This is a preaching draft.

# Christians and Money | 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19
## The Rev. Dr. Matt Lee | The Falls Church Anglican
## Preaching Draft | November 8, 2026

Today, we're going to pause our series "To Be a Christian," which has been such an amazing and relevant series from Pastor Sam. And instead, in preparation for Stewardship Sunday, which is next week, we're going to take a moment to do a deeper dive into the topic of how Christians should relate to money.

*Now, full disclosure*: This is NOT one of the topics I "LOVE" talking about from the pulpit. Because for many Christians, the topic of money is so deeply personal, and for many, so deeply private. I mean, I don't know too many people, unless they are completely narcissistic, who ***LOVE*** to openly talk about how much they make and how they spend their money. But more importantly, most people don't like being told ***HOW*** to spend their money.

As well, in this particular cultural climate, whenever pastors talk about money, you're either seen as some sort of televangelist, for those of you who are younger, these were preachers on TV that seemed to always ask for money and at times scammed people out of their money, or a spiritualized version of that ad with Sarah McLachan's song "I will remember you" with the pictures of abandoned and malnourished puppies that made you so guilty, you feel you HAD to give. And for some, that's what people feel, especially non-Christians, whenever pastors talk about giving or money. It either feels like a scam or a guilt trip. So, it's not a great environment, society wise, to talk about money from the pulpit.

HOWEVER, having said this, it is SO critical that we do talk about it. *Why? Well, first*, Jesus OFTEN talks about money throughout the Gospels. Now, money wasn't the MOST talked about topic by Jesus, but it was VERY important to Him, so it should be important to us. *Second*, the way that Christians relate to money at its' core is a "discipleship" issue. That is, how we obtain, view, and use our money is deeply tied with what it means to follow Jesus. It's an indication of where our priorities and devotion lie. As Jesus tells us in **Matthew 6**: "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also… No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*"

And really, this is why this topic DOES feel so personal – because at its' core, money and how we relate to it taps into the deepest part of who we are: our motives, our values, and the attitude of our hearts. So… whether we like it or not, and whether pastors like me WANT to talk about money or not, it's important to think and preach about.

Now that we've got all the disclaimers out of the way, let's tackle the question: *How SHOULD Christians relate to money?* Well, to get the conversation started, we're going to take a look at a few verses in **1st Timothy Chapter 6** where Paul gives instruction to his protégé Timothy, who was a young pastor of a church in the city of Ephesus, to pass along to his congregation. *Specifically*, in response to false teachers who "used" Christianity as a means to get rich, Paul uses this as an occasion to address the "general" issue of how Christians should

DRAFT

relate to money and wealth. And in these verses, Paul addresses two groups of people in the church: 1) First, those who "desire" to be rich (i.e. those who aren't rich) and 2) Second, those who are "already" rich. And as he addresses these two groups, he does two things: First, Paul reveals each group's main STRUGGLE; that is, the greatest temptation each group faces; And then presents the SOLUTION to that struggle; that is, how each group can overcome that temptation. So, the STRUGGLE and the SOLUTION. And no matter which group you are in, rich or not rich, I think you'll find these truths applicable and helpful to your life.

**I. <u>To those who are NOT rich:</u> (vs. 6-10)**

OK… So, let's first take a look at the first group that Paul addresses: ***Those who are NOT rich.*** <u>*What does he say is their main struggle?*</u> Well, let's take a look. Feel free to read along with me in your bulletin, in your pew Bibles … or in your own Bibles. Starting in **<u>vs. 6</u>**: "But godliness with contentment is great gain, [7] for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. [8] But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. [9] But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. [10] For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."

