

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 6:9 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Entrapped Because Of A Desire

INTRO: How many of us have ever gone hunting? ILLUSTRATION: *hold up an empty squirt-gun rifle and act as though you are hunting with it.*

Basically, what is hunting? Would any of us go hunting if we knew in advance that we were going to shoot off our arm or foot? ILLUSTRATION: *act out shooting off your arm or foot with the empty squirt-gun rifle.*

How about wanting or desiring to be rich? Is that anything like hunting? Would any of us go hunting for or pursuing wealth if we knew in advance that we were going to do significant harm to ourselves? ILLUSTRATION: *hold out in front on top of your head a yardstick with two paper currency bills hanging from a string and the empty squirt-gun rifle gripped to the underside of the yardstick aimed (backwards) at your head.*

Let's investigate our Scripture passage to see what God says happens like this when we choose to want to get rich.

READ: 1 Timothy 6:9, with vv.6-8 for context

BACKGROUND: Previously, we learned that:

- - Teachers of false doctrines corrupt their godliness by supposing that godliness is a means to their financial gain. (v.5)
 - - But we are to live in godliness with contentment, which creates conditions from which God will bring blessings.
 - - So, each of us would be wise to restructure our value system to henceforth diligently and comprehensively pursue contented godly living that produces the things that God says have long-term value.
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v.9 - READ

[Lesson Question: Is desiring to be rich a sin? Explain your answer and provide an appropriately-interpreted Scripture verse to support your answer.]

SECTION POINT: According to God, we believers commit sin if we want to get rich.

"People who want to get rich fall into temptation"

- - According to the description in this verse 9, God says that desiring to be rich is a sin, an adopting of or taking personal ownership of the temptation **to want** to get rich.
- - Usually, a sin is not committed until a person takes action in response to agreeing to a temptation.
- - But in this regard cited here, sin is already being committed by merely agreeing with or deciding that one "wants to get rich" - a passive "desire, resolve, or willingness" (Strong's #1014) to get rich, which technically is a "fall into [this] temptation".

- - Specifically, desiring or wanting to get rich is the sin of "avarice or covetousness", and it is also a form of the sin of idolatry, as declared in Colossians 3:5. (Strong's #4124)
- - Thus, wanting to get rich violates two of the Ten Commandments: coveting the property of one's neighbor - Exodus 20:17; and worshipping something other than the only true God - Exodus 20:3-5a.

-- Some of the falsehoods, distortions, or lies that we believers deceive ourselves with to convince ourselves that desiring to be rich is allowable for Christians are:

- - - - "God wants all believers to prosper financially."
- - - - "It is acceptable to desire to be rich as long as it does not consume me."
- - - - "God is not giving me what I need, therefore I must do whatever is necessary to achieve my goals for happiness and/or financial survival."
- - - - "When I finally get this _____, then I will be happy and contented."
- - - - "My spiritual gift is making money."

[Lesson Question: Identify and describe characteristics of what the "trap" involves.]

SECTION POINT: According to God, we believers become entrapped and enslaved when we commit the sin of wanting to get rich.

"and a trap"

- - There are always consequences to committing sin, and in this case one consequence is immediately being ensnared or fastened in a "trap" and for whatever reasons unable to free ourselves. (from Strong's #3803)
- - One aspect of this trap is that when we fall into the temptation of wanting to get rich, we automatically acquire a "propensity or bent or inward disposition" from which we are now especially inclined to choose to take direct action on this wanting to get rich. (Zodhiates #1014 p.347)
- - So our desire has now grown or automatically progressed into the taking of action to satiate the desire.
- - Furthermore, our desire is being empowered by and motivated by our perceptions of what life will be like for us when we achieve substantial financial gain. (v.9 "foolish desires")
- - So essentially and in reality, our condition has worsened even further to the extent that now we are compelled and propelled and driven by our 'discontentment'. (vv.6 and 8 and with "but" in v.9 (Strong's #1161, omitted in *NIV*))
- - Avarice (or wanting to get rich) has become a god and a master to us, and it effectively uses discontentment to keep us enslaved and under its control.

[Lesson Question: From this verse 9, determine and describe characteristics of the results that progress after choosing to want to get rich and falling into this trap.]

SECTION POINT: According to God, after becoming entrapped by our wanting to get rich, we believers are progressively moved farther away from maturing spiritually.

"and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction."

