

Study Guide

Monday, November 9- Friday, November 13

I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-18

There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered

away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains...As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

Monday, November 9- The role that money plays in our lives is a spiritual issue. Jesus addressed this on numerous occasions because, even in the first century, money and wealth were a challenge to the spiritual life. This week we will be reading just a few of the Bible's many passages on money. Today we begin with an important concept – that all that exists on this planet ultimately came from and belongs to God. We were born with nothing and we will take nothing with us when we die. If we are capable of generating wealth it is because of God's gift of life and health. It is this idea that is underlying the concept of stewardship. A steward is a manager of another's resources. The biblical worldview is that each of us is a simply steward of what we have – we are allowed to enjoy it, but we are called to manage our resources in a way that honors God. One tendency we have is to forget this. God warned against this in the earliest sections of scripture. **Read Deuteronomy 8:11-20.** What is the point of this passage for you? King David seemed to understand this idea when, as he was dedicating his wealth to the building of the temple. **Read I Chronicles 29:9-18.** How did David look at his wealth (vv. 14-16 in particular)? How does this passage apply or speak to you?

Tuesday, November 10 – Many of us struggle with the role of money in our lives. Today's passages highlight some of those struggles. **Read Ecclesiastes 5:10** – how have you experienced this to be true? **Read I Timothy 6:6-10.** Note that it is not money that is a root of all evil but the love of money. Have you observed what Paul writes here to be true? Finally, read what Jesus said regarding our insatiable appetite for more. **Read Luke 12:13-21.** What does Jesus mean in v. 15? What does the parable of the rich man with his bigger barns mean for you?

Wednesday, November 11 – How much should I give to God? This is a practical question that each of us should ask. Abraham set the example for us, hundreds of years before the Law, when, after a battle, he gave one-tenth of the spoils of war to the priest of God in Jerusalem (Salem as it was called then). You can read this story in **Genesis 14:17-20.** The tithe, or tenth, was typically what a subject gave to his or her king. Abraham gave this to the priest recognizing that God was his king. Later Jacob, Abraham's grandson, has a great vision from God (in which he sees a ladder

or, in the words of a classic rock and roll song, a stairway, to heaven). Here Jacob promises, in advance, to give God one-tenth of all he gains. **Read Genesis 28:10-22.** By the time the Law was given, several hundred years later, the tithe, or tenth, was the established norm for giving. **Read Leviticus 27:30.** By the time of Malachi (ministering almost 800 years after the Law was given) the people were becoming lax in giving their tithes. They often gave diseased animals to God, or refused to bring the entire tithe. Listen to what God says to the Israelites: **Read Malachi 3:8-10.** How does this passage speak to you? The tithe is a way of putting God first in our lives. But in order to tithe most of us would need to simplify our lifestyle if we were to give our first tenth to the Lord. How do you think God would look at you if you were to take this step? How would you explain to God why you would not tithe?

Thursday, November 12 – At one point in his ministry Paul takes a special collection from among the Gentile Christians to help the believers in Jerusalem. In II Corinthians we read Paul's words – his "stewardship letter" – aimed at encouraging giving and generosity. **Read II Corinthians 9:1-15.** How does this passage speak to you? What does Paul mean in verses 6-9? While many in the churches were poor, there were also some who had means in the New Testament churches. They were not condemned for having wealth. Wealth was seen as neither a sign of God's favor, nor a sign of God's displeasure, in the New Testament. Rather, it was seen as a tool. **Read I Timothy 6:17-18.** What does this passage mean for you?

Friday, November 13 –We'll end our week-long study of giving and money by turning to Jesus, once again. **Read Matthew 6:19-34.** What does Jesus mean when he says where our treasure is, there our heart will be? How does our heart follow our treasure? How does verse 33 relate to our giving?