18; 18:1; 1 Sam 29:3; 2 Sam 24:14; 2Ki 7:4; 25:11; 1Chr 21:13; Ps 7:15; 57:6; Pr 12:13; 13:17; 17:12, 16, 20; 22:14; 26:27; 28:10, 14; Eccl 10:8; Isa 10:4; 24:18; 47:11; Jer 48:44; Da 2:1; 7:2; Amos 5:19

## THE WAY OF BALAAM

**Paul's** description of **those who want to get rich** reminds us of

the **way of Balaam** the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but he received a rebuke for his own transgression; for a dumb donkey (**picture**), speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet. (2 Peter 2:15, 16+)

**Comment:** Balaam loved money and was willing to pursue it instead of obeying God (Nu 22:5-24:25-) with the result that he fell into **temptation**. Balaam foolishly went on to teach idolatry and immorality (See relationship between **Idolatry & Immorality**) (Nu 31:16; Rev 2:14± = "the teaching of Balaam" in which he enticed Israel to attend the idolatrous feast at Baal Peor and commit immorality with the Midianites - Read Nu 25:1-4+) and it plunged him into destruction, for he eventually paid with his life (Nu 31:8+): **Woe** to all who follow the "**error of Balaam**", the deceptive error of thinking we can disobey God and "get away with it!" (Jude 1:11) Holy God, give us all grace to not tread on the ensnaring way of Balaam! Amen

**Wiersbe asks:** When are we walking on "**the way of Balaam**"? When we deliberately rebel against the revealed will of God and try to change it. When we have selfish motives and ask, "What will I get out of it?" When we cause other people to sin so we can profit from it. (Wiersbe adds) The **doctrine of Balaam** (Rev 2:14-[note](#)) is the lie that it's permissible for saved people to live like unsaved people, that God's grace gives us the right to disobey God's Law. (Borrow [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

## DANGER SIGNS OF LOVING MONEY

What are the danger signs of loving money? The following "checklist" from **John MacArthur** is one which all believers should prayerfully ponder...

**(1) Those who love money are more concerned with making it than with honesty, or giving a quality effort** Believers must pursue truth and excellence, for which money may be the reward.

**(2) Those who love money never have enough.** Like the leech's daughters of Proverbs 30:15, all they can say is "Give, Give." Such people stand in sharp contrast to Paul, who wrote to the Philippians, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am" (Phil. 4:11-note).

**(3) Those who love money tend to flaunt it.** They derive an inordinate pleasure from wearing, driving, or living in what money

buys.

**(4) Those who love money resent giving it.** They want to use it all for their own selfish gratification.

**(5) Those who love money will often sin to get it.** They will cheat on their income tax or their expense account, or pilfer from work. Those who compromise their principles for money betray a heart that loves it more than God, righteousness, and truth. ([1 Timothy](#))

## SOME "RICH" APHORISMS

- [Aphorism](#) means a short pithy instructive saying

The more you get the more you want.

When we focus on material things, our **having** will never catch up with our **wanting**! It is one of God's unbreakable laws.

Greed is not a trifling sin before God. It has kept many unbelievers out of the kingdom, and it has caused many believers to lose the joy of the kingdom, or worse.

Trust in money equates with distrust in God.

To get money is difficult, to keep it more difficult, but to spend it wisely most difficult of all.

When I have any money, I get rid of it as quickly as possible, lest it find a way into my heart. - John Wesley

Whatever form love of money may take, the spiritual result is the same. It displeases God and separates us from Him. Nicer clothes, a bigger house, another car, a better vacation tempt all of us. But God tells us to be satisfied in Him, in Christ, our all in all!

Proverbs 23:5 reminds us of the fleeting nature of riches, stating that "wealth certainly makes itself wings."

That money talks  
I'll not deny  
I heard it once  
It said "Goodbye"!  
-Richard Armour

Look at these Old Testament examples of some who had a desire for riches and what it cost them in terms of **ruin and destruction**! [Achan](#) (Joshua 7:1, 5, 24, 25 - note who is included in Achan's punishment! Woe!). [Gehazi](#), Elisha's servant (2Ki 5:15-27).

The great circus magnate P T Barnum once said that "Money is a terrible master, but an excellent servant."

To be clever enough to get a great deal of money, one must be stupid enough to want it! - G K Chesterton

Money reveals where our interests lie; it can direct our attitudes; it ever exposes us to the danger of worshipping it; and it represents value. Money not only talks; it screams. -Leslie B Flynn

The Bible is very clear on the point that if we have money enough to live well, and do not share with others in need, it is questionable whether God's love is in us at all. - George Sweeting

A man's treatment of money is the most decisive test of his character—how he makes it and how he spends it. - James Moffatt

Writer Bert Bacharach tells us that the highest income made in any year was Al Capone's "take" in 1927—reputed to have been one hundred and five million dollars. But his "take" when he died was nothing—zero. No money was in his shroud—his hands were empty—even as the hands of all the poor and all the rich are empty when burial is accomplished. - Robert G Lee

A penny will hide the biggest star in the universe if you hold it close enough to your eye. - Samuel Grafton

Tell me what you think about money, and I will tell you what you think about God, for these two are closely related. A man's heart is closer to his wallet than anything else. - Billy Graham (**Most of the following Billy Graham quotations are from the book [Billy Graham in Quotes](#)**)

The Bible warns that money cannot buy happiness! Money cannot buy true pleasure. Money cannot buy peace of heart. And money

certainly cannot buy entrance into the kingdom of God. - Billy Graham

The Internal Revenue Service wants a record of how you spend your money, but that is nothing compared to the books God is keeping - Billy Graham

Covetousness puts money above manhood. It shackles its devotee and makes him its victim. It hardens the heart and deadens the noble impulses and destroys the vital qualities of life. - Billy Graham

If we allow our Christian faith to be adulterated with materialism, watered down by secularism, and intermingled with a bland humanism, we cannot stand up to a system that has vowed to bury us. - Billy Graham

God does not need our money. He owns everything, including “our” money. What He wants [us] to discover is where our central focus of worship lies. Is that focus on God or our money?

Materialism and self-centeredness are the great vices of our age.- Billy Graham

There is nothing wrong with men possessing riches. The wrong comes when riches possess men. - Billy Graham

Pleasure depends on circumstances, but Christian joy is completely independent of health, money, or surroundings. - Billy Graham

Many young people are building their lives on the rock of materialism. I find across the country a deep economic discontent among people in every walk of life.- Billy Graham

Materialism may do what a foreign invader could never hope to achieve—materialism robs a nation of its spiritual strength. - Billy Graham

Can people tell from the emphasis we attach to material things whether we have set our affection on things above, or whether we are primarily attached to this world? - Billy Graham

Part of our problem with debt is that we have confused needs with wants. Yesterday’s luxuries are today’s necessities.- Billy Graham

God will not merely judge us on the basis of what we gave but also on the basis of what we did with what we kept for ourselves. - Erwin Lutzer

Money is emphasized in Scripture simply because our temptation to love it is inexplicably powerful. -Erwin Lutzer

He who serves God for money will serve the devil for better wages. - English Proverb

Riches serve a wise man but command a fool.- English Proverb

Money will buy a pretty good dog, but it won’t buy the wag of his tail. - Josh Billings

O Lord, the sin,  
Done for the things there’s money in.  
--John Masefield

Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it. There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more a man has, the more he wants. Instead of its filling a vacuum, it makes one. If it satisfies one want, it doubles and triples that want another way. - Benjamin Franklin

How we use our money demonstrates the reality of our love for God. In some ways it proves our love more conclusively than depth or knowledge, length of prayers or prominence of service. These things can be feigned, but the **use of our possessions** shows us up for what we actually are. - Charles Ryrie in Balancing the Christian Life

Material wealth is either a window through which we see God or a mirror in which we see ourselves. - Warren Wiersbe in Live Like a King

If you want to know what a man is really like, take notice how he acts when he loses money. - Jewish Proverb

Jesus talked a great deal about money and the problems it causes man—in fact, one-fifth of all Jesus had to say was about money. - Billy Graham

In seventeen of His thirty-seven parables, Jesus dealt with property and man's responsibility for using it wisely. - George Sweeting

Money can buy the husk of many things, but not the kernel. It brings you food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; acquaintances, but not friends; servants, but not faithfulness; days of joy, but not peace and happiness. - Henrik Ibsen

A Wall Street Journal article once said that money is "an article which can be used as a universal passport to everywhere except Heaven, and a universal provider of everything except happiness."

In the New Testament we have these tragic illustrations of a desire of riches: Judas (Mt 26:14,15). Presumed believers [Ananias](#) and [Sapphira](#) (Acts 5:1-10).

Wealth has its disadvantages. It is difficult to have it and not trust in it. Material possessions tend to focus one's thoughts and interests on this world alone. Riches can enslave so that one becomes possessed by possessions, comforts, and recreations. The writer of Hebrews would exhort "Lay aside these temporal, worldly encumbrances." Jesus said, "the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." (Mk 4:19). Do not even entertain the tiniest thought of church leadership if you are a lover of money. (1Ti 3:2, 3).

