

What's Your Idol?

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[0:00] Let's turn to God's Word, the revelation of Christ to us, 1 Timothy 6, and we come to verses 3-10 for our scripture reading this evening.

If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing.

He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of corrupt mind who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

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. People 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.

[1:20] 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.

Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and their children. What is it that you cannot live without? What in your life makes you say that if I ever lost this, I would be unable to go on?

For some people, it's family. My husband, my wife, my children. For others, it's money or things. My job, my income, my ability to support my family, my comfortable way of life. If I ever lost those things, my life would be over. If I ever lost my athletic ability because of an injury, I would be done. For others, maybe it's something less significant. I can't live without Starbucks coffee in the morning. I can't live without the comfort of a bowl of ice cream at night.

[2:37] If I ever lost my favorite thing of lipstick, I'd just die. I wouldn't, but I don't have lipstick, of course. But what is it that you can't live without?

What is it that you have to have? If you've got something in mind at the moment, whatever it is has become an idol to you.

If you can't live without it. Not a wood or a stone idol that you bow down to in a shrine, but an idol in your heart. You've exchanged the glory of God for a corruptible part of His creation.

And understanding that, getting to the idols in your heart is foundational to understanding your problem with sin. It's a little bit like looking under the hood of a car.

You can look at a car and say, that's a really nice car. And you can watch it and you go, that car goes really fast. And you see the results. But until you look under the hood and you see the engine, you won't really know what makes that car go.

[3:49] What drives it? What moves it? What moves it so quickly? You have to understand what's under there. Or, if the car isn't running, you can look at the car and say, it doesn't run.

I can see that. There's a problem with the car. And the presenting problem is that it doesn't go. It won't start. But until you dig deeper and find the problem in the engine under the hood, you're not going to know why that car doesn't run.

And so too with sin. There will be various presenting sins in our lives. Things that we'll see. But you have to peel back the curtain. And look behind, as it were.

And when you do that, you'll always find some idol on your heart that is driving you. You'll find that you're worshiping something besides God. For example, if your stumbling block is anger.

An uncontrollable temper. You're always flying off the handle. You can try all you want to exercise self-control. And that's good. And you need to exercise self-control. But until you get at the root of it, you're not going to be able to deal with your anger.

[4:54] And chances are, if you look behind that curtain of anger in your life, you'll find that you've placed yourself on the throne. Me. I'm worshiping me. And so when things don't go the way I want them to go, the expression that follows is anger.

I lose my temper because I'm not getting what I want. Ted Tripp says, and I'm indebted to much of this, or for much of this, to Ted Tripp tonight. What he says about somebody that's angry, he says that your kingdom isn't coming.

Your will isn't being done on earth as God's is in heaven. And that's your problem. You want your will to be done, not God's will to be done. You've started worshiping yourself and your own plans and ideas instead of worshiping God.

And the thing that results, the thing that everybody sees is the temper, the anger. They don't see the idol in your heart. And to begin to deal with that anger, you've got to begin to realize the idol that's in your heart.

You've got to begin to deal with that self that wants everything his own way. And until you begin to worship God as the one who does all things according to his plan, you're going to melt down when things don't go according to your plan.

[6:11] But when you start to worship God, if things don't go according to your ideas, then that's okay. Because they are going according to God's. And he's the one that you worship.

That's just an example of what Paul does here for us in this passage with respect to the church and the false teachers in Ephesus. The presenting problems are all of the discord, the fighting in the church.

There's controversies. There's quarrels. There's envy. There's strife. There's malicious talk. There's evil suspicion. There's constant friction coming from these false teachers who are men of corrupted minds, deprived of the truth.

Instead of just describing the problem and saying, stop arguing. Stop fighting. Get rid of the false teachers. All things they need to do. Paul pulls back the curtain for us.

And he gets to the heart of the matter. And we find that these men believe that godliness is a means to financial gain. And all of a sudden, that curtain has been pulled back.

[7:12] And much of the trouble in Ephesus, we find, is because of greed in the hearts of men. All these problems that Paul has told Timothy about, many of them we find can be traced back to an inordinate, ungodly desire for riches.

