

# CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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## Godliness: The Means or The Goal?

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Have you ever contemplated the type of people who gave the Apostle Paul fits? In Timothy, Paul listed a group of people who caused him problems: One person (Demas) left him because he loved the world (2 Tim. 4:10). A non-believer (Alexander the metalworker) did Paul and the gospel a great deal of harm (2 Tim. 4:14). Many of Paul's companions deserted him while he was in a desperate situation (2 Tim. 4:16).

These events took place at the end of Paul's life and ministry. I'm sure these people gave Paul fits, but he did not go into great detail about the events or his views. However, Paul provided his thoughts on another group of people who obviously bothered him greatly. This group is described in 1 Timothy 6.

Paul was annoyed by people who used their salvation as a means to become wealthy. Paul described this group in 1 Tim. 6:3-5. They were regenerate, but conceited and understood nothing. They produced envy, strife, and friction among the body of Christ. They viewed godliness as a means to financial gain (1 Tim. 6:5).

Christians were a sub-culture in the first century. Jewish Christians were ostracized from their Jewish families and culture for proclaiming Christ as Messiah. Gentile Christians were ostracized from their Roman families and culture for proclaiming Christ as King.

Christians had to stick together and would have been inclined to trust anyone who bore the name Christian. But what if the speaker was untrustworthy? What if he was in it for himself and the money? This is the situation that Paul described. Today the Church is full of godly leaders who do not fit this description. Unfortunately, there

are others who do. How can you tell if a teacher is trustworthy or not? How can people tell if you are trustworthy or not?

"But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6, NIV). We are to become individuals who seek godliness as our highest end, not the means to an end (riches). We have all heard stories of people who attend church for the specific aim of selling their goods or services. But pursuing riches in general is a trap because, "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 Tim. 6:10, NIV).

How can you tell if you love godliness or money more? How can you tell if you are at risk from wandering from the faith? Answer the following questions.

- Which can you name more quickly - the stock market values or a Bible passage you are currently studying?
- Do you fail to give to the Lord's work regularly because of mounting bills?

Study the book of Proverbs to understand why godliness is more valuable than money. Choose to pursue godliness as an end and not as a means. Godliness is serious to God.

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