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Regarding "**fall into temptation**" Patrick Fairbairn puts it bluntly noting that they "are in danger of betaking to means of compassing their end which are not consistent with integrity of character!"

**Fall into** (1706) (**empipto** from **en** = in, into + **pipto** = to fall) literally means to fall into (Mt 12:11, Lk 6:39) and figuratively means to fall into the power of (robbers Lk 10:36, snare of devil 1Ti 3:7, God and His judgment = Heb 10:31), fall into or experience condemnation or reproach (1Ti 3:6, 7), fall into a temptation or snare (1Ti 6:9). Lenski says: The Greek word for "temptation" is itself neutral but gets its sinister meaning from the context. Since it is here followed by "snare," we have the picture of being lured into a snare and thus getting caught and falling.

Empipto is in the **present tense** which indicates this is a **continual danger and destination** for those **who want to get rich**. In other words, desiring to be rich continually leads a man into temptation. "Greedy people are continually entrapped by their consuming drive for more. Their pursuit of what they want is their passion. Their sinful behavior becomes compulsive and controls their lives." (MacArthur)

**Empipto** - 7x in 7v - Translated (NAS) as fall(5), falls(1), fell(1).

Matthew 12:11 And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if **ifalls into** a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?"

Luke 6:39 And He also spoke a parable to them: "A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both **fall into** a pit?"

Luke 10:36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"

1 Timothy 3:6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and **fall into** the condemnation incurred by the devil.<sup>7</sup> And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not **fall into** reproach and the snare of the devil.

1 Timothy 6:9 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.

Hebrews 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to **fall into** the hands of the living God.

**Empipto** - fall(5), falls(1), fell(1). 50x in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Ge 14:10; Ex 21:33; Jdg 15:18; 18:1; 1 Sam 29:3; 2 Sam 24:14; 2Ki 7:4; 25:11; 1 Chr 21:13; Ps 7:15; 57:6; Pr 12:13; 13:17; 17:12, 16, 20; 22:14; 26:27; 28:10, 14; Eccl 10:8; Isa 10:4; 24:18; 47:11; Jer 48:44; Da 2:1; 7:2; Amos 5:19

**Fall into temptation** - "That is, they are tempted to do wicked things in order to accomplish their purposes. It is extremely difficult to cherish the desire to be rich, as the leading purpose of the soul, and to be an honest man." (Barnes [1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

Temptation is not a sin but to yield to it is sin. Because they are discontent and want to be rich these people are particularly vulnerable to temptation. The list of temptations is endless - cheating on your tax return, overcharging for work (or charging for work not performed), embezzling funds from the company treasury, writing false checks, theft, gambling, speculation, perjury, printing counterfeit money, robbing banks, even murder (to get the life insurance policy), etc, etc.

Barnes - That is, they are tempted to do wicked things in order to accomplish their purposes. It is extremely difficult to cherish the desire to be rich, as the leading purpose of the soul, and to be an honest man.

### THREE PROGRESSIVE PITFALLS: A TEMPTATION, A SNARE

## A SINKING

**Temptation** (3986) (**peirasmos** from **peirazo** [word study] = to make trial of, try, tempt, prove in either a good or bad sense) describes the idea of putting to the test and then refers to the tests or pressures that come in order to discover a person's nature or the quality of some thing. The context determines whether the intended purpose of the "temptation" (test) is for good or for evil. If a believer responds in faith, he successfully endures a trial (and we call it just that -- a "trial" and not a "temptation") but if he succumbs to it, doubts God and disobeys, the trial becomes a "temptation" which can lead to sin. God allows "peirasmos" into our life not to make us sin but to make us more like the Savior. Not so with Satan as his encounter with our Lord illustrates.

In the context of 1Ti 6:9, Paul clearly uses **peirasmos** in the sense not of a *trial* but of a *temptation*.

**Resource** related to temptation: [Of Temptation by John Owen](#)

**Vincent** adds that in regard to the meaning of **peirasmos** it "is a mistake to define this word as only solicitation to evil. It means trial of any kind, without reference to its moral quality." This distinction is brought out in chapter 1 of James. James first use of **peirasmos** refers to "**trials for good**" (as in 1 Peter 1:6+), where he exhorted the saints to

**Consider** it (aorist imperative ~ do it now once and for all!) all (wholly) joy ("whole joy", unmixed joy, without admixture of sorrow, not just "some joy" along with much grief! How is this possible? The Spirit produces His joy in you - see notes Galatians 5:22), my brethren, when (implies temptations are to be expected) you encounter (fall into the midst of so as to be totally surrounded by) various (poikilos - all "shapes and sizes" of) **trials** (peirasmos), knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ([James 1:2-3](#)).

**Comment:** In this context it is clear that God brings (allows) such **tests** (**peirasmos**) to prove and increase the strength and quality of one's faith and to demonstrate its validity (read all of James 1 for full context). Every **trial** becomes a **test** of faith designed to strengthen the believer's faith, but if the believer **fails the test** by wrongly responding, then that **test** becomes a **temptation** or a solicitation to evil. The Greek word is essentially neutral. The context (including one's response) determines the practical meaning of the word - either as a test/trial or a temptation (as here in 1Ti 6:9).

Later **James** uses the root verb form (**peirazo**) explaining that no one should

say when he is **tempted** (peirazo), "I am being **tempted** (peirazo) by God"; for God cannot be tempted (apeirastos from a = without + peirazo = tempt > incapable of being tempted) by evil, and He Himself does not **tempt** (peirazo) anyone. But each one is tempted (peirazo) when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. (Jas 1:13+; Jas 1:14+)

**Comment:** Note that while God may allow a trial or test (peirasmos), He Himself never willingly tempts us to do evil. Our response to the trial determines whether it is best translated as a test (trial) or as a **temptation**, as called for in the context of First Timothy Six.

**Matthew Henry** - There is a burden of care in getting riches, fear in keeping them, temptation in using them, guilt in abusing them, sorrow in losing them, and a burden of account at last to be given concerning them.

**William Tiptaft** writes "As a Christian, your mind will be much more easy the less you have to do with the world. Having food and clothing, be content therewith. Riches and cares choke the seed, and keep you from communion with God. (1 Timothy 6:9) Your kingdom is not of this world. If I love my money more than Christ, woe is me!

**Wiersbe** says: Instead of giving satisfaction, riches create additional lusts (desires); and these must be satisfied. Instead of providing help and health, an excess of material things hurts and wounds. The result Paul described very vividly: "Harmful desires . . . plunge men into ruin and destruction." It is the picture of a man drowning! He trusted his wealth and "sailed along," but the storm came and he sank. (Borrow [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

## RICHES: A SINISTER SNARE

Once they **fall into temptation** and succumbed and gratified that temptation, the trap is just a step away and once they enter it, they become entangled and entrenched in the sin and sequelae wrought by covetousness and greed. As discussed in more detail below, the word "**snare**" in Greek is quite picturesque and suggests a sudden and unexpected entrapment.

"THOSE WHO ARE DESIRING TO BE RICH KEEP FALLING INTO" 4 THINGS: 1."TEMPTATION," 2."A SNARE," 3."MANY USELESS DESIRES," 4."MANY HARMFUL DESIRES,"

**MacDonald** - The desire becomes so strong that he cannot deliver himself from it. Perhaps he promises himself that when he

reaches a certain figure in the bank account he will stop. But he cannot. When he reaches that goal, he has the desire for more. The desire for money also brings with it cares and fears, which entangle the soul. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Barnes** says: The net was sprung suddenly upon them, and they could not escape. The idea here is, that they who have this desire become so entangled, that they cannot easily escape. They become involved in the meshes of worldliness and sin; their movements are so fettered by cares, and inordinate desires, and by artificial wants, that they are no longer freemen. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

**Hendriksen** says: As a **snare** (see 1Tim. 3:7+) keeps an animal imprisoned, so the ungovernable passion for wealth fastens its clutching tentacles about "those who pant after the dust of the earth." (Borrow [Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles](#))

**Lenski** says: There they hang entangled and caught like snared animals. The qualitative relative completes the tragic picture: "such as sink or plunge men into destruction and perdition, . . ." (See [Interpretation of St Paul's Epistle to Timothy](#))

**Guthrie** says: On the two other occasions in the Pastorals where snare is used, it is described as the devil's, and this is suggested here by its close association with temptation (Borrow [The pastoral epistles : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Snare** ([3803](#)) (**pagis** from **pegnumi** = set up, fix) is a trap (as that which is fixed or fastened by a noose or notch) and which can fall unexpectedly or suddenly (so that wild animals and birds are caught by surprise). **Pagis** was used in Greek for a "net" (a piece of equipment for a bird-catcher), a "snare" or a "mousetrap." In short a **pagis** is that which causes one to be suddenly endangered or unexpectedly brought under control of a hostile force. It is intriguing that the [Trojan Horse](#) was called a "**wooden pagis**." Is not the **desire to be rich** like that ancient "Trojan horse" which resulted in the destruction of the city the heart of which it craftily gained entrance?!