These false teachers have come in. They understand that an elder who rules well and labors in the word and doctrine is worthy of double honor. And they want that honor. They want the honor that comes with the office.

And they want the financial honor as well. But the church in Ephesus, they have already got elders. And so how are you going to get rid of them so you can get it? Well, you start to say, well, we're going to teach something different.

We're going to teach some false doctrine. And we're going to create some controversy. We're going to stir up some difficulty and a divide. And maybe we'll be able to replace those elders and get some of that financial reward.

And so they stir up all of these problems. And I don't even need to tell you that these men are pursuing ministry for the wrong reason. They take something good, like honoring an elder, and they twist it for their own greedy purposes.

[8:20] And so tonight, we want to take some time to expose one particular idol of the heart. And that is greed. The desire for gain. The love of money. We'll see the result of the Ephesians idolatry tonight.

But we're not going to focus on these false teachers. We'll spend just a little time. We met them back in chapter 1. And here we're reintroduced to them. Some of the same problems are occurring. And that's the result of their greediness.

Their love of money. And we'll look at that result. But we're not going to focus on these false teachers tonight. Instead, we want to see what happens when you pursue a life of gain and greed as opposed to pursuing a life of godliness.

You need to see. I need to see if this idol of the love of money is on the throne of your heart and my heart so that we might tear that idol away and worship only God.

Two things tonight. Two pursuits. Two great desires of the heart. Godliness or gain. I'm talking about illegitimate gain here. Sinfully desired gain. It's ironic, I think, that those who pursue gain, the

ones who are lovers of money, they find themselves in a world of hurt and trouble and even destruction, Paul says.

[9:37] But those who pursue godliness find themselves with great gain. And so we'll see those things tonight. First of all, greed brings pain. Greed brings pain.

The second thing that we'll see later is that godliness brings gain. So first of all, greed brings pain. Greed, the love of money. It's described in verse 5.

It's talked about the false leaders who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. Shocking news. These men think that godliness, that Christianity is a way, a tool to get money.

And we immediately begin to realize something's not right. Many people have an unhealthy desire for money, but we're even more repulsed by those who would try to use religion to get rich.

And sadly, the grip of greed is so strong that history is littered with examples of people like this. We don't have to look far.

[10:39] Right here in the New Testament, there are these fools in Ephesus, these false teachers. They want money, and so they used the church to get it. And they were the ones that Paul warned the Corinthians about, to peddle the word for profit.

They were selling it for profit. They were charlatans. What about Judas? An apostle of Christ, and he was using his position to do what? To advance the kingdom of God?

To service? No, he's using it for personal gain. Skimming off the top. He's got a love of money in his heart. Right down to today, where you see televangelists living lavish lifestyles at the expense of the poor, unsuspecting people who are giving their money to what they mistakenly believe is a legitimate ministry.

Many, sadly, use godliness as a means for financial gain. They're driven, verse 9, by a desire to get rich. People who want to get rich is the description Paul gives us of them.

Now, don't misunderstand. It's fine to be rich. And even to desire riches for the right reason. Look down at verses 17 and 18.

[11:48] We're not going to get to these verses tonight, but look what Paul says. 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.

God provides riches for our enjoyment. And some people in particular, he makes to be rich. Paul doesn't condemn it, but he says, command them to do good and to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share.

You see, riches themselves are not condemned. We can thank God that he has made Christians, some Christians, wealthy. And we can thank God that he's made them people who don't put their hope in that money, but rather are rich in good deeds.

They are generous and willing to share. And if that is the desire for your riches, then that is fine. But you walk a fine line when you start to desire riches.

You can say, oh, you want. Oh, I want to have a lot of money so I can do good for the kingdom of God. Well, if that's truly your desire, it will show in the way you use those riches. But if that is not your desire, if you have an inordinate desire for riches and all that money can buy, money starts to become the be all and end all of your existence, you will do anything to get it, including using godliness as a tool.

[13:11] You will be able to tell the difference between a person who truly wants to use their riches for God's kingdom and those who want them for themselves. It's the latter in view here.

Those who are rich for themselves or who want to be rich. That kind of person is going to exhibit various types of behavior. Some to attain their riches.