<u>*Ok… so what's the Struggle?*</u> Well, before we tackle this question, the first basic question we need to answer is: <u>*What does it actually mean to be "Rich"? What's a good working definition*</u>? Because it's not that straight forward. <u>*For instance,*</u> it's not necessarily about how much you make, because a $100,000 salary here in DC is quite different from at $100,000 salary in a smaller, more rural area of the US. Plus, even if you make a decent salary, if you have major debt or have a lot of expenses, like a high mortgage, childcare, tuition, etc. you may not really be that well off financially. As well, it's not necessarily about owning nice things like a nice house or nice cars. Because that just might be "false" wealth – because to have those nice things you may be drowning in debt or you're living way above your means. Furthermore, even though we may not "think" we are rich, if we compare ourselves to much of the world, especially those countries where so many are struggling just to survive, we are probably a lot richer than we think. <u>*So then, how do you really know if you are "rich"?*</u>

Well, I think the best way to think about it is through the word "abundance." Even Webster's Dictionary defines "rich" as "having ABUNDANT possessions and especially material wealth. As well, the New Testament Greek word for "rich" refers to a "full supply" or "abundance" of material goods. In other words, it's about having an "overflow", ***more*** than what we need to survive. Thus, if you have over and above what you need to survive, you are "rich."

<u>*Practically speaking*</u>, I think it means that if an emergency happens, you have the resources to cover it and you won't be hurting financially. It's also about having "expendable" or "discretionary" income to enjoy nicer things in life. In other words, those who are rich are NOT living paycheck to paycheck. Nor are they too worried about a fridge breaking down, having to fix a car, or paying for good seats at a football game. Now, again, this is somewhat subjective and context specific, but I think you know if you are living with "abundance" or not.

BUT… if you are in the group that DO worry about these things and ARE feeling the crunch of living paycheck to paycheck; and stressed out constantly about the next emergency draining your bank account, then the struggle that Paul addresses in **vs. 6-10** applies to you. *And what is that struggle?*

**1. The Struggle:**

Well, the word that best summarizes this group's struggle is the word, "***coveting***." Now, "coveting" or to "covet" has two aspects to it. The first aspect is that you are "dissatisfied" with where you are or what you have or don't have. So, there's a feeling that you are somehow missing out. The second aspect is that BECAUSE of this dissatisfaction you strongly desire or long for or "crave" those things that someone has that you don't. This is what Paul is referring to when he says that this group of people "desire" to be rich in **vs. 9,** "crave" to be rich in **vs. 10**, and that there is real temptation to "love" money - also in **vs. 10.**

In other words, the main struggle and temptation for those who are not rich is not only a dissatisfaction with what they currently have or don't have, but they strongly long for and desire to have what the rich "do" have: Whether it's a certain salary, a certain financial state, or certain possessions, or the ability to enjoy more things in life. And biblically speaking, this constant dissatisfaction and longing for something we don't have but others do, IS a sin. Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5, Luke 12, Colossians 3, Romans 7 talks about this sin of coveting.

*Now, on a side note, is it wrong to want a more comfortable life and afford nice things*? No. Because MOST of us wouldn't mind having more money, more of a nest egg, have extra funds to be able to experience nicer vacations, afford better cars, pay for better colleges, etc. That's natural – but the temptation and struggle is to get ***fixated*** on these things and be in a ***constant*** state of dissatisfaction, comparison, and a longing for what we don't have. That's the sin of coveting.

*For instance*, it's about constantly looking over and seeing the new car on the driveway next door then looking at your junky car on your driveway and then complaining about it and constantly wanting the new car. Or it's about seeing people on social media or YouTube traveling the world – "living their best life" – having what seems to be amazing adventures – but then looking at your life and your job and thinking how it's so mundane. And instead of being thankful for what you have, you constantly long for what you don't.

And by the way you can covet no matter what level of wealth you have. So, this isn't just a struggle and temptation for those who are not rich. JD Rockefeller, one of the richest businessmen during his time once was asked, "how much money is enough?" He answered "just a little more" – not sure if he really meant it or was answering sarcastically but this is sentiment of many who are rich. So, it's a struggle that MANY of us can have. It's a temptation that is quite subtle but can be detrimental.

