2026 11 01, 1 Timothy 6:9-16
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Currency of Christian Joy

When you write to someone you love, what do you wish for them? Near the end of the New Testament, an old pastor named John writes to his friend Gaius and opens like this: “Dear friend, I pray that you may prosper in every way and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.” (3 John 2).



“Prosper” is a word we think we understand. Today it sounds like a bank balance, a bigger house, a promotion. But its Greek word, euodoō, “to be led along a good road.” I use this word Euodoō as a window to see our theme today. **In the Bible, prosperity is not a snapshot of what you own. It is a road, and the question is where the road ends.** A beautifully paved road is no comfort if it leads to the wrong place.

Today, we are talking about money. Money itself is not evil. If you crave and love money, it becomes an idol in your heart. It destroys your soul and life. The world is very good at selling us cheap and fleeting pleasure. It says the good life is the luxurious life and that the next purchase, the next upgrade, will finally be enough. The reality is it never satisfies our deepest soul. Paul says it ends in “ruin and destruction.”

In verse 17 Paul tells Timothy to instruct the rich to set their hope “on God, who RICHLY provides us with all things to enjoy.” God made all things we can enjoy: food, friendship, beauty of nature, music, color, sunset, mountains, laughter, etc. So, the problem with the worldly prosperity deceives us to settle with too little. C. S. Lewis said something like this: we are far too easily pleased. He pictured a child who wants to keep making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what it means to be offered a holiday at the sea.

Our God created us for ultimate joy! Once you taste, you are spoiled for anything less. Once you taste the majesty, his beauty, his worth, and savor it in the face of Christ as we ought, it sets us free from the deceitfulness of riches. Scripture is full of people who tasted it. Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up, and the whole room shakes. The psalmist says, “In your presence is abundant joy; at your right hand are eternal pleasures” (Psalm 16:11). And Psalm 63:3 states, “Your faithful love is better than life.” Once you have tasted that, a bigger house does not impress you the same way. They are mud pies, and we have been offered the sea.

We spend our days, our energy, and our money on whatever we believe will make us glad. The currency of Christian joy is God himself. Joy and Holiness belong together. Once you taste this joy, you are most satisfied. God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him. We do not need to feel guilty about wanting joy. We need to want it big enough.



Christians are people who are living by holding God’s eternity in our hearts even though our lives are like a grass in a field. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 6:7: “For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out.”



Suppose someone passes empty-handed through the turnstiles at a big city art museum and begins to take the pictures off the wall and carry them importantly under his arm. You come up to him and say, "What are you doing?" He answers, "I'm becoming an art collector." "But they're not really yours, and besides, they won't let you out with those. You'll have to go out just like you came in." But he answers again, "Sure, they're mine. I've got them under my arm. People look at me as an important dealer in the halls. And I don't bother myself with thoughts about leaving." We would call this man a fool — out of touch with reality. So is the person who spends himself to get rich in this life. We will go out just the way we came in. It is the truth of human life.

Jesus told a parable about this. A rich man's land produced so much that he ran out of room, so he tore down his barns to build bigger ones and said to himself, "Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself." And God said, "You fool! This very night your life is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared—whose will they be?" (Luke 12:16-21). He was not a criminal.

Instead of hoarding money, **Jesus advises us to invest it in purses that never grow old and a heavenly treasure that never fails (Luke 12:22). This implies that we should use our money to secure our place in eternal habitation (Luke 16:9). Do you have this hope?**

Some of you might think, "Pastor, I am not rich." Be careful. Most of us measure wealth by looking up at whoever has more. If you are living with a regular salary in US, your wealth is in the top 1% of the world. I was never a rich person in my life. I was one of the poorest in the US standard. One day God told me, "All you have is mine." I was very surprised! What!? All I have is not mine? I always thought all I have is all mine because I earned it. Is it really all God's? It was a great shock. To digest this word, it took more than a month. Several months. I was a Christian. And I always tithed. I thought I was a faithful Christian. But God's word was like thunder. Well… it was already written in the Bible! When I meditated on it, I started to be more grateful than before. I entered into a season of financial teaching from God.

After a while, there was a great freedom in my heart. Money didn't squeeze me like before. Money became lighter and lighter in my heart in using it for others. I began to realize fully God's ownership of what I have. God is the wealthiest person in the universe and he loves me to death! I experienced concretely that God provided resources before I knew something to use for certain purposes. It was many times. Well… this was also written in the Bible as a promise of God, "I go before you and prepare for you." (Isaiah 45:2) Joy increased in my life. When I share my precious resources with those who are in need, the joy in my heart became like fireworks. Genuine sharing of life and love increased far more than before. Hearts were connected. And lives were changed. I am always following the nudge of the Lord in giving something to somebody.

So, now what should we do? Paul shows us the way. Listen to **1 Timothy 6:17-19: "Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of what is truly life."**

We see here three steps. **First, set your hope fully on God.** Paul calls wealth "uncertain." Markets turn, health changes, jobs end. If your sense of safety rests on your accounts, every headline will shake you. But God "richly provides," and he will be with you when it is gone. So, move your hope, deliberately and often, from what you have to who he is.

Second, guard yourself against pride. Wealth whispers, "You earned this. You are secure. You are different from those people." The cure is gratitude. We brought nothing into the world. Every breath, every talent, every opportunity came from the hand of God. Say it out loud: this is not mine; it is his, and I am glad.

Third, let your joy in God overflow in generosity. Look at Paul's verbs: do good, be rich in good works, be generous, be ready to share. **True riches are not what you can store but what you can give.** If our deepest delight is in God, we are free. The chain of the world, the prison of the world which means the numbers in the bank account, security, is broken by God's faithfulness, God's mighty love, and God's eternal promises.

Some steps for this week. Decide what is enough: Did God give you a talent? Give back to God or others one tenth of the talents. Did God give you time and financial resources? Give God and others one tenth of your time as volunteers and services for the Lord. One tenth, tithing is what God commanded us to give back. Give with gladness, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7). And notice who is near you: the lonely, the poor, the overlooked, the person with disabilities, the person who lost a job, the minority in your community, the odd, the strangers etc. Give one tenth of what you have for the cause of the gospel that imparts eternal life. I desire you are rich in blessing others with all your various tithings.

Let's ask now some questions to us. You *do* want life that is life indeed, don't you (verse 19)? You *don't* want ruin, destruction, and pangs of heart, do you (verses 9–10)? You *do* want all the gain that godliness can bring, don't you? Then use the currency of Christian Hedonism wisely: do not desire to be rich but be content with the simple necessities of life. Set your hope fully on God, guard yourself from pride, and let your joy in God overflow in a wealth of liberality to a lost and needy world.