Some will be workaholics. They'll work as much as possible to get as much as possible. And they're providing a comfortable life for themselves and their family, but they never enjoy it or never have time to provide spiritually for their family because it's never enough.

He has to have more and more. It works and works and works so that he can have more and more and more. You might see it in the person caught up in every get-rich-quick scheme that comes along.

I know somebody that's always excited. I've got this great thing to tell you about. And you hear it and you're like, what? It's really not great. It's not going to work. It's a get-rich-quick scheme.

[14:09] It's a scam. And people get caught up. And everyone that comes along is convinced that this one is going to work because they forget what Proverbs says. He who is eager, he who makes

haste to be rich, will not go unpunished.

You might see the behavior in a compulsive gambler who, with every loss, thinks that the next time he'll be the big winner. I think it's interesting that many times the ones who are so interested in getting rich are often those that make the worst financial decisions because they seek to do it in haste, contrary to the wisdom of the Scriptures.

They're those who desire to get rich. They're those who love money. Verse 10. They're driven by a love of money that is a root of all kinds of evil.

Instead of love to God. What are the two greatest commandments? Love money? No. Love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

Instead of these commands, the real priority of godliness. They'll say they're godly. Remember, they're using godliness as a means to gain. But they love riches. If they really love God, if they were really pursuing godliness, they wouldn't love money.

[15 : 23] They would love God and others. The people around them. 2 Timothy 3.2. People will be lovers of themselves. Lovers of money.

See, they're on the throne and they want money for themselves. And Jesus, who taught that our love must be for God and for our neighbor, also taught in Luke 16, no servant can serve two masters.

Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. And the Pharisees, have you ever, I hadn't noticed this before, I hadn't paid attention to it before.

Right after that, the Pharisees who loved money. And all of a sudden you get an insight into the heart of the Pharisees. Maybe some of what made them tick.

They loved money. Heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. It's like these false teachers. They're teaching things contrary to our Lord Jesus Christ. The Pharisees, they didn't like Jesus' teaching, so they sneered at it and ignored it.

[16 : 27] Don't deceive yourself. Some may tell you that they want to be rich for the sake of the kingdom, but examine your heart. Who is on the throne? Is it God or is it money? Because he can't serve both, Jesus said.

How will you know? Well, if money is on the throne, it will show up in various ways. In Ephesus, it was these false teachers and their ugly results. They were teaching contrary to the sound, healthy words of Jesus.

They didn't like the idea, of course, of denying themselves, like Jesus taught. They don't like the idea of not being able to serve God and money. They don't like the idea of having to serve others and love others and give their money to others.

They didn't like having to serve God and not their wealth. And so to convince the Ephesians to support them, they had to teach contrary to the truth, contrary to the healthy sound words of Jesus, they had an unhealthy desire for controversy, quarrels.

And the more people fought in Ephesus, the less light and truth there was, which was good for these false teachers, able to come in then and take advantage of them. They'd been puffed up with conceit, but in reality they understood nothing.

[17 : 41] It's not a pretty picture. These are ignorant men. They are, we could say, stupid men. Matthew Henry says, commonly those who are most proud know the least.

And that was true with these men. They were pretty full of themselves in their little scheme to get money, but Paul says they were just puffed up, proud, but they really understood nothing. Their minds corrupted.

They were devoid of truth. And that false teaching had produced in themselves and in the church all of these things. And strife and envy and malicious talk and evil suspicions, constant friction, all of these things were the presenting problems in Ephesus.

Again, we've thought of these teachers, but to see that at least part of what drove them was a sinful desire for riches. They thought that godliness was a means for gain. And pray that we would be kept from this here.

True and faithful elders in the church are worthy of their wages, but pray that that never turns into an unhealthy desire for riches that will lead to the destruction of the church.

[18 : 49] It leads to terrible things in the church, but it also leads to terrible things in individuals. You see it in verses 9 and 10. What can the love of money do to people?

Well, they imagine that their pursuit of wealth will bring them great wealth. It will bring them good. They suppose that they are pursuing their own good when they are so wrapped up in things. They think that it will bring them comfort.