**Pagis** describes a trick or stratagem (temptation). It pictures that which comes unexpectedly, suddenly even as a snare entices birds or beasts who are caught unaware. If they could see the trap, they would not be ensnared. Paul is trying to show us the "trap" of the **want of riches**, lest we fall into this trap unawares! Furthermore, **pagis** alludes not just to the initial capture but to that which fastens or holds one fast as does the **want of riches**!

**Barnes** (commenting on Job 18:8, 9) elaborates on the **snare** noting that "This was formerly the mode of taking wild beasts. It was done by excavating a place in the earth, and covering it over with turf, leaves, etc. supported in a slender manner; so that the lion, or elephant or tiger that should tread on it, would fall through. These methods of taking wild beasts have been practised from the earliest times, and are practised every where. The net was sprung suddenly upon them, and they could not escape. The idea here is, that they who have this **desire** (for riches) become so entangled, that they cannot easily escape. They become involved in the meshes of worldliness and sin; their movements are so fettered by cares, and inordinate desires, and by artificial wants, that they are no longer free men. They become so involved in these things, that they cannot well break away from them if they would; comp. Pr. 28:20. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

**Pagis** is used 5 times in the NT (Luke 21:35; Ro 11:9; 1Ti 3:7; 6:9; 2Ti 2:26) and is translated snare (4x) and trap (1x) in the NASB.

While Paul does not state specifically who or what sets the **snare** or **trap** here in 1Ti 6:9, the association of Satan with the other two uses by Paul in the pastoral epistles (1Ti 3:7, 2Ti 2:26) suggest that the Evil One is in some way involved. As **Gill** says "Satan may be compared to a fowler (hunts for birds); his temptations to sin are his nets and snares; and they that will be rich, are the birds that are caught and entangled therein, out of which sometimes it is impracticable to extricate themselves." However, as discussed above under "temptation", James makes it quite clear that each person has a resident "tempter to evil" in the form of our fallen flesh and thus the trap could as easily be ascribed to that agent. (**Related resource: the world, the flesh and the devil**)

Figuratively **pagis** was often used in Greek in connection with seductive women, Solomon writing of the lad who follows the seductress...

Until an arrow pierces through his liver. As a bird hastens to the **snare**, so he does not know that it will cost him his life. (Proverbs 7:23)

Riches are a **snare** that brings one into bondage, not into freedom. Riches not only fail to give true satisfaction, but generate additional desires (many foolish and harmful desires) which cry out to the fallen flesh to gratified. **Wiersbe** alludes to the "trap" of desire for riches writing that "*an increase in wealth often leads to an increase in evil. It's good to have things that money can buy, if we don't lose the things money can't buy. It's sad when people start to confuse prices with values!*" (Ibid)

**William S. Plumer** writes on Riches - Tempting, seductive, dangerous and ruinous

By reason of sin, riches are ordinarily tempting, seductive, dangerous and ruinous. A right view of the perils of wealth would, with the divine blessing, have a mighty efficacy in curing our covetousness and discontent, and

in causing us to cease improperly to love what we have, or sinfully to desire that which belongs to others.

When one says to himself, "You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!" (Luke 12:19) destruction is already at the door! No state of mind is more opposite to the spirit of the gospel, than that of slothfulness, high living, banqueting, and carnal mirth. "Sodom's sins were pride, laziness, and gluttony." Ezek 16:49

Wantonness and luxury, sloth and corruption usually go together. The great nourisher of these is wealth.

"Covetousness is idolatry." It disowns Jehovah. It sets up gold to be worshiped. It brings man, like the serpent, to lick the dust. It sadly perverts God's mercies, as well as all our own thoughts. It makes men believe in ... no God but mammon, no devil but the absence of gold, no damnation but being poor, no hell but an empty purse.

David speaks of "men of the world, who have their portion in this life." Psalm 17:14.

To lead a Christian life is to give up one's idols. Oh that men would believe their final Judge, when He says, "You cannot serve God and mammon!" ([The Ten Commandments](#))

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## CONTENT OR COVETOUS? . . .

be content with such things as you have. Hebrews 13:5

Many people are discontented. They are always comparing themselves and what they have with someone who has more. Even when their circumstances are favorable, they are dissatisfied. Instead of being grateful for what God has given them, they become covetous. As a result, they miss God's best for their lives and fail to see and appreciate the blessings they already have.

An ancient Persian legend tells of a wealthy man by the name of Al Haffed who owned a large farm. One evening a visitor related to him tales of fabulous amounts of diamonds that could be found in other parts of the world, and of the great riches they could bring him. The vision of all this wealth made him feel poor by comparison. So instead of caring for his own prosperous farm, he sold it and set out to find these treasures. But the search proved to be fruitless. Finally, penniless and in despair, he committed suicide by jumping into the sea.

Meanwhile, the man who had purchased his farm noticed one day the glint of an unusual stone in a shallow stream on the property. He reached into the water, and to his amazement he pulled out a huge diamond. Later, when working in his garden, he uncovered many more valuable gems. Poor Al Haffed had spent his life traveling to distant lands seeking jewels when on the farm he had left behind were all the precious stones his heart could have ever desired.

Beware of covetousness! --H.G.B. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Fret not for want of earthly things,  
They'll never satisfy; "  
The secret of contentment is  
To let the Lord supply.  
--D.J.D.

Discontentment makes rich men poor while contentment makes poor men rich.

## AND MANY FOOLISH AND HARMFUL DESIRES: kai epithumias pollas anoetous kai blaberas:

- **many:** Mk 4:19 Eph 4:22 1Jn 2:15-17
- [1 Timothy 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Many** ([4183](#))(**polus**) consists of or amounting to a large but indefinite number.

**MacDonald** explains that "Greed for wealth causes men to endanger their health and jeopardize their souls. Indeed, that is the end toward which they are drifting. They become so occupied with material things that they become drowned. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**John Flavel** said that "Where there is **no want** (**Ed:** no lack of material possessions and money) there is usually **much wantonness**" or as Paul would say where there is "no want" there are **many foolish and harmful desires**.

**Wiersbe** comments that "Instead of providing help and health, an excess of material things hurts and wounds." (Ibid)

**Illustration of many and harmful desires** - Is money the key to happiness? Consider what it did for Buddy Post, of Oil City, Pennsylvania. According to the Associated Press and Chicago Tribune, in 1988 he won a jackpot of \$16.2 million in the Pennsylvania Lottery. That was the beginning of his misery. His landlady claimed that she shared the winning ticket with Post and successfully sued him for one-third of the money. Post started an assortment of business ventures with his siblings, all of which failed. In 1991 he was sentenced to six months to two years in prison for assault. Post claimed that he had simply fired a gun into his garage ceiling to scare off his stepdaughter's boyfriend, who was arguing with him over business and ownership of Post's pickup. In 1993 Post's brother was convicted of plotting to kill Buddy and his wife to gain access to the lottery money. In 1994 Post filed for bankruptcy. Post's wife left him, and the court ordered that Post pay \$40,000 a year in support payments. Post finally had enough. To pay off a mountain of legal fees, he tried in September 1996 to sell off the rights to the seventeen future payments from his jackpot, valued at some \$5 million. But the Pennsylvania Lottery tried to block the sale. "Money didn't change me," says Post. "It changed people around me that I knew, that I thought cared a little bit about me. But they only cared about the money." (750 Engaging Illustrations)

**And many foolish and harmful desires** - "Desires, such as the love of wealth creates. They are foolish—as being not such as an intelligent and immortal being should pursue. and they are hurtful—as being injurious to morals, to health, and to the soul. Among those desires, are the fondness for display; for a magnificent dwelling, a train of menials, and a splendid equipage; for sumptuous living, feasting, the social glass, company, and riotous dissipation. ([Barnes - 1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

The desire to be rich is is **foolish** because the supposed gain really brings pain.

**Hendriksen** says: One kind of craving easily leads to another. The person who craves riches generally also yearns for honor popularity, power, ease, the satisfaction of the desires of the flesh, etc. All spring from the same root, selfishness, which, being the worst possible method of really satisfying the "self," is both senseless and hurtful. .(Borrow [Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles](#))

**Foolish** (453) (**anoetos** from **a** = without + **noéo** = comprehend) means literally "not having a mind" and here pictures the man who would desire to be rich as without spiritual understanding, ignorant of God and continually manifesting an unwillingness to use his mental faculties to understand the truth about God. He does not lack intelligence to make money but lacks wisdom to make God his all in all. He lacks discernment in spiritual realities and is like the having become "darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart." (Eph 4:18-note).

**Paul** says that "a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are **foolishness** to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (1Cor 2:14+)

Paul is saying that, no matter how advanced one might be in education and intellectual accomplishments, if he she refuses to recognize God and trust in Him for contentment in this life and the life to come, he is **foolish** concerning the most important truth in all eternity. God's attitude towards the **foolish** is expressed in Proverbs which asks...

