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# Not Loving Money

## Hebrews 13:5-6

*Russ Kennedy*

### Introduction

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| <p>Money, money, money, money,<br/>money<br/>Some people got to have it<br/>Some people really need it<br/>Listen to me y'all, do things<br/>Do things, do bad things with it<br/>You wanna do things, do things<br/>Do things, good things with it<br/>Talk about cash money, money<br/>Talk about cash money<br/>Dollar bills, yall</p> <p>For the love of money<br/>People will steal from their mother<br/>For the love of money<br/>People will rob their own brother<br/>For the love of money<br/>People can't even walk the street<br/>Because they never know<br/>Who in the world they're gonna beat<br/>For that lean, mean, mean green<br/>Almighty dollar, money</p> <p>For the love of money<br/>People will lie, Lord, they will cheat<br/>For the love of money<br/>People don't care who they hurt or<br/>beat<br/>For the love of money...</p> | <p>I know money is the root of all<br/>evil<br/>Do funny things to some people<br/>Give me a nickel, brother can you<br/>spare a dime<br/>Money can drive some people out<br/>of their minds</p> <p>Got to have it, I really need it<br/>How many things have I heard<br/>you say<br/>Some people really need it<br/>How many things have I heard<br/>you say<br/>Got to have it, I really need it<br/>How many things have I heard<br/>you say<br/>Don't let, don't let, don't let<br/>money rule you<br/>For the love of money<br/>Money can change people some-<br/>times<br/>Don't let, don't let, don't let<br/>money fool you<br/>Money can fool people sometimes<br/>People, don't let money, don't let<br/>money change you<br/>It will keep on changing, chang-<br/>ing up your mind</p> <p style="text-align: right;">The O'Jays</p> |
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Paul writes in 1 Timothy 6:6-10 the words that inspired the O'Jays and instruct us:

Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, <sup>7</sup> for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. <sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. <sup>9</sup> But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

So how do we become a people who are not ruled by money love? This is what our text in Hebrews is all about.

## Our Practical Exhortation

(v.5a)

This exhortation speaks to our materialism. But it does it in a startling way.

### Its High Responsibility

Listen to how this is phrased. “Keep your life free from love of money.” That command is so plain and clear yet is so often repeated in the Bible. Is your life-style marked by not loving money? Do people look at the way you live and have no questions about whether you are serving God and money?

Money-love is a deep root of many evils. It requires vigilance and diligence. You have to work at keeping your soul from going hard after money. It requires aggressive disciplines over your life. Don’t think that since you have no money that you do not love money. Brothers and sisters, having money only enables gratification of the craving; it does not create the craving. You can long for the next, the newest, the nicer, the neatest... as things on TV, in catalogues, on show room floors, in the malls, in shop windows, in your neighbor’s drive or home.

Loving money sometimes shows itself in cravings that are satisfied by spending. We love to buy and own and collect. And sometimes it shows itself in cravings that are satisfied by saving. We pinch and scrimp and count our accounts, pile up our savings, set it aside. I am not saying that either spending or saving in and of themselves are sins; but the love of money that motivates much of it is.

Money love can kill ministry – we see personal accumulation as the aim of working. Thus we function exactly the same as a thief. The solution to coveting hearts that drive thieving actions is repentance. It is a change of heart and life from a philosophy of *work to get* to a theology of *work to give* (Ephesians 4:28). Paul further says to Timothy that an elder, to be qualified for office, must not love money (1Timothy 3:3).

This is our responsibility. We are commanded to do this. We must believe it to be a priority, hunger to love God more than money, bow to be ruled by God more than money so that we will obey God in this. No one can do it for you. No one can come onto the field of your life and substitute for you in this. Not loving money is your responsibility.

But you do not do it alone. You do not allow money to rule your life by the grace of God who empowers and enables every effort. You do it in the company of believers. You are not alone in this struggle. All of us war with the love of money and materialism in our souls. So we help one another with loving words of encouragement, practical acts of loving help and timely exhortations to press forward when we stumble.