- - Another aspect of this trap of "wanting to get rich" is that it opens the door to "many" other temptations and "desires", rendering us being thereafter exposed to, open to, and susceptible to taking ownership in other relating temptations, which are "many" and branch off in variety.
- - Because our thinking has already and automatically become somewhat polluted and sinfully influenced through this process of being entrapped, we progressively become blinded to the sinfulness that is intrinsic within each of the many subsequent temptations and thereby we loose a substantial amount of our ability to resist their alluring aspects.
- - So our falling to the initial temptation gives rise to subsequently falling to other temptations and thereupon breeds our perpetrating of "all kinds of evil". (v.10)
- - Some of those subsequent temptations and desires we fall into are just plain "foolish" or "unintelligent", implying we loose some common sense. (Strong's #0453)
- - The subsequent temptations and desires also characteristically produce results of being "harmful" or "injurious" to oneself and/or other persons. (Strong's #0983)
- - Long-term, the trend result of wanting to get rich is that each person "sinks" and "plunges" "into ruin and destruction", which can be of a variety of forms. (Strong's #1036)
- - Certainly though, one form of "ruin and destruction" is spiritual in nature, because making the choice to want to get rich is a distinct and substantial compromising of one's faith.
- - So therein, minimally one's relationship with God and one's progress in maturing spiritually are automatically adversely affected and hindered, thereby furthermore reducing the believer's earning of eternal rewards in heaven.

-- Some examples of ways we can become entrapped from our choosing to want to get rich:

- - - - we get into debt, thereby becoming a virtual slave to the lender; (Proverbs 22:7)
 - - - - we work on Sundays, the Sabbath for believers; (Exodus 31:12-17; Acts 20:7)
 - - - - we are too busy working and too tired to spend daily quiet time with God;
 - - - - we loose our desire to give generously (1 Timothy 6:18), and then the giving we do is mainly to relieve the guilt;
 - - - - we loose most of our contentment (1 Timothy 6:5-6), so our happiness becomes primarily based on the acquiring of material things;
 - - - - we become increasingly worried and preoccupied about losing money or about making more money;
 - - - - from our obsession with wanting to get rich, our thinking can become self-destructive, and we can become distraught to the point of physical ailment or suicide;
 - - - - by default through our idolatry of wanting to get rich, we open up ourselves to getting the Kingdom of Darkness exerting influence and perhaps control in our life; (2 Timothy 2:25-26; Psalms 106:36-39; Exodus 20:4-6)
 - - - - by default, we open up ourselves to being encompassed with disciplines, tribulations, hardships, and punishments from God, even to the extent of incurring serious debilitating illness or premature death. (Hebrews 12:5-11)
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BIG IDEA: According to God, we believers commit sin if we want to get rich, thereupon becoming entrapped by and through this choice, which thereafter progressively moves us farther away from maturing spiritually.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Deep down inside, under the veneer of looking pious and righteous, do you hold the desire or the want to get rich?
 - - Do you have a wish list of all the things you want to acquire that you think you need or that you think will make you happy?
 - - In reality, exactly what are you pursuing in life? Wealth? Or things wealth will enable you to acquire?
 - - What would a close unbiased examination of your life reveal about what you desire in life? (cf. Matthew 6:21)
 - - Truthfully, are you guilty of this sin - "wanting to get rich"? Are you in denial about your guilt? Are you right now trying desperately to rationalize your guilt away in your mind?
 - Think about your past for a moment:
 - - - - Have you performed some foolish and/or harmful things because of money - because you wanted to gain financially?
 - - - - Have you suffered or do you continue to suffer consequences from the choices and actions you have made in wanting to get rich?
 - - - - Through your choices and actions you have made in wanting to get rich, have you opened doors to more temptations and sinful behaviors?

 - - If your answer is 'yes' to any of these questions, then it's crunch time!! - time to admit and deal with this sin.
 - - Are you willing to admit to yourself and others that you have a problem in this area?
 - - Are you willing to do whatever it takes to become free - to escape this trap?
 - - Are you in agreement with this truth that your wanting or desiring to get rich is a sin?
 - - Do you recognize and acknowledge that you personally are entrapped by the desire of wanting to get rich?
 - - Are you willing to sincerely repent and turn away from this idolatrous sin right now?
 - - If you are willing and ready, then COME FORWARD right here right now and publicly admit to God and to others your guilt of this sin of wanting to get rich. (James 5:16)
 - - Repent and publicly take a stand against this sinful desire and its entrapment of your life.
 - - (PAUSE and wait for people to come forward and respond)

 - - For all of the rest of us here who are genuinely free from possessing the desire to want to get rich, let's pray right now for these persons who have come forward to repent publicly. (James 5:16)
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[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - Is it acceptable to God if we have become rich even though we have had no desire to become rich and have not exerted any pursuit to be rich, for example by inheriting wealth or by one of our possessions became valuable on its own, like real estate property we inherited has since become valuable?
 - - If we have wealth, what does God want for us to do with our wealth? (Hint: see 1 Timothy 6:17-19,6; James 5:1-6)
 - - What should we do with wealth given to us that was acquired by the giver through his/her nefarious means?]
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