How long, O naive ones, will you love simplicity? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, and **fools** hate knowledge? (note now the riches of God's kindness and forbearance and patience in beckoning to all men to) Turn to My reproof, behold, I will pour out My Spirit on you. I will make My Words known to you. (Pr 1:22,23+)

**Harmful** (983) (**blaberos** from **blapto** = to injure, hurt) refers to that which causes harm, is hurtful, noxious or injurious. In this case the pleasures and gratifications which in themselves are foolish reap harmful effects, especially the effects of deteriorating or corrupting the moral well-being of one's soul (cp 2Pe 1:4-note).

There is only one other use of **blaberos** in Scripture, in the **Septuagint** translation of...

Pr 10:26 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy one to those who send him.

**Brenton's** Septuagint translation: "As a sour grape is **hurtful** to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, so iniquity hurts those that practice it."

Wealth is harmful - Men will spend their health getting wealth; then gladly pay all they have earned to get health back! (**Ed**: But Paul teaches that by that time they have potentially become irrevocably ruined) - From [God's Little Instruction Book for Men \(borrow\)](#)

**Douglas Milne** comments that "**Greed** is endemic to fallen human nature and affects nearly everyone in different degrees. It is one of the desires of the heart that produces moral corruption in the world (2Pet 1:4-note). But it deceives people by leading them into many more destructive attitudes and practices than they can hope to escape from. For example, gambling is a popular way out of poverty into greater wealth and a grand lifestyle, but it can become an addiction which ruins family life, leading to dishonesty in

business practice and even into crime. These cravings are foolish because they are irrational, and harmful because they destroy personal and social happiness. (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus: Focus on the Bible Commentary)

**Ron Mattoon** outlines some of the harmful aspects of **greed...GREED...**

guides us to deeds of deception and dishonesty.

leads to lying and lust.

causes us to feed on falsehood and faulty reasoning.

creates a need for the new (dissatisfied with the old)

- a need for nerves (worry about losing or gaining possessions)
- a need for neutrality (as we compromise Biblical principles and convictions in order to gain more.)

sways us to speed towards sorrow, shame, and stress.

influences us to heed to hypocrisy and contradictions. (Mattoon's Treasures)

**Chuck Rasmussen** gives us an illustration of the **harmful** effects of riches...

Many people think money is security, but 1Timothy 6:9 warns that it can be just the opposite. A few years ago, columnist Jim Bishop reported what happened to people who won the state lottery:

Rosa Grayson of Washington won \$400 a week for life. She hides in her apartment. For the first time in her life, she has "nerves." Everyone tries to put the touch on her. "People are so mean," she said. "I hope you win the lottery and see what happens to you."

When the McGugarts of New York won the Irish Sweepstakes, they were happy. Pop was a steamfitter. Johnny, twenty-six, loaded crates on docks. Tim was going to night school. Pop split the million with his sons. They all said the money wouldn't change their plans. A year later, the million wasn't gone; it was bent. The boys weren't speaking to Pop, or each other. Johnny was chasing expensive race horses; Tim was catching up with expensive girls. Mom accused Pop of hiding his poke from her. Within two years, all of them were in court for nonpayment of income taxes. "It's the Devil's own money," Mom said. Both boys were studying hard to become alcoholics.

These people hoped and prayed for sudden wealth. All had their prayers answered. All were wrecked on a dollar sign.

**Comment:** Here is another example of the **foolish and harmful desires** and the aftermath of carrying out those desires that seem to almost inevitably befall **lottery winners** - "In early August 2011, (Michael Carroll who won \$15.4 million in 2002) tried committing suicide twice, once by hanging, when he was saved by a friend. Most recently he also tried slicing his throat with a craft knife. The emergency ambulance went to him, treated him for cuts and he was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital was discharged after refusing treatment... In June 2005, Carroll was given an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) by the court after finding that he had been catapulting steel balls from his Mercedes van, when he was drunk, which resulted in breaking car and shop windows, around Downham Market... He was sentenced with 240 hours of community service and a warning he could face jail time if he didn't adhere to the ASBO. In February 2006, he was jailed for nine months for affray. It was noted in court while being sentenced, that since 1997, Carroll had 42 previous offences on his record. Carroll had reportedly spent almost his entire fortune within 18 months on extravagant houses, cars for demolition derby races in his back garden, and gold jewellery. Later convicted of cocaine possession, it was claimed he has only £500,000 left. In 2004, he was banned from driving for six months after being caught at the wheel of his new £49,000 BMW without L-plates and insurance. ([Michael Carroll lottery winner in Wikipedia](#))

**Desires** (1939)(**epithumia** from **epi** = at, toward {the preposition "epi-" in the compound is directive conveying the picture of "having one's passion toward"} + **thumos** = passion. The root verb **epithumeo** = set heart upon) is a neutral term denoting the presence of strong desires or impulses, longings or passionate craving (whether it is good or evil is determined by the **context**) directed toward an object. ([Click](#) article in ISBE)

Desire in itself is neutral. The object a person desires makes the desire good or bad and in this case the desire for riches is a bad desire!

**Matthew Henry** remarked that "Covetousness is commonly a master-sin and has the command of other lusts."

**Paul** instructs the Ephesians that

in reference to (their) former manner of life (as unbelievers), (they were to) lay aside the old self, which (was) being corrupted in

accordance with the **lusts of deceit**. (Eph 4:22-note)

**Comment:** In other words, **lusts** (epithumia) deceive us and lead us astray, promising more than they deliver and producing (spiritual, soul) rottenness once they are "conceived" (cp James 1:14, 15-note).

**W E Vine** explains that **epithumia** "describes the inner motions of the soul, the natural tendency of men in their fallen estate toward things evil and toward things forbidden... The lust of the flesh" stands... for the temptation which proceeds from our corrupt nature, a nature which, owing to sin, stands opposed to the will and commandments of God."

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that "these fundamental (evil) **desires** of life are the steam in the boiler that makes the machinery go. Turn off the steam and you have no power. Let the steam go its own way and you have destruction. The secret is in constant control. These desires must be our servants and not our masters; and this we can do through Jesus Christ (**Ed:** The Spirit of Christ indwelling us [Ro 8:9-note] - e.g., note "His part" and "our part" in Ro 8:13-note). (Borrow [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Hiebert** has an interesting note that the "degeneration in the meaning of the term (**Ed:** *epithumia from God given desires to perverted desires*) is a revealing commentary on human nature. Left to himself, instead of gaining mastery over his base desires and steadfastly adhering to the good, the individual is characteristically overcome by his evil cravings (2Pe 2:19-note, cp Jn 8:34, Ro 6:16-note), so that they become the dominating force of his life. (Borrow [First Timothy- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#) - excellent resource)

Paul commands those who would desire to be God's vessels of honor, useful to Him, to continually **flee** (present imperative = a charge calling for continual fleeing because the "trap is continually being baited" but remember it is a "fleeing" not in one's own strength but in continual dependence on the Spirit's inner strengthening - Ep 3:16-note, Php 2:13-note) from youthful **lusts** (epithumia - **including the youthful [and aged] desire to get rich**) and **pursue** (present imperative) righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2Ti 2:22-note)

In this letter Paul writes the wonderful truth that the "grace of God has appeared (one important effect of this grace is that believers need not try to "fight" lusts in their own strength but in dependence of God's grace or enabling power)" and His grace is continually "instructing us to deny (once and for all refuse to follow or agree with evil strong desires coming from the evil world system ruled by Satan and opposed to God) ungodliness and worldly **desires** (**epithumia**) and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age. (Titus 2:12-note)

In Romans Paul commands believers to **Put on** (aorist imperative = urgent command to do this now and first) the Lord Jesus Christ and **make** (present imperative + negative = stop making) no provision (pronoia = act of making prior preparation) for the flesh (here it means the seat of Sin in man) in regard to its **lusts** (epithumia). (Ro 13:14-note)

The Jewish historian **Josephus**, speaking of Cleopatra, says "She was an **expensive** woman, **enslaved to lusts**."

**Ray Stedman** says that...

Paul is telling us how, in every age, this subtle peril lays hold of our hearts: First, it comes in the form of simple **temptation**. Open a magazine and there is a picture, in living beautiful color, of a gorgeous automobile. It makes you drool to look at it. Walk into the airport, and it is sitting right in the lobby. You can go up and rub it, feel it, slobber over it. Your neighbors have one sitting in their driveway. Every Sunday morning they are out worshipping it, bowing down to it, lifting up its hood, feeding it all kinds of expensive things.

That is temptation, and that is what we are up against. It creates in us a hunger to have one like it. We all feel the force and power of this. It looks so natural, especially when we are constantly being told that we deserve this; we are this kind of people. It is amazing how easily we can convince ourselves that we, like everybody else, have a right to have these things. That is temptation.

But that is not the worst. There is another stage. Paul says that those who want to be rich **"fall into a snare."** Notice where the emphasis is: It is on the **desire to be rich**. It is the love of money, not money, that is the root of all evil. That is the most misquoted verse in America. We hear all the time that money is the root of all evil, but it is not. Money is a very necessary commodity in life; it is impossible to get along without using money in one form or another. It is "the love of money" that the Scripture is talking about, the desire to have more and more and more of it, the craving for riches, the constant planning of how to get another buck.