*It is our responsibility to not love money.*

## **Its Humble Remedy**

What is the remedy to loving money? Having a life filled with satisfied contentment. A Biblical Christian is marked by a deep contentment with God's provision for Him. He is grateful for it. He keeps laying up treasure in heaven so that his heart will not long for earthly riches. Whether in much or in need, Paul had learned the secret of contentment. Contentment is not a sense of satisfaction over having gained what we have long sought – it is being satisfied with what we have.

So then, do we go out and sell our houses and cars and stereos and give away our bank accounts? Only if you are making choices to serve them and want them and provide for more and better of them rather than serving and wanting and sacrificing for Christ. Beloved, it is much easier for most to hear strong words of exhortation about purity than about money. But in both we must be pleasing to God. In both we must walk-worship acceptably with fear and awe. Do you?

Take an inventory. Are you content with your station in life? If you are single, while still desiring to be married, are you quietly content before the Lord? You who are married, are you content with your spouse? Do you have words of comparison and contrast running through your hearts? Do you have thoughts or even words like, "I wish you were more like..." Are you content with your home now? Do you drive around on Sunday afternoons just to see what is out there, what people are selling secretly hoping that maybe something better will be affordable? Are you content with your job? I know many of you are in difficult work situations – remember that many of the churches in Bible days would have been filled with people who had no choice about their employers or employment – they were servants or slaves.

Do you see what I am getting at? It is possible to fool ourselves and say that we are free from loving money and yet have vague discontents or even very specific ones. Now hear me, I am not saying that all aspiring for the better is wrong. Again, desiring is a function of the heart like believing, choosing and feeling. But when there is a discontent that is unsettling, ruling, driving – then this is what we have to go after at the heart level. Loving money will bring discontent. Being content will replace loving money and require loving God more than life itself.

*We must learn to be content and satisfied.*

## Our Powerful Motivations

(v.5b-6)

How are we motivated to keep our hearts free from the love of money? We are motivated by the power of a promise.

### God's Sure Promise

(v.5b)

We have God's sure promise. This is stated in the most emphatic way possible. "I will not ever for sure never leave you and will not and cannot forsake you ever." What scripture does the author of Hebrews bring to bear on our loving money? This quote is from Joshua 1:5 which is reflected on and quoted indirectly in several other Old Testament texts. But go back there with me for a moment.

Here is God's commissioning of Joshua to enter the land, lead the people to victory and to bring about the full inheritance of the land. In facing the incredible hardships of years of battle and conquest, God promises to be with Joshua and His people through it all. Why can the author of Hebrews quote this as having bearing on our struggles with money. He does so because he understands what the book of Joshua is about through a Christ-centered lens. We learn from Joshua and how it is used and quoted through the Bible that crossing the river Jordan is a foreshadowing, not of passing through physical death and entering heaven, but of passing through death and resurrection in our salvation. Once we have died to the old man we were, we are now putting on the old man we are becoming. Joshua is all about conquering sin while living in the resurrection realm. In other words, it foreshadows our living as having been saved but not yet having the new heavens and new earth. It is about our conquering the sins that still occupy our lives.

So, while we are conquering sin and beginning more and more to live in the inheritance that God has promised, God is with us! It then makes sense for us to realize that when we are facing the Canaanite evil of money love, we conquer led by our heavenly Joshua, the Lord Jesus. And all the while the presence and power of God is with us so that we can defeat each sin.

I know that the sinfulness of my own heart is exposed when this really does not motivate me. This promise is supposed to stir up hearts to the hard work of sacrificial love, hospitality to strangers, keeping our marriage vows and not loving money. But does it? Frankly, are you ready now to go out to the task because God is there with you and will never leave you?

Why is this? Is it because we simply do not value and prize the presence of God with us? Does this promise excite you for love and hospitality and purity and so on? Here it is once again. Loved ones, hungering and desiring God ought to so burn in our hearts that we will be satisfied with no less. And that hunger and desire will leap up with an affirming "Yes!" when promises of the abiding presence of God are heard.