They think that it will bring them joy, happiness, friends even, perhaps, power, the good life, but the reality is far different. The unbridled, all-consuming desire for and pursuit of wealth do not bring good.

What does it say in verse 9? People who want to get rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires. They fall into temptation.

They're tempted. Maybe their pursuit of wealth begins legitimately, but then they're tempted. Oh, if you just bend the rules a little bit, you'll be able to make that wealth up a whole lot quicker.

[19:52] And then they're tempted not just to bend, but to break the rules. And their pursuit of wealth devolves into illegal and sinful, wretched, even using godliness as a means for gain.

They're tempted to these things when they pursue it. And so they fall into, as well, a trap. They're ensnared. They're trapped by it. And that's what Satan wants with sin. You think at the beginning that you're in control of your sin.

I've got my handle. I've got a handle on this thing. And I'll pursue it when I want, and I can turn it on and off when I want, but the reality is that this greed lays hold of your heart.

And instead of you controlling it, it begins to control you. You become ensnared so that everything you do, everything you do, all of a sudden becomes, will it bring me profit?

Will it bring me good? Will it bring me wealth? And Satan is ensnaring you so that you're controlled by your sin. It causes you to fall into foolish, harmful desires.

[20:49] Desires can be good, but when they become foolish, literally mindless, we stop thinking with our brain and start following these harmful desires wherever they lead. Where does it end?

This pursuit of money.

The end of verse 9, it plunges men into ruin and destruction. This love of money, this all-consuming desire for things, and maybe it's not money, maybe for you it's the things that money can buy, whatever it is for you, this all-consuming desire that you have to have the latest and the best, the biggest, the nicest, the most.

It's not just a little thing that you can sweep under the carpet and say, well, everybody wants nice things and money. I'm just like everybody else. Paul says that it plunges men into ruin and destruction.

Your love of money will kill you. It will destroy you. When Paul talks about the enemies of Christ in Philippians, he speaks of those whose destiny is destruction.

Their God, their God, their idol, is their stomach, their appetite, the things they want. And their glory is in their shame.

[22:02] Their mind is on earthly things. Your unbridled pursuit of riches will land you in hell. You don't believe me? You don't think it's that big of a deal? Well, believe the Scriptures and listen to a few selected examples.

We've spoken of Judas. Where does his greed land him? It led him all the way to go so far as to betray the Son of God. For 30 pieces of silver, greed had a hold of that man's heart.

And Judas is in hell today. And Achan, remember Achan in Israel? He coveted that wedge of gold and garments so much that he broke the explicit command of God.

Don't take any of the plague. Broke the explicit command of God. Took it and he buried it in his tent. And what happens? Judgment comes on all of Israel. In their next battle, they're defeated against a little podunk town like Bremen.

It would be like an army coming against Bremen and all 4,500 of us fight back and win. And Israel's beat back and they don't... What in the world?

[23:12] Well, it's Achan. He's brought judgment because of his sin. And then they find out that it's Achan. God shows it to them. And what comes of Achan? Well, he's stoned. A heap of stones raised over him.

It brought him to destruction. You remember the rich young ruler? The rich young ruler? He came to Jesus wanting to know the way of salvation.

And Jesus showed him but he loved his money so much that instead of following Jesus, he went away sad and so far as we know, went away to his own destruction.

And Ananias and Sapphira, out of greed, tried to lie to the Lord.

And they both dropped dead in his presence under his judgment. Think of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man enjoyed his wealth on the earth and everything that it got him but what did it get him in the end?

[24 : 17] His wealth and his disregard of the poor man Lazarus who lay at his gate. What did it get him? It's beyond description. The torments of hell where just a finger dipped in water touching his tongue would have brought relief.

We think of a finger dipped in water and that doesn't do anything for me. But if you've been enduring the torments of hell, you would just long for a finger to be dipped in water, touched to his tongue and he brought all this on himself because he loved his money.

That is what the love of money did for him and it is what it will do for you. It took over his life. It consumed him. It controlled him. He worshipped it and he worshipped it all the way into hell.

