

MONDAY MANNA

15 November 2021

OVERCOMING THE CONSUMING LOVE OF MONEY

By Jim Langley

There was a time when the pursuit of money was the dominating factor in my life. Without question, making money can become a way of life, and it has always been that way. In the Bible we find the apostle Paul instructing his protégé with these words of wisdom: *“The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs”* (1 Timothy 6:10).

Paul is not stating that money is inherently evil, but the *love of money* can lead to many forms of evil. There is nothing wrong with having money or desiring money, but when it becomes both our goal and our god, we have a huge problem.

I recall a car bumper sticker from the past that made the bold claim, *“HE WHO DIES WITH THE MOST TOYS WINS.”* That clever saying found agreement from many people enamoured with accumulating more and more, no matter what it cost to get it. But is that true?

King Solomon of Israel, renowned for his wisdom, addressed this subject. In Ecclesiastes 2:11 he wisely conceded, *“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.”* As a man who had devoted much of his life to the pursuit and enjoyment of material and sensual things, he wrote from the personal experience of one who had learned that the love of money is “simply chasing the wind.”

The Love of Money. It is not the only cause, certainly, but definitely a root of many kinds of evil. We see this in every area of life. If we are in love with money, we cannot be in love with God. And in reality, we do not have to have a lot of money to love it! A person can be penniless and still have a deep affection for what money can acquire.

Becoming Distracted from What is Important. We can easily fall into the sinful trap of rationalising that money will bring happiness and contentment. Time and experience have shown me just the opposite: I have personally observed how money can create all kinds of distractions, luring us away from what really matters in life, important things like relationships and our cherished values.

Focusing on the Wrong Things. I have seen many people who have become obsessed by their careers and financial rewards to the extent of neglecting family, friends, and God. Even followers of Jesus Christ can become fanatically focused on making money and totally lose sight of what is most important in life, the things that cannot be lost. To get us back on track, God can use many ways to regain our attention: illness, the loss of a job or some other business failure, divorce, or any number of forms of adversity.

Storing Up Treasures. Jesus stated it clearly in Matthew 6:19-21 when He warned, *“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 moths 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.”*

Where is your heart, the focus of your daily devotion and attention? Is it on accumulating more and more money and the things it can buy here on earth, or is it on your relationship with your Heavenly Father? The Bible teaches we are to, *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your strength”* and *“store up your treasures in Heaven.”* Are we doing that?

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

When you read "money is a root of all evil," what does that say to you? Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

Have you known of people whose lives were adversely affected by the pursuit of money and material things? Perhaps you have experienced some of this yourself. What have been some of the consequences that you observed?

How do you think that an inordinate focus on money and its perceived benefits can affect relationships – not only with our family and friends, but also with God?

What are some steps a person can take, first to recognise if they have become (or are becoming) consumed with the love of money, and also how to overcome this unhealthy obsession?

NOTE: For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:

Ecclesiastes 2:4-11

Matthew 6:24-34

2 Timothy 3:1-5

James 4:13-17