

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 6:18-19 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Using Our Wealth And Surpluses Now To Earn Us Everlasting Benefits In The Future Eternal Life

READ: 1 Timothy 6:18-19, with vv.6,9-10,17 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)
- - All pastors and ministry leaders are to command and explain the godly ways that God wants rich people to regard and manage their wealth. (v.17)
- - God wants that believers establish their life centered on Him, and not centered on their wealth. (v.17)
- - 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. (v.17)

v.18 - READ

[Lesson Question: Analyze and discover the reasoning behind each principle in this verse, and then develop an overall main principle.]

SECTION POINT: God intends that wealth is to be used for the good of other people, so He commands believers to use it in this way.

"Command them to do good,"

- - The order from God, that pastor Timothy is to "command those [people in his congregation] who are rich" to do and not do the things cited in verse 17, is extended into verses 18-19, adding the command for them "to do good".
- - Being wealthy essentially enables rich people to do what they want, which usually revolves around using their wealth to get what they want however they want.
- - So naturally and frequently, wealth is used to conduct and support evil means for rich people to get what they want, in such ways as to manipulate, coerce, pressure, intimidate, threaten, extort, enslave, steal, swindle, sue, and etc.
- - Wealth is an enabler for doing evil.
- - But wealth can also be an enabler for doing good.
- - Having wealth makes it easy to acquire or to already possess resources that are needed to help someone.
- - The command from God here is that believers who are rich are to use their wealth "to do good" - specifically, "to do good to others, to act for someone's advantage or benefit". (Zodhiates #0014 p.61)
- - Notice the shift here - from using wealth to do evil for one's own benefit, to using wealth to do good for someone else's benefit.

- - This is what God intends for wealth - for why people have it, and for what they are to do with it.

"Command them... to be rich in good deeds,"

- - In addition to being an enabler for doing good or evil, wealth is a means or tool that can be effectively used to get things done.

- - Wealth gives capacity to initiate and take action, which of course God wants that the actions are to be "good deeds" - serving God and His agenda and His program in all of the many various facets.

- - Having wealth is designed and intended and commanded by God to enable and facilitate the doing and completing of good deeds - extensively, in proliferation until the wealth runs out.

- - And when more wealth arrives, then the extensive and prolific doing of good deeds resumes in earnest until that wealth runs out - a cycle that repeats - "being rich in good deeds".

- - From experience, though, notice that "being rich in good deeds" does not necessarily require a large amount of wealth.

- - With resourcefulness, or ingenuity, or creativity, good deeds can be adequately and successfully accomplished through the use of a small amount of wealth or surplus.

- - Therefore, every believer who has a surplus, even if it is small in amount, can potentially find a way to use that surplus to serve God in some manner.

- - And God may even choose to multiply the results of good deeds done through meager resources. (see Matthew 14:15-21 for example)

"Command them... to be generous and willing to share."

- - People in the congregation who are rich are also commanded by God "to be willing to share", to be "ready and good" at "granting a share" of one's wealth as a bountiful gift. (Strong's #2130 with AHD - 'impart', 'bestow')

- - Being miserly or 'reluctant to part with one's wealth' does not belong anywhere in this biblical concept of "being willing to share", nor does giving under compulsion or from a forced sense of responsibility or obligation. (AHD - 'miserly'; 2 Corinthians 9:7)

- - Being ready to share involves maintaining preparedness and constantly looking for opportunities to share.

- - Intrinsically, there needs to exist an ongoing eagerness to give, perhaps fueled by enjoyment that is derived from sharing that results in making life substantially easier or better for other people who are struggling.

- - There also needs to be a development of skill, becoming good at sharing.

- - Therefore, prudence needs to be a dominant characteristic of the giver, "being wise in handling the practical matters that are involved in giving; and exercising good judgment and common sense while being careful about one's conduct". (AHD - 'prudent')

- - Using prudence in the activity of giving also involves doing adequate research to determine what and how much is needed, and taking precautions or establishing safeguards to ensure that the given resources go toward their intended purpose.

- - God further commands that rich people give "generously", which indicates not merely giving the minimum but giving in abundance.

- - In the same way that God orchestrates "richly providing us with everything" (v.17), so too people who have surplus or wealth should likewise richly provide or give "generously".

- - And "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" - Galatians 6:10.

- - "Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." - Romans 12:13.

v.19 - READ

[Lesson Question: Analyze and discover the reasoning behind each principle in this verse, and then develop an overall main principle.]

SECTION POINT: God wants for all believers to invest and use the wealth, time, and effort they have in this life to earn and store up for themselves treasure that they will eternally possess, benefit from, and enjoy in the next life.

"In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age,"

- - God approves of "laying up" or "storing up" treasure for oneself in the next life, eternity.

- - Matter of fact, God encourages it, recommends it, and even commands it. (v.20 in Matthew 6:19-21)

- - Rich believers and any other believers can use the wealth or surpluses and time and effort they have in this life to facilitate storing up treasure for the next life.

