

In God We Tru\$t: Treasure This
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1 Timothy 6:17-19

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This sermon series, *In God We Tru\$t*, explores our relationship with money and invites people to trust God, not money, for ultimate security. Our goal is to help others follow Jesus even in our relationship with money.

If we didn't have the Bible, then I'd tell you my experiences/opinions. You could agree, argue or ignore. But we believe the Bible is THE AUTHORITY for our lives. Either we believe it or we don't. In the very 1st story of the Bible, Adam and Eve were convinced what they needed was FREEDOM. They rejected what God said so they could do their own thing. They valued freedom, but didn't know what to do. Ironically, when we reject God's Word and insist on doing our own thing we end up CONFUSED. Another word would be LOST. The purpose of the Bible is that God wants us to FLOURISH. Today I want to tell you what the Bible says about taking hold of a life that is TRULY life. Each of us have to decide if we will take God at His word, or not. Each of us will have to choose our response.

Watch for **2 commands** Paul gives in this text: 2 "**Don't**" + 2 "**Do's**." How does giving a command go over today – "I Command You!"? Young Timothy speaking to those with far more influence and wealth than he does, could be very intimidating. 1 Tim. 6:17-19 (p. 1851) = today's text.

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Paul has 2 "**commands**" (not "suggestions" - for our own benefit)

Command those who ARE rich Earlier he'd spoken to those who aspired to be rich. Some in this audience who will hear his letter read ARE the rich. There are some special words both Jesus and Paul had for them. While the vast majority of Americans are rich according to the world's standards (\$50,000 = top 1% of income earners in the world), we may not be as rich as we would like within the context of our own family, neighbors, community & culture. We know there are many in OK who go to bed hungry.

We should strive to establish a healthy relationship to wealth no matter how much or how little we have. Good habits now better equip us to handle, in a godly manner, whatever wealth may come our way. God is the Provider and the Source, that's why we put our hope in Him no matter what our economic situation currently may be.

present world –there's always more to come for Christians...the BEST is yet to come. More in vs. 19

I. Don't do 2 things:

A.) Be **ARROGANT** = a real danger for the wealthy. Arrogance is from 2 Greek words meaning: "to think" + "exalted thoughts." "To think exalted thoughts about myself. "Because I have more than others, therefore I am superior. God sees my superiority, otherwise I'd not be so blessed." Of course a Mafia don could say the same thing. Our culture (and some Christians) think this way. I heard a former Mafia don who is now a Christian, Michael Franzese, describe the benefits of his life of crime. Millions and millions of dollars, the best cars, mansions, etc., but he certainly was not a morally or spiritually superior human being. This gets into the church far too much/often. This is why we should strive to connect with those who are struggling financially and try to respond to their needs. We must be wise in the ways we go about this, for even in helping, we can become arrogant. Our thoughts can easily be: "We are going to give them something and they'd better appreciate it."

Deut 8:10-18 *When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.*

B.) Don't put our **hope in wealth**. If we have nice stuff it's hard not to let them become what we hope/trust in. But if we put our hope in wealth, it's going to have an **uncertain** (vs. certainty) future. The stock market can tank. Today's gains = tomorrow's losses. Another certain thing = we can't take it with us.

Paul did not say that money was evil; he said the love of it was what was wrong. He doesn't tell rich people to divest themselves of their wealth; he said don't put your trust in it or make it your ultimate treasure. Invest in and put your hope and trust in the Kingdom of God, not the Kingdom of Money. Just think of all the money/coins that people owned in the days of Jesus. It's valuable now only as collector's items. But most all of it is gone.

Has the arrogance of wealth darkened your soul? Are you putting your faith in the belief that "If Only I had a little bit more then I'd be happy?" It's a lie. Don't fall for it.

II. 2nd 18 "Command them"

A.) **Do Good – be rich in good deeds** Don't try to be rich by obtaining money, be rich in doing good things to help others. So whether you are rich, middle class or poor, we can ALL do good deeds. True wealth isn't a financial portfolio – it's how we are serving others. True riches have nothing to do with money.

B.) **be generous & willing to share**

Answers the question: How to be rich toward God.