Jesus says, it is not no big deal. It will plunge you like a sinking ship into ruin and destruction. It will lead you, verse 10, into all kinds of evil.

This lust for money will destroy you. It will cause you to lie and cheat and steal. It will cause you to drive your friends away, hurt your friends. It will cause you to teach lies in order to gain. It will cause you to use anyone and anything to get what you want.

[25 : 38] It's no wonder Paul talks about people whose consciences have been seared because they're so consumed with it. It doesn't matter who they hurt or who gets in their way. They will walk over them. They will do whatever it takes to get money.

They can't see or think of anything else. Beware, Christian. I'm above that. I'm immune to it. But what does it say?

In verse 10, some people eager for money have wandered from the faith. They were in the faith.

They were part of the Christian religion from all appearances.

But it was a false profession because this desire for money. Maybe it started innocently enough, but now it's consumed them to the point that it's led them away from the faith. Again, they keep coming back to Judas.

This one who, from all appearances, was a disciple of Christ and his love of money destroys him.

Apostasy is warned against repeatedly in this letter to Timothy.

[26 : 42] And here we see one of the underlying causes and it's greed, the love of money. And it will lead, verse 10, to piercing yourself with many griefs. People who find themselves after a lifetime of pursuing wealth, they find themselves with nothing and they're in pain and agony and suffering in more ways than one, mentally, emotionally, physically perhaps.

And they will try to blame all sorts of other people. The compulsive gambler will blame the casino or the government that made them legal. The one in the failed get-rich-quick scheme will blame the person that made the pitch to him in the first place.

You can blame all sorts of people. The disgraced preacher who was in it for the money can blame his congregation who was too nosy and should have respected him. And the greedy teenager can blame his parents who punished him when he's caught stealing from them.

But Paul strips all of that away and he says they brought it on themselves. You're only going to hurt yourself. Pierce yourself with many griefs. They pursue pleasure but they find pain.

It's a way that seems right to them but in the end it's the way of death. I'm reminded of a child who's not yet tall enough to see on the kitchen counter.

[27 : 58] He can maybe see some of the things that are on it but he can't quite get high enough to see what's up there but he can see he's got his cup of milk and I think in these terms because I have kids that are that size one of them anyway he can't quite see up over the counter he's got a cup of milk he wants something good and a cup of milk is your riches that's what you're pursuing and so he reaches up there and he wants that cup of milk but what he can't see is that there's a knife on the counter and we have some sharp knives at our house.

They're my wife's joy and the bane of my existence anyway I have the wound to prove it but one of those knives is laying on the counter and my son hasn't done this he's done plenty of other things but not this but you imagine a child he's reaching he wants what's good up there and he wants that cup of milk and he instead lays hold of that knife and he's pierced himself and he begins to scream and cry as his hand begins to bleed because he thought he was reaching for something good but in the end he pierces himself with great pain.

Don't be like the little boy because in your pursuit of wealth blindly chasing after it maybe you don't see right now all the dangers that will come but what you're going to do is pierce yourself.

You're going to hurt yourself. And if you don't believe me read the scriptures and see it. Ask your parents ask somebody that's been in the faith a long time who's able to see the whole countertop and able to warn you of all the dangers that are there.

Well what's the presenting sin in your life that reveals the greed in your heart? What does the love of money in your heart produce in you?

[29 : 37] Maybe if you have one of these problems it's a sign that at the root of it is the love of money. The things you can buy with money are on the throne of your heart and God is not. What are some of those presenting sins?

We've seen what it'll do false teaching and envy and strife but some other ones. Let's start with envy and jealousy. You constantly struggle when you see people that have more than you do. Maybe there's one friend in particular who always seems to have the latest and the best and it upsets you to no end that you can't have those things. Her husband must love her more than my husband because she has nicer things.

Or you wish that his dad was your dad because he gives his kids more and bigger and better and you are jealous of them. You covet what they have.

