

WHICH WAY TO HAPPINESS?

1 Timothy 6:6-19

We live in days of rapid change!

This year Helen and I celebrate 57 years of marriage

Look at how many changes have affected our homes in the past 57 years.

57 yrs ago there were no microwaves, no personal computers, cell phones or tablets, no texting or Powerpoint!

± 50 yrs ago, Toffler wrote *Future Shock* warning of changes to come at ever-increasing pace.

China is rapidly becoming financial capital of the world.

In U.S. no one's sure *what* may happen in the next year.

Change affects *everything*: traditional values, marriage practices, gender identity.

One major area of change affecting our lives is **economic**:

Best-seller warned that we live beyond our means; unless changes occur, disaster awaits us.

WE LIVE IN SCARY, UNSTABLE, CHANGING TIMES!

Cal Thomas: **"Happiness isn't found in material goodies"**

"Surely a person who gets all the material goodies must be happy!... Go to school, find high-paying job; make oodles of money; buy things; be happy."

Happiness isn't found in material goodies."

I'm content when I get what I want: love, money, pleasure

Frustration with this perspective:

- 1) We never get enough of what we want
- 2) When we get it, *it doesn't satisfy*—it's empty;

Is "the American Dream" the road to happiness?

Have you noticed how many people who "have it all" commit suicide?

Cal Thomas asks: "When will we come to our senses and realize that there's no profit for anyone who *'gains the whole world, but loses his own soul.'*"

"No Fear" T-Shirt:

"He who dies with the most toys, STILL DIES!"

Have we learned that happiness isn't found in material goodies?

Parable of rich fool warns against piling up goods, when we can't use what we *already* own.

Final day of his life the fool is planning bigger barns.
Our homes are more than twice as big as a generation ago;
We still *own more than we can store in them!*

So we rent storage units!

Maybe we should tear them down & build bigger ones!

That's the fool's problem!

Jesus calls him a fool for hoarding goods he can't use,
instead of using it for others' good and God's glory.

Jesus: *"No one can serve two masters..."*

You can't serve both God and possessions."

Paul: *"No one who goes to war entangles himself with matters of daily living."*

Possessions aren't bad.

They're only wrong when we're *entangled* in them!
People never think they have enough.
People who always want more usually aren't happy.

Today it's fashionable to *talk* about "**downsizing.**"

–opposite of striving to own "bigger and better."

–choosing to live on *less* rather than *more*.

–outgrowth of realizing that every person here has *already* eaten

better, dressed better, and traveled better than most people who ever lived.

To downsize is a decision to live more simply.

Two major reasons:

1. For many it's practical: We're living beyond our means.
2. For others, it may be saying *"I could buy it, but I won't. I don't need it; I have higher priorities for using resources God gave me."*

Paul deals with such issues in **1 Tim. 6.**

Paul looks at **God's attitude about wealth.**

You *could* get idea He's against it

Scripture is filled with examples of godly people who are very wealthy

Scripture also warns us about danger of seeking it!

GODLINESS VS. MATERIALISM 1 Tim. 6:3-19

How does God view wealth & accumulation of goods?

Danger of the Profit Motive 6:3-5

*"If anyone teaches false doctrines & doesn't agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ & to godly teaching, ⁴he is conceited & understands nothing... ⁵...men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth & who **think that godliness is a means to financial gain.**"*

Danger false teachers face: using religion for profit.

"Religion is a great way to make a buck!"

False teachers have "sold themselves!"

You make more money by telling people *what they want to hear* than by telling them what God has said!

Profit motive gets in the way of telling truth

=> abundance of religious racketeers.

To avoid that risk, Paul counsels followers about the...

Advantage of Godliness with Contentment 6-10

Value of Contentment 6:6-8

"Godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, & we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food & clothing, we will be content with that."

Problem with wealth:

Wealth doesn't bring contentment 6

Paul & Rockefeller agree:

How much does it take for a person to be satisfied?

Wealth doesn't bring contentment

2nd problem with wealth:

Wealth isn't permanent

Wealth isn't FOREVER!

It doesn't last!

7 *"We brought nothing into the world, & we can take nothing out of it*

*"We always know answer to question: "**How much did he leave?"***

– Everything!

Wealth isn't permanent

Our basic needs should be enough to satisfy 8 *"But if we have food & clothing, we'll be content with that"*

Danger of Greed 9-10 *"People who want to get rich fall into temptation & a trap & into many foolish & harmful desires that plunge men into ruin & destruction. ¹⁰For **the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil...***

Desire for more wealth causes all kinds of evil.

Problem isn't how much we *have*!

Wealthy people want more;
poor people may be content

Scripture doesn't criticize wealthy because of what they own.

Scripture's concerned about where our heart is.

Danger is the love of money!

CHARGE TO PURSUE GODLINESS 11-16

Rather than wealth, godly people ought to pursue a godly walk.

¹¹*"But you, man of God, flee from all this, & pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance & gentleness.*

Our pursuit, rather than possessions, ought to be accumulation of:

1

Righteousness 3. Faith 5. Endurance

2. Godliness 4. Love 6. Gentleness

Warning Against Materialism 17-19

Wealthy run risk of trusting wealth, rather than God!

6 PRINCIPLES ABOUT WEALTH.

1st 4 deal with...

Proper *ATTITUDE* concerning wealth 17

"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."

1) Don't be proud of your wealth

2) Don't trust your wealth.

Our confidence is in God

–not our investments or bank accounts.

If we trust our things, 1 emergency can wipe out all we have.

*If confidence is in God, when we lose things,
we still have what matters!*

3) Trust God who gives you wealth.

**4) Enjoy what God gives you,
but don't become its slave!**

God *has* given us all things—*richly*—
for our *enjoyment!*

BUT we aren't to cling to them

–we aren't to put our trust in *them*.

**Corrie ten Boom: it hurts when God pries possessions loose,
from our tightly clenched fingers!**

5th principle related to wealth...

Proper *INVESTMENT* of wealth

6:18 *Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.*

5) Use what God gives you to accomplish godly purposes

Do good Be rich in good works

Be generous—in *giving it away!*

Be willing to share what you have

Final principle for use of wealth...

Proper *PURPOSE* for wealth

6:19 *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."*

**6) Accumulate eternal treasure
—that which lasts forever.**

Woman met old friend who asked about her dad. She shared suffering of his last days, but expectancy of eternity. **"Your father was more optimistic than I; he is going to his treasure. I'll be leaving mine."**

We know that's true *theologically*,
but is that how we live *practically*?

Downsizing! Living a simpler lifestyle; recognizing we can live better with less; that life can be more meaningful when we aren't entangled in *things*.

Getting off "more is better" treadmill frees us to invest in God's business!

What does God want us to do with wealth in our hands?

The real issue:

WHAT ARE WE LIVING FOR?

What's it Going to Take to Get Our Attention?

30 years ago, God got OUR attention.

Financial crisis left us no choice.

It taught us about ourselves & our priorities.

God may still teach us more about downsizing!

We can choose a simpler lifestyle voluntarily—let God reorder our priorities, or we can wait, until He brings us to that point.

If you don't know Christ, God isn't asking for your money.

HE WANTS TO GIVE A FREE GIFT.

To refuse to take his gift, or try to buy it, would be an insult. *Take the gift.*

Giving is a privilege for God's children.

We give because of what he's given us.

JOYFULLY— without pressure!

It's our way of saying thanks for all God has given to us.