

LESSON 11

OVERCOMING MATERIALISM

Central Truth: True wealth is found in godliness with contentment.

Memory Verse: Then he said, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."
- *Luke 12:15*

LESSON TEXT

1 Timothy 6:6-21

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6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.

8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

10 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.

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

12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

13 In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you

14 to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

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.

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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.

20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge,

21 which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.

INTRODUCTION

In this modern world, many people are daily working very hard to attain higher standards of living. Consequently some make unnecessary sacrifices to obtain what they want.

But the question which confronts us is how many possessions do we actually need? To what extent can Christians pursue material things before that pursuit becomes materialism? This week's lesson explores some of the important biblical principles that provide guidance to overcoming materialism.

LESSON

Materialism by definition is "a preoccupation with or stress upon material rather than intellectual or spiritual things" (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition).

In Paul's ministry some people including one of his associates, Demas (**2 Tim. 4:10**) fell into the temptation of placing material possession above the gospel. Paul did not forbid wealth outright. He rather emphasized the influence material wealth can have on heart issues, one of which is contentment. Contentment is being generally satisfied with what one has. It shows the idea of self – mastery. Christians must have contented minds; our hearts must be content with the simple necessities of life. Without contentment, Christians cannot become truly godly.

In **1 Timothy 6:9**, Paul refers to those who desire to be rich. The desire for wealth produces a lust for the things of the world and when this lust goes unrestrained, it leads to spiritual destruction. This is why the Bible says "the love of money is a root all kinds of evil..." When people are overtaken by the desire to acquire wealth, they could do all kinds of things for money. Thus Christians must be able to master the temptation for unreasonable desire for riches.

Again the desire for wealth is likened to idolatry. Idolatry in its basic form is putting anything before one's faith and trust in God. Money cannot provide health, long life or genuine love; neither can it buy entrance into God's kingdom. The pursuit of it more often than not produces anxiety; it is a thirst that is insatiable, there is always something that is just beyond a person's grasp, but remember Christ is our provision. One other means of overcoming

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materialism is to pursue the character of Christ (**1 Timothy 6:11**). The qualities of this character are righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness. As Christians, we are citizens of God's eternal kingdom. Therefore rather than pursuing material possessions which will pass away, since we will inherit the kingdom of God, we must pursue things that are consistent with our eternal identity.

Putting our faith in God gives us confidence and strength to overcome materialism. Unlike material riches which can be lost so easily, trusting in Christ has no ultimate risk attached to it. Since God never changes, when the Christian hopes in him, he can be rest assured.

LIFE APPLICATION

Each Christian must personally deal with the issue of materialism. The Bible does not teach that the material things of this world are evil. In fact we are to view the world's abundance as God's gift to His creation. God wants us to enjoy the pleasures of life. He does not want us to be miserable, but He wants us to keep the material things of this life in proper perspective. We must place our hope and confidence in God rather than material gain. If we know we are vulnerable to the lure of riches or putting our faith in money we should ask the Lord to help us.

----- **DAILY BIBLE READING** -----

- Monday – Building Gods' House (Exodus 25:1-9)
- Tuesday – God, the Creator (Psalm 148:1-6)
- Wednesday – Consider Your Ways (Haggai 1:3-11)
- Thursday – Give Sacrificially (2 Corinthians 8:1-7)
- Friday – Pursue True Riches (Ephesians 3:8-19)
- Saturday – Be Grateful (Philippians 4:10-20)

----- **Fellowship of the Spirit** -----