You know that envy and jealousy covetous are wrong and so you try I'm not going to be envious of what I'm not going to be jealous anymore but you're just sort of scraping at the surface you're not getting at the root of the matter which is that money and the love of money is on the throne of your heart and you need to bow down to God as king and say I have exactly what you want me to have Lord and I will be content with what you have given me to be envious and jealous is to say Lord you've missed it you've made a mistake with me you haven't given me what I need and you see how that's become God God doesn't make mistakes and you've begun to worship something instead of God only if God rules in your heart are you going to be able to kill that envy and jealousy maybe it's this fighting and quarreling and the sources envy and jealousy that goes back to that wrong God on the throne of your life do you struggle with a lack of joy in your life you find that it's difficult to rejoice in the Lord always well maybe it's because your lust for riches the finer things of life or not even the finer things just more just a little bit better than what you've got maybe that desire has sucked away your joy you've begun to put your joy in things instead of in the Lord and so when things are tight you're sad you're depressed when things are good you're a little happier when your friend has more than you it makes you upset instead of being happy for them and it ought not to be that way that means that things the love of things money has gotten the place of honor in your heart you've exchanged the worship of God to worship created things and you've gotten a lousy rotten stinking deal you return to your God and worship him and you'll find that joy is restored maybe for you worry is what presents itself always worried and you know that Jesus says not to worry about tomorrow and you try not to worry but again you're not getting at the root and this is just one possible root there could be other idols on your heart we're focusing on greed tonight the love of money and so if you look at your sin and you trace it back and greed's not there don't quit look for another root find something else that's on the throne but we're focusing on greed tonight so let us worry you're afraid that you won't have everything that you and your family need you've forgotten that you have the Lord and if you have him it is enough he's promised to never leave you or forsake you that may mean he's with you in the middle of your poverty when you have nothing but he is with you and that is all you need

[33 : 15] Hebrews 13 and verse 5 keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have and what's the reason because God has said never will I leave you never will I forsake you it's in remembering that promise that we can begin to slay greed in our hearts do you struggle with the fear of men always concerned with what other people think about you maybe that can be traced back to this vile root that's infecting your life you think people won't think very highly of you because of your lower place financially in the world I think this is huge for men with big egos it's a painful thing to be a little fish in a big pond and you always wonder what the big fish are saying about you and if they're making fun of you for your old beater car that you drive to work and for wearing the same clothes that you've worn for the last 10 years because you can't really afford new clothes and you always wonder what people think and I think this is huge not just for men but I think it's huge for young people always concerned with what other people think and you think somehow that if you have money if you have the same name on your shirt that they do that it came from the

same store and if you have nicer things then somehow maybe they will like you better they will be your friends and this fear of men can often be traced back to greed in the heart let me tell you that if people only like you because of your money and the things that you have they don't really like you they're not really friends at all you don't want friends like that but we're sinners and we want people to like us and somehow we often tie that back to how much money or stuff we have have you ever traced your fear of men back to your love of money you can't just say

I'm going to stop being concerned about what other people think I've got I try to keep dandelions out of my yard I really do I'm not very good at it but man I hate dandelions I know they're pretty little yellow flowers and my sons don't understand why I hate them so much because they're pretty it's all in the eye of the beholder I guess but you know if you want to get rid of a dandelion you can't just pick it and say well I've gotten rid of it you've either got to kill that thing with weed killer or you've got to dig a crater around it to make sure you've got the whole root to get it out and I've got enough in my yard that if I did that I'd have another problem I'd have a lot of craters in my yard but you know you can't just go in your life and you say well here's here's the fear of men and pick that dandelion and get rid of it you've got to you've got to dig down to the root you've got to go back and say there's greed I'm worshipping things instead of worshipping God maybe it's pride maybe you do have a lot and you're proud of it you can't just try harder to be humble you have to go and see that your pride is driven by your possessions and your comfortable position in life

I thank thee that I'm not like all these poor people just scraping to get by what makes you to differ it's God and so the praise goes to him your joy is in him that will be a pride killer when you realize that you realize it's not you but it's a gift of God you see the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil all kinds of problems come if you've got this idol on your heart it's this fabulous illustration trying to decide if I've got time to tell it but it's so good that we're just going to use it and it's not mine it's from a gifted author if I were to say the name Eustace how many of you would know what I'm talking about?

