

1 Timothy 6:6-10

September 21 & 22, 2025; Pentecost 15

What would it take for you to be truly happy? I think all of us probably have a number of things that we have in the back of our mind that we think of that would make us truly happy. For example, I would be happy having an unending bucket of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. (And one that you could continue to eat and not gain a single ounce from eating it.) Or maybe one of those big containers of M&M's that would never run out. (And one that you could continue to eat and not gain a single ounce of weight from eating it.)

What would it take for you to be truly happy? Maybe it was an event in your life – the day you graduated from college; the day that you got the perfect job for you; the day you walked down the aisle with your new bride hanging on your arm; the day that your children were born. Maybe you would be truly happy being able to afford and buy your dream car. Finding the perfect house. Maybe you would be happy if you could retire and do all the things that you had not been able to do when you were younger and working.

What would it take for you to be truly happy? Someone once said that one of the goals of advertising is really to convince someone that they *need* that company's product. To make them feel as if there's some sort of void in their life that can only filled by what the company has to offer. But what happens when you buy that thing that's advertised? Well, we purchase it, and like a child we maybe played with it for the first day, first week or first year, but eventually we get bored with it, or until we want something else that is new. It no longer gives the happiness that it once promised. (And if you doubt me, just look around in your basement or rafters in your garage.

So, how much is enough? For the world, the answer always seems to be: *"just a little bit more."* That's one of the reasons God speaks so often about money. Our hearts naturally crave more, and contentment with what we already have doesn't come easily. God knows how real this struggle is for his people. Jesus himself spoke frequently on the subject—16 of his 38 parables focus on money and possessions. In the Gospels, one out of every ten verses (288 in total) addresses money directly. To put that in perspective, the Bible contains about 500 verses on prayer, fewer than 500 on faith, but more than 2,000 on money and possessions.

Why is this so? Because money is a master Satan often tempts us to serve. Of all the rivals competing with God for our devotion, money may be the strongest. It promises comfort and security, but only a false kind. It can easily become a source of pride. In contrast, God has shown himself to be a master truly worth serving. Even more, Jesus teaches that when money is the master we serve, it will always fail us in the end. Paul writes: **"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 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. 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."**

Let's go back to verse 10 in our text: **"For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils..."** Notice carefully what Paul says. He does not say that the love of money is the root of all evil, but that it is the root of all kinds of evil. In other words, Paul is not condemning wealth itself. He is not saying that money is wrong, or that it is sinful to enjoy the blessings money can provide. The problem is the love of money. That's what opens the door to all sorts of trouble. The love of money turns us from generous to greedy. The love of money pushes us to be selfish instead of seeking to serve. The love of money makes us fear that giving to God will somehow leave us with less. And let's be honest—that temptation lives in every one of us, myself included.

Why does God devote so much space in the Bible to the subject of money? Because he knows how hard it is for us to keep him first. That's the very temptation Satan used on Adam and Eve. He convinced them that God was holding something back, that eating the fruit would give them what God had. Satan led them to believe they could be equal to God—or maybe even rise above him. Satan is a master at luring us into breaking the First Commandment. When God wrote down his commandments for his people, what does God say? **"You shall have no other gods. What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things."** This is hard to do! There are so many things going on in our lives pulling at our hearts – pulling us away from God. For thousands of years, Satan has refined and perfected that

same temptation. So what are we to do? Notice that God does not say, **“I want more of your money.”** That would be absurd. Instead, he points us to contentment: **“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”** When God says, **“godliness with contentment is great gain,”** he is not promising that if you live a godly life, you’ll automatically prosper or find happiness in earthly things. Rather, he directs us to true godliness—faith in our Savior Jesus Christ. In him, we lack nothing. In him, we discover true happiness. In him, we find lasting contentment.

Think about it in your own life—what could possibly be greater than what Jesus offers? He gives us the forgiveness of all our sins and the promise of peace right now, knowing we stand right with God and that nothing is held against us. He gives us meaning and purpose—not just to chase money or collect more stuff, but to live in service to him. He lived and died for us. And beyond this life, he promises eternal happiness in heaven, pointing us to the pleasures that will never end. Compared to that, nothing in this world even comes close.

In verse 12 of this chapter, Paul urges young Pastor Timothy: **“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.”** Later, near the end of his own life, Paul writes in his second letter to Timothy: **“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”** (2 Timothy 4:6–8) May God grant that to all of us. Amen.