

Free from the Love of Money

Detailed Outline

I. Paul's Personal Example Regarding Money

²⁹ I know that after I am gone fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Even from among your own group men will arise, teaching perversions of the truth to draw the disciples away after them. ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears. ³² And now I entrust you to God and to the message of his grace. This message is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have desired no one's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands of mine provided for my needs and the needs of those who were with me. ³⁵ By all these things, I have shown you that by working in this way we must help the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:29-35 NET Bible)

- A. Paul had taught the Ephesian elders everything they needed to know. The Scriptures (Paul's teaching) would be sufficient revelation for them after he was gone.**
- B. He also warned that false teachers would arise, seeking a following by teaching what was false. Some of the false teachers would even come from among their number.**
- C. Immediately following this warning Paul reminds these elders of his conduct regarding money.**
 - 1. Paul, unlike the false teachers, was not seeking financial gain through his ministry.
 - 2. Paul set the example for these elders by working with his own hands, providing for his own needs and also providing for the needs of others.
 - 3. For, him, it was better to give than to receive, just as Jesus taught (vv. 33-35).

II. The Role of Money in Relation to False Teaching and Teachers

- A. There is a distinct relationship between Paul's words about false teachers and his own words regarding money.**
- B. False teachers are in it for the money.**

... They are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. (Titus 1:11)

- C. In their greed false teachers will exploit the saints with their false words.**

³ And in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. (2 Peter 2:3)

- D. Men will turn away from the truth to error, because they have "itching ears."**

Men with "itching ears" are willing to pay for false teaching that not only endorses their sinful ways, but actually encourages them.

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers...
(2 Cor. 4:3 NKJV)*

E. A teacher cannot serve God and money. We must choose one or the other.

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Matt. 6:24 ESV)

F. Some men are deprived of the truth and believe that godliness is a means of gain.

... Men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. (1 Tim. 6:5 NASB)

1. There is a sense in which this is true, when godliness is accompanied by contentment, but those who love money fall into temptation and its outcome – destruction.
2. Those who are rich ought not to put their faith in wealth, but to fix their hope in God. They should likewise be “rich in good deeds,” using their wealth to minister to the needs of others.

*Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.
(1 Tim. 6:17)*

III. Paul Practiced What He Preached.

A. He had a right to support, but he set it aside (1 Cor. 9:3–14).

1. Paul demonstrates his right to be supported in his ministry
2. And yet he relinquished this right in order to preach the gospel free of charge, and thus to enhance its impact on others.
3. How do you preach a message of grace, when you have a motive of greed?

B. He often worked to support himself

For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. (1 Thess. 2:9)

1. Paul labored night and day so as not to be a burden on these folks.
2. Like a nursing mother and a loving father he nurtured them, so that they were dependent on him, rather than he upon them.

C. Paul was ridiculed for his practice (2 Cor. 11:7–15).

1. Unlike the “false apostles,” Paul ministered to the Corinthians without charge.
2. And because of this some actually looked down upon Paul as inferior.

IV. Conclusion

- We must be free from the love of money if we are to be teachers of the truth.
- The gospel we preach is all about grace, and preaching for hire is not gracious.
- Money is one of the ways that false teachers and teaching can be discerned.
- False teachers have their hand out.
- We teach God's grace while working with our hands, so that we may demonstrate the grace of God in the gospel.