I remember after purchasing our first house as a family in Houston, I was so grateful to God for providing a wonderful house for us. And I was pretty happy and satisfied with what we had. It wasn't a mansion, but it wasn't a tiny shack either. It was JUST what we needed. But then I discovered show Fixer Upper on HGTV. And I was blown away at how Chip and Johanna Gaines

took a super cheap dilapidated house and made it into something spectacular. All for less than $100,000 – purchase of the house included! And as I would watch this show, I started to notice how old things were in our nice new house. I started to see the things that could be renovated. And then I got dissatisfied. Man… only if we could have that nice Island that Chip and Joanna used. That paint color they used was so much better than the color we currently had in our house.

And without me realizing it, I not only was dissatisfied with the amazing blessing of a nice house that God provided, but I was ***constantly*** longing for a better house, better furniture, and better fixtures. And I found myself subtly giving into the temptation of coveting.

Now, thankfully we didn't have the finances to do all the renovations we wanted, but man, how easy it was for me to get sucked into being dissatisfied with what I had and constantly desiring what I didn't.

Now, nothing wrong with HGTV in and of itself, but companies know how to tap into our vices don't they? Whether it's coveting or greed or gluttony – think of Food Network or those videos where people gorge on amazing food. Or even causing us to be dissatisfied with our perfectly functioning iPhone that has a 13-hour battery life and feeling like that's not good enough because we need the newest phone with 13 ½ hours of battery life. And it's all around us – all the ads and retailers we see are targeted to tap into this temptation to covet. And if we're not careful, that seemingly innocent desire for nicer things can become a real struggle and more importantly, a serious sin.

That's why Paul in **vs. 9** reminds us that if we're not careful, this longing to be rich, this coveting and desire for things we don't have can lead us into a *"snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction."* *Furthermore,* this "inordinate desire" for riches, which Paul calls the "love of money" is a root of all ***kinds*** of evil as **vs. 10** says. It can even cause people to "wander" from the faith" and result in people "piercing themselves with many pangs" – basically causing great deal of harm on themselves.

And you don't need to think very hard to realize how a simple dissatisfaction with we currently have and a constant longing for what we don't have can lead to some pretty destructive things. Think of how online gambling, especially when you can now make bets through your phone has become such a huge problem in the US, especially young men. And it's a constant bombardment of temptation during every commercial during a football game. And I've been seeing more and more articles and stories of how people are becoming so addicted to betting on their phones that it's literally destroyed their lives and families. What seemed like a simple "longing" can become an "obsession" and then an "addiction" which can lead to destruction.

This is why Paul gets at the root of the issue for those who long to be rich – and that is the sin of coveting. Now, on a side note, and I think we've heard this before, but money itself is not evil. It's neither good nor bad. But it's the "love" of money, the constant longing for it, the obsession to get more of it, that is the root of all kinds of evil. And it's not the root of ALL evil, but all different kinds of evil that can lead to some destructive things. As Ecclesiastes 5:10 says:

*"Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income."*

**2. <u>The Solution:</u>**

OK… So that's the main struggle for those who are not rich. *<u>What then what's the solution? What's the antidote to this problem?</u>* Well, Paul reveals it to us in **<u>vs. 6-8</u>**. Let's take a look at these verses once again. **<u>Vs. 6</u>**: "But godliness with contentment is great gain, [7] for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. [8] But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content." The solution is the repeated word here: "***contentment."*** That is, for Paul, the antidote to the problem of coveting, this love of money, this longing for what we don't have – is learning how to be "content." **<u>Hebrews 13:5</u>** says the same thing: *"Keep your life free from love of money, and be **<u>content</u>** with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"*

*<u>But what exactly does it mean to be "content"? And how do we experience this in our lives?</u>* Well, the simple definition of "contentment" is to be ***happy*** or ***satisfied*** with what one has and with the situation one is in. So instead of being "dissatisfied" with what we have or don't have and constantly "longing" for those things, contentment says that I am "satisfied" with what I have and I don't compare myself with others and I don't constantly long for what others have that I don't. It is a sense of peace that no longer looks over at the driveway next door.

