

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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The Trap

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It looks like such a simple device – only a small piece of wood with a few pieces of thin wire attached. It just sits there and does not make any noise. Certainly, this could not be dangerous. To top it all off, it even has free food on it! Creatures interested in the food sitting on the device seldom pass it up. All seems well until...WHAP...the onlooker turns into a fatality. What once looked delicious turns out to be dangerous. So works the mousetrap.

Mice are not the only beings that can get trapped. Listen to some strong words that the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy. "But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction" (1 Tim. 6:9, NSB).

Think of the progression of the mouse and the mousetrap. First the mouse generally desires food, then it finds the food on the trap and specifically desires it, and finally the mouse seeks the food and gets caught in the trap.

According to the Apostle Paul, that same progression can happen to people. First, there is a general desire to get rich, then he or she is tempted with specific areas or opportunities, and finally he or she actively seeks riches and gets caught in a trap that ends in destruction.

Interesting thing about traps – it is very difficult to get out on your own. The mouse cannot get out because it is dead. Can people get out of financial traps? The answer is a resounding yes! As long as you are alive, God can help you remove yourself from a financial trap that ensnares you.

To get out of a financial trap, you must stop desiring the bait on the trap. It is the bait that got you caught in the first place. Paul says the bait is the desire to get rich. It can take many forms:

working longer hours at work just to support your standard of living, falling prey to get-rich-quick marketing by buying things, or putting your money in riskier investments because other people say they are making money.

I somewhat jokingly call financial bondage, "The sin that keeps on giving." Even when you fix your attitude toward riches, you still must live with the effects of your past mistakes or sins.

Some people realize that they need to get out of the trap they are in but choose not to because they realize that it will require a lot of work to fix the effects. They believe that it is less painful to remain in the trap than to have freedom outside of the trap. I'm sure a mouse in a mousetrap would not have that philosophy. Why should you?

Paul does not state that life will simply be inconvenient while caught in the trap. He states that it will "plunge men into ruin and destruction." If you are caught in a financial trap, you need to repent of desiring the bait on the trap – the desire to get rich. With God's help, remove yourself from the trap both in your thinking as well as your actions. Starting today, will you choose to avoid the bait of desiring riches? The Book of Proverbs gives some wonderful advice on avoiding greed and living a life of stewardship. God can get you out of your financial trap. Will you follow His instructions?

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: bbcfoundation.org; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org