

## Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 6:17 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: The Strictly-Forbidden Topic

INTRO: Over the years of having heard countless numbers of sermons while regularly attending church, how many sermons have you heard on the topic of 'being wealthy'? On occasion, when the church is experiencing a budget shortfall, sermons are presented on the topic of 'tithing' or 'giving to the church'. But, have you ever heard any sermon, or Bible lesson, or Bible study on the topic of 'being wealthy'?

Well, stay awake and alert so you do not miss any of this message, because this may be the first time or one of the few times most of you will ever hear a sermon (or Bible lesson) about 'being wealthy'.

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READ: 1 Timothy 6:17, with vv.6-12 for context

### BACKGROUND:

- - Every pastor, elder, and ministry leader, along with every believer, is to consistently stay away from wanting to get rich, and instead be completely devoted to thoroughly pursuing and implementing the virtues of the faith in their life. (v.11)
- - Consistently maintaining genuine godly virtues and tenaciously living by an eternal perspective are vital for being a true "man [or woman] of God" - one who successfully "fights the good fight of the faith", even in the midst of relentless surrounding pressure, opposition, and temptations to the contrary. (vv.12,11,9)
- - God, being deity and creator, rightly expects and commands and deserves that every pastor, elder, and ministry leader, along with every believer, consistently and continuously live a godly life that is spotless and blameless. (vv.13-16)

### v.17 - READ

[Lesson Question: Describe how pastors respond to the orders they have been given in this verse 17, and in verse 18.]

SECTION POINT: Most all pastors and ministry leaders staunchly refuse to preach and teach the passages and principles in Scriptures about being wealthy, even though they are ordered to do so by God.

### **"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant"**

- - With the authority from God as apostle (v.1:1), Paul orders pastor Timothy to "command those [people in his congregation] who are rich not to be arrogant".
- - Arrogance is "improper for God's holy people". (Ephesians 5:3)
- - Apparently, rich people are especially susceptible to being arrogant and "high-minded", which can be defined as: "thinking too highly of oneself; an excessive sense of one's superiority; boldness and self-assurance that are shamelessly presumptuous, insulting, audaciously rude, or disrespectful; marked by often forceful domination or control". (Strong's #5309; AHD - 'arrogant')

- - Pastor Timothy, as well as all pastors, are to address, command, "impose with authority", and if necessary confront arrogance within their flock. (AHD - 'enjoin' from Strong's #3853)
- - However, most all pastors are highly motivated not to speak in any way that might upset rich persons because their church's budget and their salary are completely dependent on financial giving.
- - Indeed, in the minds of most all pastors, to speak about 'being wealthy' is to immediately put their ministry employment in serious jeopardy.
- - So, for most all pastors and ministry leaders, 'being wealthy' is a strictly-forbidden topic - taboo - never to be mentioned, never discussed, never referred to, never implied, never preached about, never read any Bible verses about, and absolutely never ever confronted.

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[Lesson Question: Essentially, what are pastors being ordered to do here in this verse 17, and in verse 18? Elaborate on the contents of what pastors are to do, in correlation to verse 17.]

SECTION POINT: All pastors and ministry leaders are to command and explain the godly ways that God wants rich people to regard and manage their wealth.

**"nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain,"**

- - Pastor Timothy, as well as all pastors, are to also command rich people "not to put their hope in wealth", not putting their confidence in and reliance on their wealth - that it will provide everything they need and want in the present and the future.
- - Yes, wealth does provide security - in the immediate present.
- - But, wealth "is so uncertain", indicating that despite one's best preventative efforts, nevertheless there are ways in which wealth can be lost, and some of those ways include losing wealth quickly or even instantly.
- - Another problem with putting one's hope in wealth is that this is a presumptuous assertion or gamble - betting that conditions in life will proceed in the future in the same manner beneficial for acquiring and/or retaining wealth that have been occurring up to this time in the present. (cf. James 4:13-16)
- - In our minds, wealth possesses these two characteristics - 1. we will not lose our wealth, and 2. conditions in life will remain conducive for being wealthy - but the reality is that these two characteristics are actually illusions that we generate and erroneously ascribe as facts of reality.

**"but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment."**

- - Pastor Timothy, as well as all pastors, are to also command rich people to "put their hope in God" instead of in their wealth.
- - God continues to exist unchanged over all of time, and as such, we can and should confidently place and keep our faith in Him. (theologically known as 'immutable'; James 1:17)
- - And as our loving creator, God "richly" or "copiously" "provides" and supplies us with "all things". (Strong's #4146, #3956; theologically known as 'providence as preservation'; cf. James 1:17)
- - God is active, orchestrating the supplying of things to sustain and to benefit us.

