



Biblical Foundations

How to Enjoy Your Wealth

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Command those who are rich in this world's goods not to be haughty or to set their hope on riches, which are uncertain, but on God who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, to be generous givers, sharing with others. In this way they will save up a treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the future and so lay hold of what is truly life.

— 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NET)

Paul encouraged the young pastor Timothy to instruct “those who are rich” regarding the use of their money. One definition of “rich” is “having more than enough of material possessions.”¹ *More than enough*. Based on that definition, most of us would fit the category.

Let's consider Paul's instructions. Then we'll look at the reasoning behind those instructions.

PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS

- Do not be arrogant (high-minded, conceited)—literally, lofty in thought or attitude.
- Do not put your hope in (trust in, look for security in) wealth, which is uncertain.
- Put your hope in (trust in, find your security in) God.
- Do good, be rich in good deeds, be generous and willing to share.

Our natural inclination seeks security in money and possessions. Rather than allowing us to remain in this tendency, Paul encourages us to rely on God as our true source of security and provision. Trusting God as our source frees us to give generously.

Once we've taken care of our basic needs, we find four things we can choose to do with money:

1. **Binge.** We can indulge in creative ways to spend money on ourselves, seeking to satisfy every whim and desire imaginable. Solomon, one of the wealthiest men to

¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/rich>



ever live, aggressively embarked on such an experiment. This led only to emptiness, disappointment, and depression.

I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;
I refused my heart no pleasure. . . .
Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done
and what I had toiled to achieve,
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;
nothing was gained under the sun. (Eccl 2:10–11 NIV)

2. Hoard. Much like the unwise servant, we can build up our bank accounts far beyond what is necessary or *enough*, only to die and leave it to someone else.

Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. “Master,” he said, “I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.”
(Matt 25:24–25)

3. Toil. We can work hard to accumulate even more wealth, just to leave more behind for someone else.

And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:16–21)



4. Give. We can give it away.

PAUL'S PURPOSE

- They will lay up treasure for themselves.
- They will take hold of (fully embrace) the life that is truly life (real life; life in all its fullness and abundance; the life that God intended). “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (The words of Jesus, recorded in John 10:10)

Paul teaches us to give generously from our excess. He doesn't say this because he expects to receive any of this money for himself, nor does he say this because he hopes to receive assistance with his ministry. In fact, his focus is not necessarily on any particular recipient. Rather, Paul focuses on the *giver*. Paul tells us to be generous because of what it will do for us. It will bring us joy.

Paul affirms that such generosity will store up treasure for the giver. Does this remind you of Jesus's words in his Sermon on the Mount?

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

What does it mean for us to store up treasure in heaven? I believe one aspect is the fact that our current generosity carries eternal impact. It makes a difference in the lives of eternal souls for the glory of Jesus Christ. If that doesn't fill your heart with joy, nothing will!

So what will you do with your “more than enough”? Binge? Hoard? Toil? Or will you choose to embrace life in its fullness through a lifestyle of generosity? Only the latter is guaranteed to produce joy.