You say, "What is a young man with a family supposed to do? Isn't he supposed to try to provide for them?" Yes, he is, but what is his objective? Is it to make money, or is it to be a good, faithful worker, using his gifts and abilities to the fullest degree for the glory of God in the scene in which he is placed? That is something the world never thinks about.

Paul says that when you **fall into temptation**, and give way to this lust for more things, you create **asnare** for yourself.

**By that, he means that your possessions  
will soon begin to possess you.**

Everyone who has had any success in obtaining some of the things they desired soon discovers this. I am sure many of you could bear testimony to this. As soon as you get a shiny new car, an expensive gadget, a new home with all its comfort, etc., it immediately introduces a whole new range of worries. You have to get insurance on it, you have to buy locks to make sure that it is not taken away from you, you must be available many times when you would rather be away, because your possessions demand that you take care of them.

**Possessions also change your relationship with others.** You discover that people are treating you differently because you have something that is a symbol of prestige or status. People no longer treat you for who you are; they are treating you for what you have, so you begin to get suspicious of your friends and your friendships. You can even get involved in court cases, lawsuits, etc. All this enters when the love of money starts to possess you. That is the snare involved.

Second, the apostle says, such people fall into "senseless and hurtful desires"; damaging things happen to them and to those they love. For years I have been hearing about the television show, Dallas. The whole world was agog for awhile with the desire to know who shot J. R. Ewing. I had never seen the program, so the other night I decided to watch it and see what it is all about. It was an amazingly apt time to do so because the show illustrated exactly what I am talking about this morning. Last week's episode told of J. R.'s son, who had left him and gone off to live with J. R.'s business rival. J. R. was trying to force his son to come home. Not understanding anything about personal relationships, the only way he had of doing this was to put on the squeeze by applying financial pressure. As the situation unfolded, some of the results of J. R.'s heartless, cruel actions became apparent. One of the family members was driven to the very edge of suicide; another faced financial ruin; J. R.'s mother despised him. The episode ended up with J. R. looking very solemn, dimly aware that somehow he had made everybody unhappy. ([The Cost of Riches](#))

### **"BE-WHERE" OF WHERE YOU SEEK YOUR "HAPPINESS"!**

**Matthew Henry** warns us of "The evil of covetousness. Those that will be rich (that set their hearts upon the wealth of this world, and are resolved right or wrong, they will have it), fall into temptation and a snare, 1Ti 6:9. It is not said, those that are rich, but those that will be rich, that is, that **place their happiness in worldly wealth**, that covet it inordinately, and are eager and violent in the pursuit of it. Those that are such fall into temptation and a snare, unavoidably; for, when the devil sees which way their lusts carry them, he will soon bait his hook accordingly. He knew how fond Achan would be of a wedge of gold, and therefore laid that before him. They fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts. Observe, The apostle supposes that, {1.} Some will be rich; that is, they are resolved upon it, nothing short of a great abundance will satisfy. {2.} Such will not be safe nor innocent, for they will be in danger of ruining themselves for ever; they fall into temptation, and a snare, etc. {3.} Worldly lusts are foolish and hurtful, for they drown men in destruction and perdition. {4.} It is good for us to consider the mischievousness of worldly fleshly lusts. They are foolish, and therefore we should be ashamed of them, hurtful, and therefore we should be afraid of them, especially considering to what degree they are hurtful, for they drown men in destruction and perdition. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

**Thomas Brooks** on the plague of unsatisfiedness

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of covetousness; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Luke 12:15

Covetousness is ... a very great and grievous sin; a mother-sin; a breeding sin; a sin which has all sin in its womb; a very vile and heinous sin; the root of all evil.

Covetousness makes the soul earthly—which should be celestial.

Covetousness is an evil which subjects men to the basest and vilest evils.

Covetousness makes a man a fool! "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" Luke 12:20

Covetousness robs a man of all true peace, comfort, contentment and quiet.

Covetousness brings men into snares which drown their souls in perdition.

Covetousness renders men unsatisfied under all their outward enjoyments. Though a covetous wretch has enough to sink him—yet he can never have enough to satisfy him. First he wishes for a bag full, and then a chest full, and then a room full, and then a house full, etc.

The plague of unsatisfiedness—is the great plague which covetous men are under. Certainly

you shall as soon fill a triangle with a circle, and a chest with grace—as you shall be able to fill and satisfy a covetous mind with money.

A covetous man is like a swine—which is good for nothing while it lives. The horse is good to carry, the ox is good to draw, the sheep is good for cloth, the cow is good to give milk, and the dog is good to guard the house—but the hog is good for nothing while he lives! Just so, a covetous man is only serviceable when he is dead. That scripture often proves true, "the riches of a sinner are laid up for the just." Job 27:17 No sin lays men under greater woes! ([The Crown and Glory of Christianity or. HOLINESS, the Only Way to Happiness](#)", 1662)

#### Thomas Brooks...

I bequeath my pastor's soul to the devil (Brooks, "A Word in Season to Suffering Saints") "Covetousness, which is idolatry." Colossians 3:5

Covetousness is explicit idolatry. Covetousness is the darling sin of our nation. This leprosy has infected all sorts and ranks of men. Covetousness being idolatry, and the root of all evil,

is highly provoking to God.

Whatever a man loves most and best—that is his god. The covetous man looks upon the riches of the world as his heaven—his happiness—his great all. His heart is most upon the world, his thoughts are most upon the world, his affections are most upon the world, his discourse is most about the world.

He who has his mind taken up with the world, and chiefly delighted with the world's music—he has also his tongue tuned to the same key, and takes his joy and comfort in speaking of nothing else but the world and worldly things. If the world is in the heart—it will break out at the lips. A worldly-minded man speaks of nothing but worldly things. "They are of the world, therefore they speak of the world," John 4:5. The love of this world oils the tongue for worldly discourses, and makes men ... forget God, neglect Christ, despise holiness, forfeit heaven.

Ah! the time, the thoughts, the strength, the efforts, which are spent upon the world, and the things of the world; while sinners' souls lie a-bleeding, and eternity is hastening upon them!

I have read of a greedy banker, who was always best when he was most in talking of money and the world. Being near his death, he was much pressed to make his will. Finally he dictates:

First, I bequeath my own soul to the devil—for being so greedy for the muck of this world!

Secondly, I bequeath my wife's soul to the devil—for persuading me to this worldly course of life.

Thirdly, I bequeath my pastor's soul to the devil—because he did not show me the danger I lived in, nor reprove me for it. ([A Word in Season to Suffering Saints](#))

**WHICH PLUNGE MEN INTO RUIN AND DESTRUCTION: aitines buthizousin (3PPAI) tous anthropous eis olethron kai apoleian:**

- **which:** 1Ti 1:9 Nu 31:8 Jos 7:24-26 Mt 27:3-5 Ac 5:4,5 8:20 2Pe 2:3
- [1 Timothy 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### COVETING RICHES: A DEAD END STREET

The Authorized Version renders the Greek - "which **drown** men in **destruction** and **perdition**"

**Patrick Fairbairn** comments "Truly a *tristis gradatio* (scale down), as Bengel remarks; and one that in all ages, and within the pale also of the professing church, has ever-recurring exemplifications. We see it constantly proceeding before our eyes; nor can anything

effectually arrest it but that the grace of God which brings salvation (Titus 2:11-note) and carries the affections of the soul upwards to the things which are not seen and eternal (Titus 2:12-note, Titus 2:13-note, Col 3:1-note, Col 3:2-note, 1Pe 1:13-note, 2Cor 4:18-note, etc) ([The pastoral epistles](#))

**John Trapp** wrote that "Covetous men, though they have enough to **sink** them yet have they never enough to **satisfy** them."

**Albert Barnes** comments that the downward spiral of these men ends in destruction, one that that "is complete. There is a total ruin of happiness, of virtue, of reputation, and of the soul. The ruling desire to be rich leads on a train of follies which ruins everything here, and hereafter.—How many of the human family have thus been destroyed! ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

**Lee** writes that "the trapped ones drown in an almost personified wealth that becomes "a personal monster, which plunges its victim into an ocean of complete destruction." (The New American Commentary)

**John Gill** says Paul's description is that of "utter ruin... the ruin both of soul and body... which is irrecoverable, like that of the drowning of a man in the sea, with a millstone about his neck; such folly and danger do those expose themselves to, who will be rich at any (cost - indeed it ends up costly them their very life and soul!).

**Hiebert** says: The word translated "drown" (**plunge**) is literally "sink"; it gives the picture of these lusts overwhelming the man, like the waves covering a sinking ship, and plunging him into perdition.

**Guthrie** says: Three clear steps of decline are discernible, first the lure, then the lust, and finally the total moral ruin. The verb **buthizo** (drown) vividly represents the desire for wealth as a personal monster, which plunges its victim into an ocean of complete destruction.