You see, we love money because of what it promises us. It holds out the hope for something else we desire. We rarely love money for its own sake. Yes, there is the occasionally distorted heart that piles up money for its own sake. But for most of us, money promises to bring us something better than we have now. We define what we believe to be better. Then we desire those things. Money prom-

ises to bring them to us. So we love money because, you know, when you have money, you can have what has not organized and oriented your heart.

But God makes His own promises. He tells you what He will give and what He will grant. Your struggle is to so clearly define that in your heart and to so powerfully desire it that you will turn away from what money promises to what God promises. This turning is repentance. It involves two steps.

First, you must clearly know what God has promised, what, when, how where He will keep His word. This must be as clear in your heart as the things that money promises. You must see in your mind's eye the providing hand of God as clearly as you see that house, car, computer, stereo or even other person.

Second, you must desire what God promises. You begin to rehearse words in your heart carry the desire for God and His promises. You have been saying, "Boy, I would really like to have..." Now, you replace that with words like, "I love to see how God is going to..." "Won't it be great to experience what God has promised in ..."

What will emerge then is the power of believing God's promises. Love of money will flee and contentment with God will grow.

*We will learn the power of God's promises.*

## **Our Spoken Purpose**

**(v.6)**

That is what verse 6 is all about. The presence of God motivates godly living when we respond with thought out and committed confidence. We say to ourselves and others that God's promises mean that God will help us. And because He will help us, we will not fear the threats or pressure or persecution of man. What can man do? The worst is to cause pain and bring death. But they cannot do even that if God does not allow it.

Do you respond to God's sure promises with inward spoken purposes? God says He will be with us whether we are in prison or in the home of a Christian friend. He was with us when we covenanted our marriage. He will be with us when we are tempted to sin. He will be with us when we choose to treasure heaven more than we value earth.

And we will not fear what man can do to us when we care for one another. We will not tremble when we publicly stand with persecuted Christians all over the world. We will not fear the scorn of others when we stand for purity. We will not be afraid to hold up the Biblical standard for marriage against the prevailing wickedness of our culture – that is, marriage is the lifelong covenant union of a man and a woman. We will not fear for future security and safety. We will not be anxious over the stock market or our 401K's or the size of our paychecks. We will not fear for the devourer for we have God's Divine presence.

So do you fear what man can do to you? And is this fear, anxiety, worry a gauge to measure your lack of contentment with God, with all that He is and promises?

*We will constantly declare and desire the abiding presence of God.*

**Lessons**

What have we learned over the last 4 weeks?

First, from Proverbs tells us the true value of money and what is our treasure.

God's wisdom is our greatest treasure.

God's approval is our greatest reward.

Poverty and fearing God are better than great wealth and its trouble.

Poverty and righteousness are better than a large income and inequity.

Poverty and integrity are better than being rich and crooked.

Poverty and a good name are better than wealth and a bad reputation.

Riches cannot be trusted.

Riches are easily lost.

Quick wealth is rarely a blessing.

Fraudulent gain is wicked.

Generosity will mark godly people; stinginess leads to want.

When a Christian prospers, God intends for giving to increase.

When we prosper with joy, we must attribute it to the blessing of God.

We must be diligent with our money in practical budgeting and spending.

Jesus warns over worrying over our money by reminding us that::

Our heart focuses on what we value.

Our eyes will focus on what we give to.

You cannot serve God and money.

Life in God's kingdom is more than food.

We are higher than the beasts and birds in God's esteem.

Worry never changed anything for the good.

God cares for you more than you can imagine.

Finally, we must love God more than money.

It is our responsibility to not love money.

We must learn to be content and satisfied.

We will learn the power of God's promises.

We will constantly declare and desire the abiding presence of God.

May God give us grace that we will seek the Kingdom of God first, love God supremely, hunger for what His promises will bring and stand on tip toe imagining what it will be like to be before the throne of God beholding the face of Jesus.

