

A Root of Evils

Atheism, selfishness, and greed are destroying our country, and indeed the world. But let's be clear: Saving "our country" (or the world) from downfall is NOT my goal- saving souls from sin is. And if saving "our country/the world" from collapse and chaos is the objective, as Christians we're fighting the wrong war, cf. 2Cor.10:3-7 and Eph.6:12.

We've considered atheism and selfishness previously, so let's turn our attention and the biblical spotlight on **greed**. *Corporate* greed is abundantly evident as companies raid worker pension plans, sacrifice worker safety for management salaries, hide money in offshore accounts, and CEOs and CFOs use lay-offs and mergers to create golden parachutes for themselves. But are the workers any better? Their envy of owner's/company profits also produces greed- more money for less work, more paid time off for more reasons (or no reason at all), more benefits with less responsibility, more pension for less time to become vested; etc. Politicians go into office heavily indebted, make modest salaries, but leave office multi-millionaires. Is the populace any less greedy? They shout (and vote for) "tax the rich" and "redistribute wealth" (third-party robbery through taxation) and less personal liability and responsibility (cradle to grave dependency). It all spells one thing G.R.E.E.D. The wealthy and the "have nots" all want the same thing, M.O.N.E.Y. The wealthy don't care whom or how they hurt to achieve it, and the "under-served" (isn't that term telling!) want what others have without putting forth the honest effort and investment to achieve it. Free education, free healthcare, free housing, free food, and free phones aren't really free. "Free to me" just means that someone who didn't receive it worked and paid for it. Rich and poor, owner and worker, politician and populace have all been consumed with greed... which is **spiritual** issue more than social one!

I. 1Tim.6:1-19. We've all heard it before, that "Money is the root of all evil." No, that's not what 1Tim.6:10 says...

- A. It says, "*the love of money*" rather than "*money*." Though Jesus did refer to it as "*unrighteous mammon*" in Luke 16:9,11, it is also clear that *money/wealth* can be viewed, and thus possessed and used, properly, 1Tim.6:17-19. The problem arises when we love and long for, trust and rely on, and become *idoltrous slaves* to money. Though this may also result in resorting to *unscrupulous means* to attain it, the *unrighteousness* is more about our idoltrous attitude toward and the subsequent use of earthly possessions, and how this leads us *away from* God and righteousness. **We're** the problem more so than the **money**.
- B. Thus, the *wealthy* can be righteous (though such is not easy), and conversely the *poor* can be *envious* and/or *covetous*: Judas *pilfered* (stole from) the money box, cf. Luke 8:3 with John 12:6; and *betrayed* Jesus for *thirty pieces of silver*, Matt.26:14-16; 27:3-5. However, both Abraham and Job were *wealthy* men (as was Joseph of Arimathea, cf. Matt.27:57ff), but evidently managed to remain uncorrupted by their prosperity; though the difficulty of doing so is made clear by the rich young ruler and Jesus' summation of wealth generally, Matt.19:22-24.
- C. Furthermore, there are two grammatical/translation issues that need to be addressed in 1Tim.6:10: 1) the *love of money* is "**a**" not "*the*" *root of all sorts of evil*- there are other *roots* that also give rise to and support *evil*, cf. Heb.12:15; 1John 2:15 (to my knowledge, David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah had nothing to do with a love of money but everything to do with *lust* of the flesh!); and,

2) although *rhiza* (*root*) is singular in the text, *pas* (*all*) is **plural**- thus yielding “*all sorts of evil*” rather than merely “*all evil*.” What’s the significance? Overall, instead of the “*love of money*” being “***the root of all evil***”- both singular as in the KJV, it is actually “***a*** (one of others) *root of all sorts* (plural) *of evil*” as in most other modern English translations.

D. One final translation note before we move on: *orego* (translated as “*longing for*”) basically means *to stretch oneself out in order to touch or grasp* (cf. 1Tim.3:1 and Heb.11:16 for its other N.T. usages). What a picture! We can *stretch ourselves out* in order to *grasp* the spiritual and eternal glories of *heaven*, or the earthly material possessions destined to corruption and destruction, cf. Matt.6:19-20!

II. And what **results** from this particular **root of evil** (that is **loving money**)? Two separate but related tragedies are provided (again, in 1Tim.6:10):

A. *Wander(ing) away from the faith*- Make no mistakes here, *the love of money* that motivates us to *stretch ourselves out for* it separates us from God, Matt.6:24; because it is *idolatry* (loving/serving *anything* more than or other than God), Col.3:5; Eph.5:5! This is so, not only because the Bible said so, but also because, as A.T. Robertson noted in Word Pictures in the New Testament on this passage, “Men and women will commit any crime for money.”

B. *Self-piercing with pangs* (*odune*- consuming grief, pain, sorrow). Once infected with the *love of money*, such quickly becomes an all-consuming and all-destroying addiction in which the “junkie” will do anything for a “fix”- loving nothing else, and sacrificing anything and everything to attain it- including not only *physical* relationships, but the *spiritual* soul.

III. Now let’s note some additional and related points from the context:

A. Those who *suppose* (spiritual) *godliness* to be a *means of* (physical) *gain* are of a *depraved mind* and are *deprived of the truth*, v.5. Sounds a lot like *atheism* from Rom.1:18-32 doesn’t it?

B. *Physical contentment*, for the *rich* or the *poor* (thus *everyone*), the *business owner* and the *worker*, the *politician/government* and the *citizen*, is the *key to spiritual gain*, vv.6-9; for it allows us to...

C. ***Pursue*** (or *stretch ourselves out for* as in v.10) ***righteousness*** rather than wealth, ***godliness*** rather than human standards of “success,” ***faith*** rather than finances, ***love*** rather than lust, ***perseverance*** to a heavenly home rather than pensions for earthly demise, and ***gentleness*** rather *abuses of power*, v.11.

D. Thus, our ***fight*** is “*the good fight of faith*” rather than the atheistic, selfish, and ***greedy*** fight for that which will lead us *away from* instead *toward* God, vv.12-16.

IV. Conclusion: How do we win *this battle*? Note specifically vv.17-19: don’t be *conceited/arrogant* or *high-minded*; don’t *fix your hope on the uncertainty of riches/wealth*, cf. Luke 12:15,16-21; *do good* with whatever God chooses to bless you; be *rich in good works*; be *generous* and *ready to share* whether wealthy or poor (like the *Macedonians* in 2Cor.8:2-5); and *store up treasures in spiritual* rather than *physical* things, cf. Matt.6:19-20. Atheism and selfishness can produce greed; but greed can also combine with selfishness to produce atheism!