"willing" Attitude more than anything

"share" (Lk. 3:11) The Greek word here = "Koinonia." We aren't all in the same income bracket & God isn't asking us to give the same as the next person. But He IS asking us to look at what we have, what He's generously provided for us, and to SHARE. What is God leading you to share today for the sake of the KOG, for your NEIGHBOR, and for your OWN SOUL?

¹⁹ **treasure...for the coming age** The New Testament never moves away from "What happens next." This life isn't all there is. It has a very counter-intuitive and culturally reversed script: the more we give away now = the more we will have later. It's the long view. Not only will we lay up treasure in heaven but generosity also serves an immediate purpose. It makes us trust God, not money. It also makes us generous. NOBODY likes being around Scrooge. Even Scrooge didn't like himself. Those of us who have more, have the challenge and the opportunity to hope in God in spite of their wealth. In practical terms, that requires us to hold it loosely, i.e. be generous. I don't see any other way to demonstrate this attitude.

Matt 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where

thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This connection is clear = treasure + heart. The goal of Christian disciple = ***"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not RICH TOWARD GOD."*** (Luke 12:21)

Supposedly, at the stroke of midnight on January 1, 2000, a computer glitch would throw everything into a terrible disruption. It would be a world-wide, cataclysmic event unparalleled in human history. It was called "Y2K." In anticipation of it, many people adopted strategies to safeguard themselves. I just learned of a guy who was convinced by the PR that it would be doomsday. So, in advance, he dug out a basement and bought all of this prepared food and stored it in his basement. He learned to grow a garden. He bought a water purifier and a lantern and lots of extra batteries. He bought lots of silver (not certificates, but actual silver) and since he lived in the country thought it would be smarter just to bury the silver instead of putting it in safety deposit boxes in a bank. Y2K came and went with no problem, but he liked the feeling of security and independence he had gained, knowing he could survive on his own, if necessary—so he left everything as it was. A few years later, an ice storm destroyed several trees on his property which he had to remove in the spring; he leveled the ground and planted grass in their places. Later that summer, he sat on his porch drinking his coffee and admiring his acreage- thinking how nicely the grass had grown up and how much more light there was without the trees . . . and then he had a horrible, sinking feeling. Most of his wealth was buried deep in the ground, in sealed plastic containers, under trees *which no longer existed*. The treasure is still buried there to this day, but there's no "x" to mark the spots. (It was also about this time that he discovered all the aged emergency canned goods stored in his basement had exploded.) He was putting his security here in this – now he can't even find it. I also know what you're thinking – you want to take your metal detector to that property and find all that silver. I'll sell you a map after the service ☺ What will happen with your stuff? We'll die – and somebody else will get it. I saw that a Monet painting sold for \$84.1 million. I thought: "And I wonder how that makes Monet feel?"

so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. "Truly Life!" What a great note to end the series on! This is what Jesus wants for us! So often we doubt this truth, and we doubt that he really knew how to give it. If we truly believed it, then we would do what we're commanded. Somehow our relationship with God is connected to our relationship with money... John 10:10 *I have come that they*

may have life, and have it to the full. If we want “life” we don’t grab it; we get it from Jesus with the opportunity then, to give it away. This is our great incentive = a treasure in heaven.

Application: We want to help you to be “rich toward God” in your heart, but we also want to provide a strategy for your brain. How do I do this? Claudia used a phrase to describe what she and Bill had done: “**Develop a strategy.**” They started somewhere. They started with 1%. Over a period of 10 years, they increased their giving 1% for 10 years until they gave 10%. I know they give more than that now, but the important thing is: They got a strategy and they did something.

We are all in different places right now. Some of us are retired and living on fixed incomes, others are in-between jobs, many are “married with kids,” some are in debt up to their eyeballs, and others are doing okay, while still others have learned to practice financial discipline and are doing extremely well. We want to help you do well. There are things which can be done. **Financial Peace University** is one of those great places which can help (the next Asbury FPU will be at the end of January). If we fail to develop a strategy, we tend to remain unfocused, haphazard and undisciplined.

Jesus wants you to take hold of the life that is truly life. I want that for you too. Today, I don’t “command” you 😊 but I encourage you and I challenge you to take God at His word. He says, *this is how you lay treasures for yourself in the coming age. This is how you take hold of true life.* Do this for yourself - for your own soul, and for relationship with God.