*<u>But how do we actually experience this</u>*? Because it's not that easy, especially when we're living paycheck to paycheck. It's not easy to be content when we feel like we are drowning financially; when we feel like after we pay one bill, another one is right there waiting for us; when we feel like we are one bad emergency away from living on the streets.

And we've heard the statistics – this is a very common issue for many Americans – some estimate that about ½ of all Americans live paycheck to paycheck and can't afford to pay for a $1,000 emergency. And probably true even in this area and in this church. So, I don't want to minimize the struggle that many of us face. It's REALLY difficult to feel at peace and have contentment when we're struggling financially. But I believe that Paul here gives us some very helpful truths and principles and solutions that can at least help us take a step towards greater contentment and peace. And there are at least two that I see here.

***a. <u>Learn to see life and money from an eternal perspective (vs. 7)</u>***

The first solution is found in **<u>vs. 7</u>** where Paul says: "for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world." That is, the first step to contentment is learning how to see life and material possessions from an eternal perspective.

It's the Monopoly illustration I gave in my last sermon. It's remembering the truth that this life is temporary and so is the wealth that we have or don't have. That it "all goes back in the box" at the end; that when we pass away, we can't take anything with us. Again, referring to John D. Rockefeller, his aide was asked how much he had left behind. The aide wisely answered, "***ALL*** of it."

*For us this morning*, it's when we can come to a place where we see life and the stuff of life through God's eyes, with an eternal perspective, that we begin to see that true life isn't about what we have or don't have, how much wealth we have or don't have, our position, our power, or anything temporary. But that what really matters to God is our relationship with Him and what we do for His Kingdom. Because at the end of the day, none of the stuff we've accumulated will go with us after we die. And when we can gain that sort of perspective, that "longing" for the stuff of this life starts to wane; and we can begin to be at peace with what we have and where we are. That's the beginning point of being content.

***b. Learn to be satisfied and grateful for the necessities of life (vs. 8)***

The second solution and the key to finding contentment is found in **vs. 8**: "But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content."
Here, Paul tells us that it's when we recognize that all we really need are the basic necessities of life AND are satisfied with having those met that we can be content. In other words, when we really understand the differences between what is a necessity and what is a luxury; and that all that we REALLY need in life are the basic necessities; ***and then***, and this is the hard part, become ***satisfied and even grateful*** for God providing these things, that's when we become "content" people.

*Specifically,* when we realize that when you boil it all down, all that we "actually" in life is food, shelter, and clothing as **Matthew 6** talks about, and that everything else is really a luxury, we can start to become more grateful and more satisfied with what we have. This is why Jesus tells us to pray for our "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer. He's talking about being satisfied with our necessities being met by God.

Now, that's easier said than done because sometimes it's so easy to believe that the luxuries we have ARE our necessities. *For instance*, in the US all of us are pretty guilty of this, including me. We often talk about "first world problems" like not having super-fast internet; or not getting our Amazon package within the 2-day window; or having to wait for our Chick-Fil-A order more than 5 minutes. We feel as though we "need" these things, when in reality, this is really a luxury, especially when compared with the rest of the world. As Alister Begg, a well-known pastor once said: *"When our luxuries become our necessities it destroys our contentment."*

I was convicted of this at one of the short-term mission trips I went on a long time ago. We were doing some outreach in Mexico and me and another pastor had to stay with a family from a local church. When we got to their home, they opened the door and we immediately came into their dining room, living room, and kitchen which was about the size of most people's walk-in closet. So we put down our bags and we ate with them; they didn't have much to offer, but it was simple and delicious. And they were so happy to serve us.