- - And God orchestrates the supplying of things in abundance and for our enjoyment.
- - Rich people tend to fail to acknowledge that God exerts an active role in the wealth that they have in abundance and enjoy.
- - Rich people also tend to fail to remember that material wealth is restricted to existing in "this present world", and as such is not transferable into the next life eternal.
- - Pastor Timothy, as well as all pastors, are to command rich people to acknowledge and honor God for "everything" He has "richly provided" them with "in this present world".
- - God wants that believers establish their life centered on Him, and not centered on their wealth.
- - And God wants that believers humbly appreciate everything He has richly provided them, and that they maintain reliance upon Him even in the midst of abundance.

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## IMPLICATIONS:

[Lesson Question: Analyze, develop, and describe what the reality is for pastors and ministry leaders who avoid preaching and teaching the Scripture passages about wealth.]

SECTION POINT: Avoiding preaching and teaching the Scripture passages about wealth is being outright disobedient to God, cowardly immobilized by fear, and complicit in three of the same sins that rich people engage in.

- - Because rich people have to be commanded in these regards, this implies that rich people are by nature grossly deficient in regarding their wealth in a godly manner.
- Wealth naturally fosters:
  - - - - arrogance in rich people;
  - - - - misplaced hope in their wealth;
  - - - - faulty judgment of the security of their wealth;
  - - - - idolatrous worship of their wealth;
  - - - - blatant disrespect of God;
  - - - - and dismissive regard for God's activities of richly providing.
- - All of this defective and sinful thinking is fueled by wealth, thereby rendering rich people unwilling and unmotivated to consider their wealth in a godly manner.
- - This topic of wealth obviously is an important issue to God because repeatedly in Scriptures He keeps bringing up these issues regarding wealth, and God directly orders pastor Timothy to command the rich people in his congregation to correct their thinking.
- - So, in order to be compliant to these and other direct orders from God about wealth, pastor Timothy, as well as all pastors, must command and teach these orders and supporting principles to the rich people in the congregation.
- - But, avoiding preaching and teaching the Scripture passages about wealth is outright disobedience by pastors.
- - And avoiding preaching and teaching the Scripture passages about wealth is furthermore cowardly, being so afraid that they become immobilized by anticipated reductions in the finances of the church and the pastor's salary.
- Avoiding preaching and teaching the Scripture passages about wealth is therefore complicit, actively participating in three of the same sins that rich people engage in:

- - - - of "putting their hope in wealth" that has been coming in to the church;
  - - - - of worshipping and serving that wealth to the extent that places it above obedience to God;
  - - - - and of not relying upon and "putting their hope in God, who richly provides".
  - - All pastors are to obediently preach and teach these commands about wealth to their congregation, and trust God to somehow work out and bring good from any aftermath that may result. (Romans 8:28)
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BIG IDEA: Pastors and ministry leaders are ordered by God to preach, teach, and command the passages and principles in the Scriptures about being wealthy.

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#### IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

- - For those of you who are a pastor, ministry leader, or Bible teacher, what are you going to do about this direct order from God that He has given you to "command those who are rich..." as stated in the Scripture passages?
- - Are you going to staunchly hold as strictly forbidden the topic of 'being wealthy'?
- - Or are you going to henceforth obey God regarding you preaching and teaching about 'being wealthy'?
- - Can God be trusted and relied upon to work for your good and to richly provide if you obey Him in preaching and teaching the Scriptures about 'being wealthy'?
  
- - For those of you who are rich, have you caught the seriousness of that which God says rich people do regarding their wealth?
- - God directly orders His pastors and ministry leaders to command you in various ways regarding your wealth.
- - Is your heart so hard that you have to be commanded from the Scriptures by the pastor?
- - Whatever happened to having "a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart", tender towards the things of God? (Psalm 51:17)
- - And "what good is it for [you] to gain the whole world" (so to speak) while God opposes you to the extent that He says you rich people have "fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter"? (Luke 9:25; James 5:5)
- - Are you going to resort to complaining and attacking me and withholding your regular giving because you do not like this message that is straight from the Scriptures and which God has authorized and directly ordered to be commanded to you?
- - From merely this one verse, there are numerous major adjustments in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that you rich people need to make in order to be pleasing to God.
- - You can respond to these commands from God and start making all of the corresponding numerous major adjustments, or you can ignore these commands from God and thereby continue to build up for yourself a more adverse determination from God on Judgment Day. (see James 5:1-6, 2:6-7)

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[Additional Lesson Question to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - What characteristics and dynamics accompany 'being wealthy', which contribute to and foster arrogance? Analyze and describe.]

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Works Cited:

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