**Jesus** gave the strongest warning to those who would desire to truly be His disciples (cp Jn 8:31, 32)...

And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall save it. **For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?** (Mark 8:34-36)

**Plunge** ([1036](#))(**buthizo** from **buthos** = the depth) to cause to go down into water or other liquid substance. To sink in the deep (Literally and passively Lk 5:7). To cause to sink, submerge, or "drag to the bottom. Paul uses **buthizo** here in 1Ti 6:9 meaning to cause someone to experience serious consequences and in the present tense indicates the continuing effect of the previously mentioned "**foolish and harmful desires**" is "**drowning**" in destruction, so to speak! Or picture the luxurious Titanic on its maiden voyage, seemingly invulnerable, invincible, inviolable, and yet quickly sinking to the depths of the sea on impact an iceberg. Riches are like "icebergs" not appearing that dangerous on the surface (for only part is visualized) but deadly down deep where the dangers are invisible and thus deceive the sense into thinking they are "safe"! These persons are "drowned" by defective desires! Be careful what you desire! (Instead... Mt 6:33+, Psalm 27:4+, Colossians 3:1+, Colossians 3:2+)

There is only one other use of **buthizo** in the NT...

Lk 5:7+ (Context Lk 5:6) And they signaled to their partners in the other boat, for them to come and help them. And they came, and filled both of the boats, so that they began to **sink**.

There is one use in the **Apocrypha**...

2 Maccabees 12:4 this was done by public vote of the city. When the Jews, not suspecting treachery and wishing to live on friendly terms, accepted the invitation, the people of Joppa took them out to sea and drowned (Lxx = **buthizo**) at least two hundred of them.

**Which plunge men into ruin** (**olethros**) **and destruction** (**apoleia**) - (Taylor's Paraphrases it = "*finally send them to hell itself*" TLB) Although not clearly stated, Paul's use of the words ruin and destruction" strongly suggest that this truth is not just applicable to this life but to life in eternity future. Indeed, if one continually seeks gold over God, he or she may indeed gain gold in this short life, but lose God in the eternal existence! A sad, very bad exchange I might add! Don't be deceived and ensnared by the "bait" of riches. Lock points out that "The combination (found here only) is emphatic, "loss for time and eternity."

**Barnes** says: The idea of drowning is not properly that of the apostle, but the image is that of a wreck, where a ship and all that is in it go down together. The destruction is complete. There is a total ruin of happiness, of virtue, of reputation, and of the soul. The ruling desire to be rich leads on a train of follies which ruins everything here, and hereafter.--How many of the human family have thus been destroyed! ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - The Scriptures contain many tragic examples of those destroyed by money love. Achan's love for money brought

defeat to Israel, and death to himself and his family (Josh. 7:1–26). Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ for a paltry sum of money (Matt. 27:3–5). In Acts 8:20–23, Peter sternly rebuked Simon, who sought to buy the Spirit's power. James condemned in no uncertain terms those who love money (James 5:1–5) "Neither their silver nor their gold," sums up Zephaniah 1:18, "will be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord's wrath." (see [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

**Hendriksen** says: In the original the sentence is conspicuous by virtue of its beautiful alliteration. The constantly recurring letter **p** strikes the eye and then the ear, and probably serve to fix the saying more firmly in the mind, as if we were to say: "Those who desire to be **opulent p**recipitate themselves into evil **p**romptings and **p**erilous **p**itfalls and into numerous **p**recarious **p**assions." These cravings, passions, or lusts of which the apostle speaks are described as such as plunge the members of the human race into ruin and destruction. Instead of the gain which they were seeking, the men whose hearts are set on riches experience only loss. In the original the words ruin and destruction are both derived from a verb whose secondary meaning is to lose. Note the progressive and climactic character of the movement which is portrayed here. First, these men are described as desiring the wrong thing, namely, material wealth. Soon they lose their footing and fall into temptation and a snare and numerous senseless and hurtful cravings. Finally, these cravings plunge them into ruin and destruction. Wretched men! They have guided their vessel to the very brink of the cataract, which, in its turn, plunges them into the awesome depths. (Borrow [Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles](#))

**John Piper** comments...

In the end **covetousness destroys the soul in hell**. The reason I am sure that this destruction is not some temporary financial fiasco but final destruction in hell is that Paul says in 1Ti 6:12 that covetousness is to be resisted with the fight of faith; and then he adds, "take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession." What's at stake in fleeing covetousness and fighting the fight of faith is eternal life. (See 1Ti 6:19.)

So 1Ti 6:9 isn't saying that greed can mess up your marriage or your business (which it certainly can!), but it's saying covetousness can mess up your eternity with ruin and destruction. Or as 1Ti 6:10 says at the end, "it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs." (Literally: "impaled themselves with many pains.")

**God has gone the extra mile in the Bible to warn us mercifully that the idolatry of covetousness is a no win situation.** It's a dead end street in the worst sense of the word. It's a trick and a trap. So my word to you is the word of 1 Timothy 6:11: Flee from it. When you see it coming (in a TV ad, or a Christmas catalog, or a neighbor's purchase), run from it the way you would run from a roaring lion escaped from the zoo and starving.

### But Where Do You Run?

You run to the arsenal of faith, and quickly take the mantle of prayer from Psalm 119:36 [note](#) and throw it around yourself: "O Lord, incline my heart to your testimonies and not to worldly gain." And then quickly you take down two cutlasses, a short one and a long one, specially made by the Holy Spirit to slay covetousness. And you stand your ground at the door. When he shows his deadly face you show him the shorter cutlass:

1 Timothy 6:6 "There is great gain in godliness with contentment." **GREAT GAIN! GREAT GAIN!** Stay where you are, Lion of Covetousness. I have great gain in God. This is my faith!

Then, before he has time to attack, you take the longer cutlass (Hebrews 13:5-6 [note](#)),

Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content (arkeo) with what you have; for [God] has said, 'I will never fail you nor forsake you.' (**Ed**: This last clause in Greek has five negatives! I think God means it!)

Hence we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?'" And drive it home. Do exactly what Paul says to do in Colossians 3:5, "Put covetousness to death."

Brothers and sisters, all covetousness is unbelief. Learn with me, O learn with me, how to use the sword of the Spirit to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life! ([Battling the Unbelief of Covetousness](#))

**Illustration of Plunged into Ruin** - In December 1993, a small Canadian mining company named Bre-X reported favorable gold mining results in the jungles of Indonesia. Gold fever gripped St. Paul in Alberta, the hometown of Bre-X. More than 100 of the 5,200 residents invested heavily in the company. "I've never been so broke," says Real Michaud, a small business owner who tossed all his liquid investments into the stock when it floated near \$12 a share. The stock skyrocketed to a high of \$286 a share, making millionaires of ordinary people virtually overnight. Press releases issued from the firm's modest Calgary offices proclaimed their Indonesian gold mine to be the richest gold mine ever found. The party ended on March 19, 1997, when a report that the company's chief geologist, Michael de Guzman, had committed suicide by hurling himself out of a helicopter over the jungles of Borneo. Almost overnight, the company lost \$5 billion. Pension and retirement funds along with thousands of individual investors were hit hard.

"Never in my wildest dreams would I imagine this could happen in Canada in the year 1997," says Greg Chorney, who lost several million dollars in the fiasco. (Read about the scandal - [Bre-X Fraud - See Wikipedia](#)) (Preaching Illustrations Vol 1)

## **NOBODY DIES A MILLIONAIRE**

**Ray Stedman** - Years ago I picked up a young hitchhiker. As he was telling me about himself, he said, "My uncle died a millionaire." I said, "No, he didn't." "What do you mean?" he said. "You don't know my uncle." I said, "Who's got the million now?" "Oh," he said, "I see what you mean." Nobody dies a millionaire. We all die paupers; we leave it all behind. ([1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19 The Cost of Riches](#))

**Thomas Watson** said that "A man may be said to be given to covetousness when he takes more pains for getting earth than for getting heaven."

**Jesus** minced no words warning that...

the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (Mt 13:22, cp Mk 4:19)

**Spurgeon's Comment:** When that which comes of his sowing is unfruitful, the sower's work is wasted: he has spent his strength for nothing. Without fruit the sower's work would even seem to be insane, for he takes good wheat, throws it away, and loses it in the ground. Preaching is the most idle of occupations if the Word is not adapted to enter the heart, and produce good results. O my hearers, if you are not converted, I waste time and energy in standing here! People might well think it madness that one whole day in the week should be given up to hearing speeches-madness, indeed, it would be if nothing came of it to conscience and heart. If you do not bring forth fruit to holiness, and the end is not everlasting life, I would be better employed in breaking stones on the road-side than in preaching to you.