Then we were getting ready to sleep and we thought they were going to show us to our rooms. There was a curtain right next to the dining table and they just opened it. And behind the curtain were two cots and makeshift beds on the ground.

DRAFT

My pastor friend and I were confused and thought that there was another door, but that was actually the entire bedroom not only for the family, who had two kids, but ALL of us; So we had to sleep on the ground next to the whole family. And then we realized that the restroom was out in the field, which was an adventure because there were no lights.

Now, to be completely honest, me and my pastor friend were quite uncomfortable and we started to have a complaining heart. But then right before we all went to sleep, the father of that host family prayed for all of us; and we were so humbled and embarrassed because he was so grateful for all that God had provided him and his family.

In fact, the entire family were so grateful and honestly so happy with having a roof over their heads, food on their plates, and clothes on their backs, that it made us realize how spoiled we really were. They had a peace, joy, and contentment that I didn't see in most people, including myself.

And now, every time I struggle or complain about not having certain things, which are really luxuries, this image of that family pops into my mind and humbles me and gives me a big reality check. And I have to ask myself: *Am I really content with all that I have? But more importantly, am I satisfied and grateful for the fact that God has provided the necessities of life, my "daily bread"?*

*For us this morning*, I'm not sure if you have a struggle like me with having a sense of contentment, especially regarding our economic or financial situation, but the question that I believe God through Paul would want to ask us is: *Have we somehow lost sight of what we really "NEED" in life; and maybe at times confused the luxuries of life with true necessities?* Because when we confuse the two, that's when contentment is destroyed.

*One practical suggestion* to grow in this area is something that God's been putting on my heart these past few years to become less covetous more content and that is to BEGIN my time of prayer thanking him for EVERY blessings that God has given me, especially all the necessities.

And my boys hear me praying this all the time: But it really makes a difference when you begin the day giving thanks for the food on your plate, roof over your head, clothes on your back, cars to transport you, a wonderful family, friends, church, schools for the kids, and most of all for His salvation.

When you do this, you quickly realize how good and abundant your life really is; and how God has provided so many blessings. And you'll find that you stop being so dissatisfied with what you don't have and start being content with what you do have. This is when begin to overcome the temptation to covet and become more content.

## II. To the "Rich": (vs. 17-19)

OK… So that's the struggle and solution for the first group. *How about for those who are "already" rich? What's THEIR struggle and solution?* Well, let's take a look again starting in **vs. 17:**

> *17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes*
> *on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.*
> *18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 thus*
> *storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may*
> *take hold of that which is truly life.*

1. **The Struggle:**

Here, what we see is that the main struggle or temptation for those who are already rich is ***pride or "haughtiness"*** in **vs. 17** which expresses itself by trusting in the "uncertainty of riches" instead of God. *But, what does this actually look like in daily life?* Well, one of the ways that this struggle plays out is that those who are rich are tempted to ***immediately*** turn to either themselves or their own resources whenever they face any difficulty or problem.

And we see this all the time – even in the news – when someone with great wealth gets into trouble – the tendency is to simply throw money at the problem. And often, they can get out of any trouble, even criminal, if they have enough resources to hire the right lawyers, pay the right people…

But this isn't just true for a non-believing wealthy person. The temptation for Christians who are wealthy is to do the same thing: To lean not on God and HIS resources, but to lean on their own understanding and their own resources. ***In other words, the key struggle is "self-sufficiency" instead of "God-dependency."***

Now, again, this isn't JUST a temptation for those who are rich. Anybody can struggle with self-sufficiency instead of God-dependency, BUT, what Paul indicates here is that this seems to be the MAIN struggle for those who are rich.

And we see this not only on an individual level, but even on a corporate level. Think about wealthier churches vs. churches that are poor – the temptation and struggle is that when a problem arises, the inclination for wealthier churches is to FIRST and IMMEDIATELY "throw money" at the problem; there's a temptation to think that if we just hire more people or the right people; build more or better buildings, we can solve the problem.