- - Treasure stored up for the next life is "good, valuable, and virtuous". (Strong's #2570)

- - And this stored up treasure establishes a good "foundation" upon which the next life will proceed in a manner highly beneficial for those of us believers who have stored up this treasure.

- - In other words, it earns for each of them rewards from God that last eternally.

- - So, having wealth or surplus in this life provides believers with an excellent and easy opportunity to gain eternal rewards for the next life - if the wealth is given away in the manner that God prescribes, such as what is cited in verse 18 for example.

- - How much time and effort are required to dispense wealth? To send money, an hour of time to research where the money is to go, and a few minutes to write out a check and mail it?

- - So, in 1 hour and 4 minutes to research and send a check, any believer can earn eternal rewards in heaven.

- - And of course, the more wealth that is given away (in God-prescribed ways), the more eternal rewards that are earned for the giver - verse 18 "be generous" and verse 19 "in this way they will lay up treasure for themselves...for the coming age". (cf. 2 Corinthians 9:6)

"so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

- - By laying up treasure for oneself for the coming age, we believers "take hold of" or "seize" the life that is coming next for us - life that is "eternal". (Strong's #1949, #0166)

- - We not only believe there is a next life for us, but we also embrace it now in this life, preparing now for what is to come in the next life by taking specific steps and actions to enhance the benefits for us to receive then and enjoy thereafter forever.
- - So in effect, we deliberately sacrifice our leisure, comfort, and enjoyment now, in this life, in order to invest instead in what will pay off or yield benefits in the distant but certain future, in the next eternal life.
- - Everything in this life that we acquire and invest in that is not in accordance with the guidelines God prescribes for earning eternal rewards will come to nothing when we enter the next life - it will be immediately obliterated in entirety upon our arrival in the next life, both the principle investment and any yield or increase that was expected from the investment (v.15 in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15). Wow!! That's a really poor investment - like pouring your money down a sewer drain, never to be seen again!
- - Conversely, everything in this life that we invest by giving it away in accordance with the guidelines God prescribes for earning eternal rewards will yield benefits and blessings for us that will never end nor fade nor lose their value.
- - If each of us believers "takes hold of", adopts, and permanently implants this eternal perspective into our thinking and our philosophy of life, then we can proceed to lay up and accumulate God-approved treasure for ourselves that builds a good foundation for the eternal life that is coming for us next.

BIG IDEA: God commands that rich people (and by extension all believers) are to use their wealth or surpluses for the good of other people, which will earn and store up for themselves treasure that they will eternally possess, benefit from, and enjoy in the next life.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

- - Having just studied this passage about what God commands that should be done with wealth or surpluses we have, perhaps you need to do some restructuring.
- - First and foremost, do you need to restructure your perspective and priorities away from striving to acquire wealth that has value only in this temporal life, toward instead striving to acquire wealth that has value in eternity?
- - Do you need to restructure your attitude, regard, and objectives about wealth - lowering the value of wealth as something to be attained and retained, to instead raising the value of wealth as something to be given away generously?
- - Do you need to restructure your attitude, regard, and objectives about people - moving away from a heightened valuing and pursuing the servicing of your own self, and moving toward a heightened valuing and pursuing the servicing of the needs of other people?
- - Do you need to restructure your attitude, regard, and objectives about how you spend your time - reducing or terminating doing things that God does not value or approve of, and instead engaging in doing things that God not only approves of but also rewards for?

- - Why not implement this restructuring of all of these aspects, and become contented and satisfied with this new perspective and approach to how you regard and manage your wealth or surpluses?
- - Even more so, find and relish enjoyment from this - enjoy using your wealth to help others, to further the cause of Christ and God's kingdom, to assist ministries and people in ministry, to tangibly "make a good confession" in the presence of other watching people. (v.12)

Now, let's take some time for each of you believers to do a quick mental inventory of your assets, and finances, and skills, and time.

- - Do you have any wealth or surpluses in any of these areas?
- - Do you have any skills that would prove useful or helpful to other people or ministries or organizations?
- - Do you have extra free time in which you could be useful or helpful to other people or ministries or organizations?
- - If so, then to obey God and to earn some eternal rewards, what can you do with this wealth or surpluses or skills or free time you have?
- - What specific actions can you take to dispense this wealth or surpluses or skills or free time by giving them to other needy people or ministries or organizations, in order to thereby invest in and earn some everlasting benefits for your future life in eternity - a good "firm foundation for the coming age"? (v.19)

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

- - Read Matthew 25:14-29 and theorize what God's reaction will be on Judgment Day to believers who were rich in this life but did not obey these commands in 1 Timothy 6:18-19.]

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File name: 1Timothy6_18-19-SermonOrLesson.____ (.htm, .doc, .pdf)

Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within this document

Source: www.BelieverAssist.com

Updated: January 27, 2018