**Fruit-bearing** made the difference appear in the various soils upon which the sower scattered seed. You would not so certainly have known the quality if you had not seen the failure or success of the seed. We do not know your hearts until we see your bearing toward the Gospel. If it produces in you holiness and love to God and humanity, then we know that there is good soil in you; but if you are merely promising people, but not performing people, then we know that the ground of your heart is hard, or stony, or thorny. The Word of the Lord tries the hearts of the children of men, and in this it is as the fire which distinguishes between metal and dross. O my dear hearers, you undergo a test today! Peradventure you will be judging the preacher, but a greater than the preacher will be judging you, for the Word itself shall judge you. You sit here as a jury upon yourselves; your own condition will be brought clearly out by the way in which you receive or refuse the Gospel of God. If you bring forth fruit to the praise of God's grace, well; but if not, however you may seem to hear with attention and may retain what you hear in your memories, if no saving effect is produced upon your souls we shall know that the soil of your heart has not been prepared of the Lord and remains in its native barrenness.

**What fruit have you born hitherto from all your hearing?** May I venture to put the question to each one of you very pointedly? Some of you have been hearers from your childhood — are you any the better? What long lists of sermons you must have heard by now! Count over your Sundays; how many they have been! Think of the good men now in heaven to whom you once listened! Remember the tears that were drawn from you by their discourses!

**If you are not saved yet,  
will you ever be saved?**

If you are not holy yet, will you ever be holy? Why has the Lord spent so much on one who makes no return? To what purpose is this waste? Surely you will have much to answer for in that great day when the servants of God shall give in their accounts, and shall have no joy when they come to mention you. How will you excuse yourselves before God for having occasioned them so much disappointment?

At this time I will only deal with one class of you. I will not speak to those of you who hear the Word, and retain none of it because of the hardness of your hearts; such are the wayside hearers. Neither will I address myself to those who receive the truth with sudden enthusiasm, and as readily quit it when trial befalls them; such are the rocky-ground hearers. But I will deal with those of you who hear the Word attentively, and, in a sense, receive it into your hearts and understandings, so that the seed grows in you, though its fruit never comes to

perfection. You are religious persons, and to all appearance you are under the influence of godliness. You exhibit plenty of leaf, but there is no corn in the ear, no substance in your Christianity. I cannot speak with any degree of physical vigor to you by reason of the infirmity under which I struggle; but what I do say to you is steeped in earnest desire that the Lord may bless it to you. An eloquent congregation will make any preacher eloquent: help me then this morning. If you will give me your ear, you will make up for my deficiency of tongue: especially if you give to God your hearts, He will bless His truth, however feebly I may utter it. (See Spurgeon's full Sermon - [Sown Among the Thorns](#))

**Barclay** addresses the special dangers that face those who want to get rich...

**(i) The desire for money tends to be a thirst which is insatiable.** There was a Roman proverbial saying that wealth is like sea-water; so far from quenching a man's thirst, it intensifies it. The more he gets, the more he wants.

**(ii) The desire for wealth is founded on an illusion** It is founded on the desire for security; but wealth cannot buy security. It cannot buy health, nor real love; and it cannot preserve from sorrow and from death. The security which is founded on material things is foredoomed to failure.

**(iii) The desire for money tends to make a man selfish.** If he is driven by the desire for wealth, it is nothing to him that someone has to lose in order that he may gain. The desire for wealth fixes a man's thoughts upon himself, and others become merely means or obstacles in the path to his own enrichment. True, that need not happen; but in fact it often does.

**(iv) Although the desire for wealth is based on the desire for security, it ends in nothing but anxiety.** The more a man has to keep, the more he has to lose and, the tendency is for him to be haunted by the risk of loss. There is an old fable about a peasant who rendered a great service to a king who rewarded him with a gift of much money. For a time the man was thrilled, but the day came when he begged the king to take back his gift, for into his life had entered the hitherto unknown worry that he might lose what he had. ([1 Timothy 6 Commentary](#))

**Ruin** ([3639](#)) (**olethros** from **ollumi** = to destroy. Derivative = **apollumi** = destroy utterly or fully and has to do with that which is ruined and is no longer usable for its intended purpose; Related - **exolothreuo**; **olothreuo**) is a state of utter and hopeless ruin and the end of all that gives worth to human existence! Do not confuse with a state of annihilation (and non-existence so that there is no longer an actual personal perception) for **olethros** signifies an unavoidable, very real experience of distress and torment! The destruction Paul warns about is a time of unavoidable distress, torment, disaster and utter ruin. It will not be a loss of being but rather a loss of well-being, the ruination of the very purpose of one's being or existing!

**Olethros** is used in **LXX** especially by the OT prophets (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Obadiah) to refer to eschatological destruction (1 Ki. 13:34; Pr 1:26; Pr 1:27; Pr 21:7; Jer. 25:31; Jer. 48:3; Jer. 48:8; Jer. 48:32; Jer. 51:55; Ezek. 6:14; Ezek. 14:16; Hos. 9:6; Obad. 1:13). The idea inherent in this word is to suffer the loss of all that gives worth to existence. It does not denote loss of being (annihilation of the human soul is not taught in Scripture) but rather of well-being, the ruination of the very purpose of their being. [2Th 1:9] helps us understand why Paul calls this "utter ruin" for this is the fate of those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus -- they will be paid eternal destruction (**olethros**) "away from the presence of the Lord" Who created them for His glory & good pleasure!

**If your treasure is on earth, you are going from it  
If it is in heaven, you are going to it.**

**Spurgeon** wrote "When I see so many rich people, as I do, caring so much for their bodies, and so little for their souls, I pity them from the bottom of my heart, and sometimes think there are as many ruined by riches as by poverty. -Feathers for Arrows

**Thomas Watson** To damn them with delights!

"So that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are very familiar with his evil schemes." 2 Corinthians 2:11

The serpent beguiled Eve with his subtlety; let us not be beguiled by his hellish snares and plots.

Satan has a dexterity in subtle contrivances. He hurts more as a fox than a lion. His snares are worse than his darts. His error damns as well as His vice; poison kills as well as a pistol.

Satan bewitches and ensnares men, by setting pleasing baits before them; as the riches, pleasures, and honors of the world. "All these things will I give you." Matthew 4:9. How many does he tempt with this golden apple! Pride, idleness, luxury—are the three worms which are bred by prosperity. "Those who will be rich fall

into temptation and a snare." 1 Timothy 6:9. Satan kills with these silver darts! How many are ensnared by his luscious delights!

The pleasures of the world are the great engine by which Satan batters down men's souls. His policy is to tickle them to death—to damn them with delights! The flesh would gladly be pleased, and Satan prevails by this temptation—he drowns them in the sweet waters of pleasure.

Such as have abundance of the world, walk in the midst of golden snares! We had need watch our hearts in prosperity, and pray not to be led into temptation. We have as much need to be careful that we are not endangered by prosperity—as a man has to be careful at a feast where there are some poisoned dishes of food. ([The Lord's Prayer](#))

**In their ceaseless quest for gold,  
They neglect their never-dying soul!**

**Destruction** (waste) (684)(**apoleia** from **apo** = marker of separation, away from + **olethros** = ruin, death but **not** annihilation <> from **ollumi** = to destroy) means utter and hopeless loss of all that gives worth to existence. Note that contrary to popular opinion **apoleia** does not refer to extinction or annihilation or an end of existence, but to total ruin so far as the purpose of existence is concerned. *Apōleia* (destruction) usually refers to the eternal ruin of the soul (cf. Ro 9:22; 2Th. 2:3; Heb. 10:39; Rev. 17:8).

The more common sense of **apoleia** is as a description of the destruction which one experiences, when man instead of becoming what he might have become by redemption through the blood of Christ (new creature/creation in Christ - 2 Cor 5:17), is ruined ("spiritually bankrupt", in a state of "eternal disrepair") suffering loss of value or usefulness (ultimately usefulness to God - this is sad beyond words and even as I write this note tears well up in my eyes for the plight of these men and women, created in the image of God.) Think of the picture of a once beautiful edifice which has suffered the ravages of time and circumstances and all that one sees is the useless, collapsed, disintegrated remains.

In short, **apoleia** speaks of the loss of everything that makes human existence worthwhile. The idea not loss of being, but loss of well-being.

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## THE DANGER OF RICHES

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare. 1 Timothy 6:9

Money is a good servant but a poor master. If the desire for riches becomes an obsession and an end in itself, men soon lose all spiritual perspective and fall into many "foolish and hurtful lusts."

The emperor Nero reveled in earthly possessions and set his heart upon them. From his splendid throne as the ruler of the Roman Empire, he commanded that gorgeous porches a mile long be built around his palace. The ceiling of his banquet hall was equipped at great expense with hidden showers that lightly sprayed perfume upon all who came to visit him. His crown was worth a half million dollars, and his mules were shod with silver. Whenever he traveled, a thousand chariots accompanied him, and he refused to wear the same garment twice no matter how costly and beautiful it was. Taxing the people unmercifully, he was able to pay extravagant sums of money to anyone who could devise new methods of entertaining him. Yet with all his riches and splendor he was a peevish, gloomy, dissatisfied man. The immense wealth he had amassed could not satisfy his soul. Not being rich toward God, he died a suicide.