Now, there may be prayer involved, but the temptation is pray that God blesses what we want to do instead of first seeking God's heart and direction BEFORE we do anything. However, churches that are poor, because they have nothing else to turn to and have very little resources - their first instinct is to pray – to desperately seek God's help and provision and direction.

I've seen this even in my own ministry when I planted churches and we didn't have enough money to even buy a $100 piece of equipment. We desperately sought God's provision FIRST whenever there was a need. But AS the church grew and became more prosperous, there was a temptation to lean on our own wisdom, our own resources FIRST instead of trusting and depending on God. Not that we didn't trust God or depend on Him in prayer, but there was a temptation to turn to ourselves FIRST. The struggle was ***self-sufficiency vs. God-dependency***.

And for many who are wealthy, this is the struggle. This is why Jesus says in **Matthew 19:24** says that: *"it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who*

*is rich to enter the kingdom of God."* Because the struggle for the rich is self-sufficiency – to NOT NEED God. And it's self-sufficiency that is the greatest barrier to salvation. Because self-sufficiency says that we don't NEED God; we can do it ourselves; we can SAVE ourselves; we don't need a Savior. That's the danger of being rich and wealthy.

Now, there's nothing evil or wrong about having wealth, but there is a constant pull towards ***self-sufficiency*** instead of ***God-dependency***. **Proverbs 30 vs. 7-9** reveals this struggle when the writer prays: *"…give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God."*

*For us this morning*, whether we consider ourselves rich or not, this is something that ALL of us struggle with at times. When faced with problems, issues, or decisions, the temptation and struggle is to move towards self-sufficiency instead of God-dependency. And the more resources we have, the more capable we are, the greater the struggle. And the more we need to make sure that our first instinct is to turn to God in prayer instead of trying to take things into our own hands.

**2. The Solution:**

*So, that's the struggle. So, what's the solution that Paul provides here?* Well, if the struggle is pride that expresses itself in self-sufficiency instead of God-dependency, the antidote or solution is ***humility*** that expresses itself in several ways.

***a. Trusting God above ourselves and our own resources:***

First, it's humility that expresses itself by trusting and depending on God above ourselves and our own resources. As Paul says in **vs. 17**, *"don't set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches, BUT on God."* In other words, don't just try and throw money at problem and don't ***immediately*** turn to your own resources or self when there is a decision to be made or a problem to solve. Instead, immediately and desperately depend upon and trust in God.

*Practically speaking*, what this means is that like the solution for those who are rich is to ***prioritize prayer.*** They are to seek FIRST God's Kingdom as **Matthew 6** tells us. Again, whether we are rich or not rich, we need to prioritize prayer. But the more resources we have, the more capable we are, the harder it is to immediately and desperately depend upon God. This is why prayer is SO essential for those who have a lot of wealth. And the more we need to be intentional about prioritizing prayer in our lives.

**Proverbs Chapter 3 vs. 5-7** should be a verse that we daily recite: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean NOT on your OWN understanding, in all your ways SUBMIT to Him (**or acknowledge Him, that is, turn to Him, depend on Him, and surrender to Him**), and THEN He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes…"*

***b. Recognizing and acknowledging that all we have is a gift of grace from God:***

DRAFT

The second way that humility for the rich expresses itself is by recognizing and acknowledging that all the good things we have is a gift of grace from God … everything GOOD we have is a gift of grace from God. Again, **vs. 17**, "*don't set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches, BUT on God* ***who richly provides us with everything to enjoy."***

In other words, the way we combat pride and self-sufficiency is by recognizing and acknowledging the truth that EVERYTHING good we have – the house, the cars, the clothes, the job, the family, the friends, the resources is only possible because of God's grace.

But this is harder than we may think. Because when we achieve a certain amount of wealth or status, there is a tendency to believe that "I" did it, "I" earned it, it was through "my" hard work. And we forget that the fact even the ability to work hard, the intelligence to get the degree, the skills to do the job is ONLY because God has granted these things to us.