anybody? I've got one two few alright Eustace it's from the Chronicles of Narnia C.S. Lewis and it's not the Lion the Witch and the Roardrobe so if that's the only one you've read you need to read the rest of them you need to get to the Voyage of the Dawn Treader and you need to meet Eustace and Eustace is a hmm he's a brat he's a lot like like somebody I used to know he's a lot like I used to be he thought he was something special and thought everybody else should think that he was something special too and he's on this voyage with these other people I can't tell the whole story here but man everybody is just sick of Eustace they just can't stomach him anymore and they're on they make a stop at this one island and Eustace stumbles upon a dragon's lair and dragons lairs are full of treasure and the dragon is dead he sees the dragon he's just died

I don't remember how the dragon died but anyway the dragon is dead and so Eustace goes into the dragon's lair and he he looks there's all this treasure and he begins filling his pockets with treasure and he finds a gold band and he puts it on his arm and he's happy and he's so content and this pie finds a more comfortable spot on the gold coins and he falls asleep and he wakes up and and and we can't I just don't have time but you've got to read the description of when he wakes up he wakes up and he doesn't know that he's become a dragon and and he thinks that there's another dragon now in the lair because he sees the arm of the dragon it's his own arm and he sees smoke rising from the nostrils and he doesn't realize it's his own nostrils that it's coming from anyway he's turned into a dragon he's a wretched filthy dirty dragon and that band on his arm now is much bigger and so it hurts him it's painful and Eustace has now looks like what he was on the inside he's ugly he's full of sins disgusting and Aslan who you've met in the line the witch in the wardrobe comes to Eustace and after he's endured this for some days he comes to him and and he brings him to a well and he says

[39 : 22] Eustace you need to you need to scrape off your dragon skin and wash in the well and so he begins to scrape and he finds that dragons are like snakes and they can just shed a layer of skin and he scratches and this is you picking dandelions okay he's scratching at that skin and he's trying to get it off and he loses he gets a layer off and he's able to look at a layer and he's able to see his sin and that's good but he looks and he's still a dragon and Aslan says undress yourself that's the words that he uses so he begins again and he sheds another layer and he's able to see and he looks and he's still a dragon still covered with his sin and a third time he does it he's able to shred a third layer but he's still he's still a dragon and you know what it takes it takes Aslan the great lion who's a picture of Christ to come with his great claws and to dig deep and Eustace talks about the

pain how it feels to have that layer that thick not just as the scales but the full the whole dragon ripped off of him it's painful and you will find that if you're trying to peel the idol of greed away from your heart it hurts it's painful it's hard to let go of things that you've held on to so hard but Aslan comes and peels that skin back and finally

Eustace washes in the well and he looks and he's a boy and if you you know you can pick the dandelions but then you can even try to get at the root you can try to get at the greed and if you try to do it without Christ you will fail what is it that Paul says in Philippians 4 I've learned the secret of being content in any and every situation whether well fed or hungry whether living in plenty or in want how is it that Paul can do that I can do all things through him who strengthens me only through Christ can such a victory over idolatry greed the love of money be won so if you pursue Paul says if you pursue gain if you love money then it's only going to lead to pain and suffering you're only going to hurt yourself you're going to destroy yourself very quickly and we're just going to skim over this the second thing then is instead of pursuing greed and gain what should we pursue well godliness says Paul and godliness will bring gain what's the antidote don't pursue wealth and riches pursue godliness godliness with contentment is great gain couldn't be a greater difference between these two things

Matthew Henry compares the evil of covetousness versus the excellence of contentment and there's what we must strive for godliness with contentment that contentment is key in verse 6 you see the difference between verse 5 and verse 6 in verse 5 godliness is a tool it's a means to get financial gain but then in verse 6 the goal is godliness and with contentment you'll find that there is gain to be had with it as well contentment being happy thankful for what you have and Paul he makes the point he echoes Job naked I came into the world from my mother's womb and naked I will depart from it you don't bring anything with you and you can't take it with you when you go and so if you stack up all this wealth you're like the foolish man that Jesus talks about in Luke 12 you fool this very night your life will be demanded from you then who will get what you have prepared for yourself you can't take it with you the pharaohs in Egypt had it all wrong and buried themselves with money and food and furniture and watch a documentary on King Tut sometime and they missed it they should have spent their lives pursuing godliness instead of things to take with them to their grave you can't take it with you and so instead contentment with what you have and Paul says here's a helpful standard if we have food and clothing food and covering and it could be shelter like a house or clothes maybe both in view here the basics of life you've got food in your stomach clothes a roof over your head you can't really complain and even if you didn't have those things you can't complain

