

Sermon Series: “Strengthening Your Grip”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—6/2/2002

Title: “Strengthening Your Grip on Money”

Text: 1 Timothy 6: 6-19

Introduction: (comment on skit of “Catalogitis”) how do you get this disease/how do you get cured from it?

Theme: Beyond sharing principles on how to spend, share, save, and invest money, the Bible works toward imparting a transformed perspective in Christ for using our financial resources to the glory of God and the benefit of others.

A reminder and a warning to those who want to get rich (Print and read vss. 6-16)

?? Taking a look at life from an eternal perspective

1. Contentment is not a life-style but a way of life

1. God’s formula for lasting success: **Godliness** + **Contentment** = **Great Gain (vs. 6)**

2. *Guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.*” Luke 12:15

3. Purging our ears and hearts of the worldly siren call of materialism

4. **Ills.: How to be rich and successful**

5. *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal...For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* Matt. 6: 19, 2

2. Eternal investing is not about the investment but about the long term goal

1. *“For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.” (vs. 7)*

2. *“Here is someone who had worked hard with wisdom, knowledge, and skill. Yet, he must turn over his estate to someone else, who didn't work for it. Even this is pointless and a terrible tragedy.” Eccles. 2: 21*

3. Temporal life is so temporal--exert care not to invest too heavily in it for emotional/mental/spiritual well being

?? Enjoying the essentials with simple acceptance

3. Learn to live simply (vs. 8)

1. Keep things simple, own things simply, be simple in generously giving them away

2. Food and shelter (clothing and roof over our head) — what does that mean?

3. **Ills.: I Want that Car**

4. Receiving with thanks what God gives without looking over shoulder at another’s possessions in envy

4. Avoiding the want/need trap (vs. 9-10)

1. Get rich schemes (legitimate or not) are a “**deathtrap**” to your life and soul if not kept in check (addictive nature)

?? they can take us off-focus spiritually and cause us to “**wander away**” from our faith in Jesus

?? pursuing riches can actually take our vital attention off of family, marriage, health (**pierce w/many pangs**)

2. Remember, money is not the problem; our attachment to it is what sinks us (**love of money = root of evil**)

5. The how-to of simple living (vss. 11-16)

1. **Flee** anything that wants to displace God in your life and take your focus on Jesus

?? *“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2*

2. **Pursue** (wrestle) a life-style that will keep you connected to Jesus and connect others to Jesus through you

?? Characteristics of life with heavenly riches: **righteousness** (guiltless); **godliness** (God-pleasing);

faith (trust); **love** (agape -- sacrificial); **patience** (endurance for long haul); **gentleness** (meek — not power lunch crowd)

3. **Witness** to the hope and treasure you have in heaven by the way you use your earthly treasures (vss. 12-13)

Instruction for those who are rich (Print and Read 1 Timothy 6: 17-19)

?? Don't be conceit—be humbly rich (vs. 17)

1. “Who says that you are any better than other people? What do you have that wasn't given to you? If you were given what you have, why are you bragging as if it weren't a gift?” 1 Cor. 4:7

?? Don't trust in your wealth for security----trust in God (vs. 17)

2. Like an egg—life, possessions, and relationships are fragile—hold them lightly and don't lean on them too much
3. “These things that I once considered valuable, I now consider worthless for Christ. . . I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” Philip. 3:7,12

?? Don't be stingy—generously share as you have been graciously given (vs. 18,19)

4. Activists in doing good; be rich in doing “noble” things; be “first strike” givers (don't wait to be asked) (vs. 18)
5. “God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” 2 Cor. 9:8
6. **Ills.: The more the happier!**

How to be rich and successful

Some rich and successful people don't have much money and aren't famous. Leslie Flynn told how the leaders of an alumni association discovered this through a questionnaire sent to a missionary in Colombia, south America. Here are some of the questions they asked and the answers they received:

- 1) Do you own your own home? **Yes (he had paid the tribes people \$125 for his palm-thatched dwelling in the Amazon basin)**
- 2) Do you second residence, elsewhere? **Yes (he and his family occasionally stayed in a house where missionaries were crowded together for conferences.)**
- 3) Do you own a boat? **Yes (he had a dugout canoe tied up at the riverbank below his house.)**
- 4) Do you plan to travel abroad during the next 2 years? **Yes (he and his family were going home on furlough.)**
- 5) What is your approximate income? **Under \$10,000 per year.**

Flynn suggests that the computer probably spit out an analysis with the notation, “Data incompatible.” But this man is both rich and successful! He possesses great spiritual wealth as a child of God and as a citizen of heaven. In the country in which he ministers, he is considered rich beyond imagination—temporal wealth is all a matter of ones opinion when viewed from an eternal perspective.

I Want that Car

The story goes that a hip young man bought one of the best cars around: a Ferrari GTO. He took it out for a spin and stopped at a red light. An old man on a moped pulled up next to him. The old man looked over at the sleek, shiny car and asked, "What kind of car ya' got there, sonny?" "A Ferrari GTO. It cost half a million dollars." "That's a lot of money," said the old man. "Why does it cost so much?" "Because this car can do up to 320 miles an hour!" stated the young man proudly. The moped driver asked, "Mind if I take a look inside?" "No problem," replied the owner. So the old man poked his head in the window and looked around. Sitting back on his moped, the old man said, "That's a pretty nice car, all right!" Just then the light changed, and the driver decided to show the old man just what his car could do. He floored it, and within 30 seconds the speedometer read 160 miles per hour. Suddenly he noticed a dot in his rear view mirror. It was getting closer! He slowed down to see what it could be, and—Whoosh—something whipped by him going much faster. "What on earth could be going faster than my Ferrari?" the young man said to himself. Then, ahead of him, he saw a dot coming toward him. Whoosh! It went by again, heading the opposite direction—and it looked like the old man on the moped. ***Couldn't be, he thought, how could a moped outrun a Ferrari?*** Once more, though, he saw the dot in his rear view mirror, followed by a *bang* as the speeding object crashed into the back of his car. The young man jumped out and saw the old man lying on the pavement. He ran to him and asked, "Is there anything I can do for you?" The old man whispered, "Unhook? my suspenders? from your side-view mirror." Be careful what you admire!

The more the happier!

An ancient fable tells about three merchants crossing a desert. One moonless night as they came to a dried-up creek bed, they were started by a voice speaking to them out of the darkness. It commanded them to pick up stones and then journey on as far as possible before stopping again. The travelers were also told that when daylight came and they saw what they had gathered, they would be both happy and sad. Without hesitation they obeyed the instructions. When the first gray streaks of dawn appeared in the eastern sky, the men eagerly looked into the bags where the rocks had been placed. Instead of stones, they discovered precious jewels. It was then they understood the meaning of the strange yet significant words, "You'll be both happy and sad." They were glad because of their enrichment through the possession of such valuables, but they were sorrowful to think they had not picked up more!

1 Tim. 6:6-19

But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹People 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. ¹⁰For 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.

¹¹But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. ¹²Fight 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. ¹³In 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 ¹⁴to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which God will bring about in his own time--God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who 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.

¹⁷Command 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.

¹⁸Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹In 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.