But when we recognize this truth and acknowledge it in our heart the more humble we become – and the more grateful we will become. Because it is then that we understand that we have this life ONLY because of God's grace. And THAT'S is the key not only to humility, but the key to relating to money and wealth. It's when we realize that EVERYTHING good we have is ***sheer grace***; that the life we have; the house we have; the cars we drive; the family; the friends; the job; and most of all, our salvation is ONLY because of God's grace. And it is then that we begin to see the "stuff" we have in a different light. We then see that we are merely "stewards" of these gifts; nothing truly "belongs" to us; everything belongs to God. It is then that we become grateful for all that God has provided; and it is then that we become generous people.

For us this morning, whether we are wealthy or not, the question is: *Do we recognize that ALL we have in life that is good, not just our salvation, is a gift of grace from God? Do we realize that it's ALL grace? That nothing truly "belongs" to us but we are merely "stewards" of all that God has given?* This is when we become grateful people which results in us becoming a generous people.

***c. Living for and serving others instead of only ourselves:***

The third way that humility is expressed is by living for and serving others instead of only ourselves. **Vs. 17** again: "*don't set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches, BUT on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.* ***18*** *They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,* ***19*** *thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life."*

Here, there are a couple of things to note. First, notice that God through Paul tells us that we can actually "enjoy" the good things God has given us. And that's important because it shows that It's ok to enjoy the fruits of our labor. It's good to enjoy a nice meal, take our family on a nice vacation, to enjoy good things. But the important point here is that we are ALSO called to SHARE that blessing with others. As Paul says, the rich are "*to be generous and ready to share*" (**vs. 18**)

This is how humility is revealed. Because as mentioned, the natural result of recognizing and acknowledging that all is grace and all that we have is a gift of God's grace is not only

gratitude, but generosity. We recognize that we aren't supposed to just enjoy the blessings for ourselves but we are to bless others with what God has provided. And we'll do that joyfully and cheerfully BECAUSE we have been moved by God's grace.

One of the best illustrations of this type of humble gratitude was a professor I knew in college – some of you will know who I'm talking about if you went to UVA. He is a renowned professor and highly respected expert in his field of economics. He has done really well not just vocationally, but he is pretty well off financially. But what impressed me wasn't his academic achievements or the houses he owned, but his character and generosity.

You see, he serves as an Elder of his church, and he's been serving for many years. As well, he's one of the most humble men that I know and a man of integrity. But he also is one of the most giving and generous men I know. He not only gives to his church, but he gives of his time in serving others. He has often and continues to serve colleges students at various Christian fellowships by speaking and mentoring.

He enjoys the blessings of a nice houses, but he doesn't just enjoy them for himself, but he constantly allows Christian groups to use them for retreats and gatherings because he understood that all that he has is because God had given it to him. He freely gives not only his time but all the resources God has provided for the sake of others.

For me, I think THIS is the picture that Paul has in mind when talking about those who are rich AND following Jesus. It's someone who makes sure to give credit where credit is due; that all they have is a gift of grace from God; that ALL is grace; it's someone who leans not on their own understanding, but constantly depend upon God in all that they do; it's someone who not only enjoys the material blessings themselves, but chooses to share that blessing with others. And they do so as a grateful response to the grace that God has shown them, especially through Jesus.

It's someone who realizes that this world isn't it; that they can't take anything with them; they have an eternal perspective; and they want to live for something that is eternal, rather than temporary. Because it's when they live for God and His Kingdom, they live for that which really matters, that which is "truly" life as Paul says in **vs. 19.**

But this isn't true just for the rich, but for those who are not. THIS is the type of heart and relationship with money God desires for us to have. As I close, let me leave you with Jesus' words from **Matthew 6:**

> *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* (Mt. 6:19-21).

\