Paul had gone without that and was content and so could we through him who strengthens us but how many people do have these the basic necessities they've got a roof they've got clothes and they've got food and it might not be the best of food every meal it might not be the nicest clothes that everybody else is wearing it might not be the nicest house but you've got the basics and so many people have that and if they could just see that with Christ they can be content with even that and less than that but so many people have these good gifts and they're not content again I think of young people and they just they want more they want something better and they're unsatisfied and it makes them unhappy with their parents did you ever think that your dishonoring of your parents could be traced back to greed because you're not satisfied with what they're providing for you're not content just the bare necessities give me neither poverty nor riches but give me only my daily bread Proverbs 30 verse 8 I know some of you think you can't live on just daily bread without the newest video game the most popular clothing and whatever else but God give you grace to be content with what you have the bare necessities if that's all it is because in this way of life contentment there is great gain to be had it's not necessarily material gain here that's obvious you may not have the best of everything but oh there's there's spiritual gain godliness has value for all things holding promise for this life and the life to come we saw in chapter 4 how much better is a life of contented godliness one that is free from always restlessly striving for more never at peace never never thankful instead a life of peace because you're content with what God has given you you're not always unhappy and worried and restless you enjoy joy fighting and envy and friction or rare occurrences because you aren't always pursuing this gain you can enjoy the peace that the scriptures speak of enjoy and not worry that is great gain to be able to live a life like that and maybe there will be great financial gain as well if God blesses you with that way don't hoard it for yourself use it for his glory you can save and provide an inheritance for your children's children as a good

man will do according to

Proverbs and you can give to the kingdom read 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 hold those riches if God provides them loosely be generous and conclude with a warning in Paul's second letter to Timothy in chapter 3 he says mark this there will be terrible times in the last days people will be lovers of themselves lovers of money and other things rather than lovers of God having a form of godliness but denying its power far better to have real godliness and to not have the best of everything the world has to offer because there you will find great gain there you will find the gain of eternal life if you have Christ instead of just pursuing the trinkets that this world has keep your lives free from the love of money be content with what you have remember because God has said never will

[47:26] I leave you never will I forsake you I can do all things through him who strengthens me including live with the bare minimum if that's what God sees fit to give me and so tonight pull the curtain back on your sin and find out what's on the throne of your heart what are you worshiping are you worshiping God if you are then all of these material things when you look full in the face of Jesus the things of earth grow strangely dim you worship Jesus we sung it tonight all of this other stuff gain love of money it's all not very important when you see that you've got Christ if you don't have Christ tonight that's not going to make a lot of sense to you but oh you run to Christ and you trust in him tonight and he'll save you from your sins!

see the glory of Christ so pray tonight that God would teach you and me contentment it's something that's learned Paul said I've learned the secret of being content in any and every situation and the secret is I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me but you have to learn it you have to learn contentment it doesn't come naturally we're sinners our natural bent is towards discontent that rare jewel of Christian contentment pick up Jeremiah Burroughs and read the rare jewel of Christian contentment if you want more teaching on this but for now may God guard us may keep us from that love of money and from all the wickedness that it can produce and our hearts may keep us our father we pray that you would pull back the curtain and show us our hearts and if there is greed or the love of money sitting on the throne we pray that you would tear it from that throne that you would come and do that great work of renewal and purification and drive that idol away and give us grace to bury such an idol and to worship you and you alone or if there is some idol other idol lurking in our hearts that of ourselves our own desires that of our own pleasure whatever it may be give us grace to tear it from the throne and to worship only you give us grace to pursue godliness not as a means to gain but as a means to honoring and glorifying you make us to be a contented people even if we have less than the bare necessities we may