

Something We Must Not Love: Money

Ponder: Is money the root of all evil?

Scripture: “For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy” (2 Timothy 3:2, NKJV).

Within Paul’s ominous warning of the “perilous times” that were upcoming, the apostle wrote of those who would be lovers of money. Money-lovers is a compound word coupling *philos* (the warm, friendship variety of love) with the word for silver (a common form money took back then). Paul used the same word in 1 Timothy 6:10, where we find that it is not money, but the love of it, that is the root of all kinds of evil.

Even religious people face the danger of loving money. In the Old Testament, the prophet Balaam desperately wanted the fabulous wealth that King Balak promised him (see Numbers 22). Peter says Balaam “loved the wages of wrongdoing” (2 Peter 2:15).

Jesus endured the abuse of the Pharisees, who were lovers of money (Luke 16:4). Their inordinate desire for material wealth led them to mistreat poor widows while hypocritically praying for them (Matthew 23:14).

So yes, even religious folk can love money – even in the Lord’s own body! Paul warns in particular that elders and deacons must not be money-lovers (see 1 Timothy 3:3, 8). Of course, that doesn’t mean the rest of us are off the hook! The love of money can lead anyone into every kind of sin imaginable (1 Timothy 6:9, 10). From petty theft to grand theft, from flattery to fornication, from misdemeanors to murder, the motives for sin often involve the love of money.

Scripture does not condemn the possession of wealth; it does caution us powerfully not to trust in riches (Mark 10:24) or love them. The rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16-22 thought more of his riches than he thought of Jesus. But greed is no respecter of persons. Even the most poverty-stricken people can love money, while a rich person just might be devoted to using wealth to serve God and other people.

What is your attitude toward money? Do you need to transform it?