If the Lord has granted you material possessions, recognize the dangers that accompany such prosperity. Honestly evaluate whether you are a good steward of the gifts He has bestowed. If you are poor, you should also heed the warning of 1 Timothy 6:9 because the burning desire for goods and gold can be just as destructive to your spiritual life as having them! Seek the riches of grace and concentrate on laying up "treasures in heaven." --H.G.B. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

You may own countless acres--a lordly estate;  
You may dwell in a palace, costly and great; |  
But the mansions in Glory will only be given  
To those whose treasures are laid up in Heaven.  
--Moncrief

Never let your GOLD become your GOD!

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## COVETOUS OR CONTENTED?

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. 1 Timothy 6:10

Someone has said, "Money is a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and a certain provider for everything except happiness." In itself money is good and necessary, but to love it is sinful. Those who try to find contentment in wealth are usually not satisfied unless they have just a little bit more.

Coming downstairs one morning, a wealthy man heard his cook exclaim, "Oh, if I only had 5 dollars, wouldn't I be content!" Thinking the matter over, and wanting to see the woman satisfied, he handed her a 5-dollar bill. She thanked him profusely. He paused outside the kitchen door to hear if she would express the same satisfaction and thanks to God. As soon as she thought he was out of earshot, he heard her mutter in disgust, "Oh, why didn't I say 10 dollars!" That's the typical cry of the covetous heart.

A Christian magazine reported that a songbook had a misprint in one line of the hymn, '**Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah.**' It should have read, "**Land me safe on Canaan's shore,**" but it was printed, "**Land my safe on Canaan's shore.**" The editor observed, "The revised version might be acceptable to many who have fallen into the trap of the love of money."

To find the joy and satisfaction that comes from God-- that's contentment. Truthfully now, are you seeking to be rich in goods or rich in God? Are you covetous or contented? --H.G.B. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Who finds in Christ a resting place  
From all his toil and pain  
Has greater wealth than if earth's gold  
Were gathered to his gain.  
--Garrison

The real measure of our wealth is what will be ours in eternity

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Temptations Men Face by Tom L. Eisenman) B. F. Skinner did behavior-modification experiments with chickens. He found that he could teach a chicken to peck at a disk if he rewarded the bird with a piece of corn. If he stopped rewarding the chicken, the chicken would quit pecking the disk. But if he gave an intermittent reward, that is, dropped a piece of corn only occasionally and at random, chickens would stand and peck relentlessly at the disk until they fell over from exhaustion. This is the psychological principle behind the compelling power of the slot machine. We are driven and manipulated by the intermittent reward principle in sweepstakes, lotteries and gambling. Sure, sometimes people do get rich quick. If it never happened, we would soon give up the obsession. I read last week of a man in Colorado who won two \$10,000 prizes in the lottery in one week. That ought to keep Coloradans pecking the lottery disk for months.

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(Laugh Again by Charles R. Swindoll) The whole subject of finances and fund raising and remaining pure, humble, and grateful in the handling of money is a heavy weight hanging on the thin wires of integrity and accountability.

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**Thomas Watson** describes three worms which often breed in prosperity

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11

To make us content with "daily bread," though God straitens us in our allowance, think seriously of the danger there is in a high, prosperous condition.

Some are not content with "daily bread," but desire to have their barns filled, and heap up silver as dust; which proves a snare to them. "Those who will be rich fall into a snare." 1Ti 6:9. **Pride, idleness, and lust—are three worms which often breed in prosperity.**

**Prosperity** often deafens the ear against God. "I spoke unto you in your prosperity, but you said—I will not hear." Jer 22:21. Soft pleasures harden the heart. In the body, the more fat—the less vitality. Just so, the more outward plenty—often the less piety.

**Prosperity** has its honey—and also its sting! Anxious care is the evil spirit which haunts the rich man—and will not let him rest. When his chests are full of money—his heart is full of care, either how to manage or how to increase, or how to secure what he has gotten.

Should this not make us content with that allowance which God gives us—if we have daily bread, though not dainties? Think of the danger of prosperity! The spreading of a full table may be the spreading of a snare!

**Many have been sunk to hell,**

### with golden weights!

The world's golden sands are quicksands, which should make us take our daily bread, though it be but coarse, contentedly. If we have less prosperity—we have less snare. As we lack the rich provisions of the world—so we lack their temptations. "If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that." 1 Timothy 6:8.

If God keeps us to a spare diet—if He gives us less of temporal things—He has made it up in spiritual things. He has given us the Pearl of great price—the Lord Jesus, who is the quintessence of all good things. To give us Christ, is more than if God had given us all the world. He can make more worlds—but He has no more Christs to bestow. Christ is such a golden mine, that the angels cannot dig to the bottom! His riches are unsearchable! Eph. 3:8. From Christ we have justification, adoption and glorification!

Consider that it is not having an abundance, which makes us content. It is not a fancy cage which will make the bird sing. Having an abundance may make one less content. One staff may help the traveler—but a bundle of staffs will be a burden to him. A great estate may be like a long trailing garment—more burdensome than useful.

He who can say, "My God," has enough to rock his heart quiet in the lowest condition. What can he lack—who has the all-sufficient God for his portion! (Thomas Watson, "The Lord's Prayer")

**Illustration** - Samuel Insull was born in London, and began his career as a clerk for various local businesses. At the age of 21 he caught the attention of Thomas Edison while working for Edison's business representative in London. Edison offered Insull a job as his personal secretary, and he immigrated to the United States in 1881. After moving to Chicago in 1892, Insull assembled an empire of utility and transportation companies including Commonwealth Edison, Peoples Gas, and the Northern Indiana Public Service Company, and he acquired several electric railways in Indiana and Illinois. In 1932, the Great Depression brought Insull's empire crashing down. His utilities holdings lost \$3 billion and he lost \$300 million in personal wealth. He fled to Greece to live on a meager income of \$18,000 per year but was returned to the U.S. to stand trial on charges of mail fraud, embezzlement, and violation of the bankruptcy acts. He was acquitted in three separate trials. Broken financially by the exhausting court trials and the Great Depression, he retired to France. Insull died on July 16, 1938, died of a heart attack in a Paris subway station with twenty cents in his pocket. Riches come and go, but we can put our trust in the Lord forever. (Preaching Illustrations Vol 1)

**Watson** writes...

The rich man's table is often his snare; he is ready to engulf himself too deep in these sweet waters. In this sense it is hard to know how to abound. It must be a strong brain which can bear heady wine. Just so, he has need have of much wisdom and grace, to know how to bear a prosperous condition; either he is ready to kill himself with worry—or to glut himself with luscious delights. O the hazard of honor, the damage of prosperity! Pride, lust, and worldliness, are the three worms which breed in prosperity. (De. 32:15) The pastures of prosperity are dangerous. How soon are we ensnared upon the soft pillow of ease! Prosperity is often a trumpet which sounds a retreat—it calls men off from the pursuit of religion. The sun of prosperity often dulls and puts out the fire of piety! How many souls has the cancer of abundance killed? "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." (1 Timothy 6:9-10)

The world is full of golden sands—but they are quick-sands! Prosperity, like smooth Jacob, will supplant and betray! A great estate, without much vigilance—will be a thief to rob us of heaven! Such as are upon the pinnacle of honor, are in most danger of falling. A more humble condition, is less hazardous. The little boat rides safely along, when the gallant ship with its large mast and top-sail, is cast away. Adam in paradise was overcome, when Job on the dung-hill was a conqueror. Samson fell asleep in Delilah's lap. Just so, some have fallen so fast asleep on the lap of ease and plenty, that they have never awaked until they have been in hell!

The world's fawning—is worse than its frowning! It is more to be feared when it smiles—than when it thunders. Prosperity, in Scripture, is compared to a candle; "his candle shined upon my head:" (Job 29:3) how many have burnt their wings about this candle! The corn being over-ripe, withers; and fruit, when it mellows, begins to rot. Just so, when men mellow with the sun of prosperity, commonly their souls begin to rot in sin! "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" (Lu. 18:24) His golden weights keep him from ascending up the hill of God! And shall we not be content, though we are placed in a lower orb? What if we have not as much of the world, as others do? We are not in so much danger! As we lack the riches of the world—so we lack their temptations. O the abundance of danger—which is in abundance!

When men's estates are low, they are more serious about their souls, and more humble. But when they have abundance, then their hearts begin to swell with their estates. Bring a man from the cold, starving climate of poverty—into the hot southern climate of prosperity—and he begins to lose his appetite to godly things, he grows weak—and a thousand to one if all his religion does not die! But bring a Christian from a rich flourishing estate into a low condition—and he has a better appetite after heavenly things, he hungers more after Christ, he thirsts more for grace, he eats more of the Bread of Life; this man is now likely to live and hold out in his piety. Be content then, with moderation; if you have but enough to pay for your passage to heaven, it suffices. "If we have food and clothing—we will be content with these." 1 Timothy 6:8

**WHERE YOU GO HEREAFTER  
DEPENDS ON  
WHAT YOU GO AFTER HERE!**