

A Root of Evils

Commentary for October 16, 2019 — There Are Several Roots of Evil

I want to comment on 1 Timothy 6:10, giving the context of verses 9 and 11 from the King James Version (KJV):

“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”

Now compare the Concordant Literal Version (CLV) with the King James Version or other translations. Reading the verse before and after 1 Timothy 6:10 gives useful context. Read these words carefully because they are insightful:

“Now, those intending to be rich are falling into

[1] a trial and

[2] a trap and

[3] the many foolish and harmful desires

which are swamping men in [to what end?] extermination and destruction.¹

For a root of all of the evils is the fondness for money, which some, craving, were

- led astray from the faith and
- try themselves on all sides with much pain.

Now you, O man of God, flee from these things: yet pursue righteousness, devoutness, faith, love, with endurance, suffering, and meekness.”

• 1 Timothy 6:9–11 (CLV)

Money is NOT **“the root of all evil,”** as the KJV translates the verse. It is **“A root of all of the evils** [plural].” There is no definite article connected to **“root.”** There are, however, several roots of evils. The fondness of money is one of the roots that encompasses **“all of the evils.”** **“The fondness of money”** is more accurate than **“the love of money,”** although the latter is the most frequent English translation. Money in ancient times meant wealth in terms of land, position, or income, not just hoarding silver or gold coins. Nevertheless, money is an inanimate goal that can be lusted after.

¹ Proverbs 28:20: **“A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that makes haste to be rich shall not be innocent.”**

Proverbs 15:27 (KJV): **“He that is greedy of gain troubles his own house; but he that hates gifts shall live.”**

The phrase translated as **“fondness of money”** or **“love of money”** is a single compound word in Greek. The root words “fondness” or “love” in Greek is connected with the word “silver” into a single term *phileo* + *argous* (hence, “love of silver”).²

In verse 11 the phrase, **“Flee from these things,”** causes us to ask, what things should we flee from? We should flee from an intention to be rich leading to **“foolish and harmful desires”** (verse 9); **“the fondness of money”** and a **“craving”** that would lead people astray, presumably from God and His blessings (verse 10). An excessive desire to be rich is meant.

“Do not labor to become rich; In your understanding, forbear. While your eyes are on it, does it fly away and is no more? Indeed riches make wings for themselves And fly away to the heavens like a vulture.”

• *Proverbs 23:4–5 (CLV)*

The apostle Paul identifies greed to idolatry:

“Deaden, then, your members that are on the earth: prostitution, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and greed, which is idolatry.”

• *Colossians 3:5 (CLV)*

Please read all of Proverbs 8:12–21 for a proper understanding of the connection of humility, wisdom, and wealth. Other portions of Proverbs give similar sentiments:

“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches; Grace is better than silver and gold. The rich man and the destitute one encounter in this: Yahweh is the Maker of them all. A prudent man, he sees evil ahead and conceals himself, Yet the simple pass along, and they are mulcted [punished]. The consequence of humility is [1] fear of Yahweh, [2] Riches and [3] glory and [4] life.”

• *Proverbs 22:1–4 (CLV)*

Wealth can be a gift of God (Ecclesiastes 5:18–20), and **“The consequence of humility is fear of Yahweh, Riches and glory and life”** (Proverbs 22:4, CLV). Paul had more to write to his young colleague in 1 Timothy chapter 6:

“Those who are rich in the current eon be charging not to be haughty, nor yet to rely on the dubiousness of riches, but on God, Who is tendering us all things richly for our enjoyment;

to be doing good acts, to be rich in ideal acts, to be liberal contributors, treasuring up for themselves an ideal foundation for that which is impending, that they may get hold of life really.”

• *1 Timothy 6:17–19 (CLV)*

Indeed, Paul tells us we all will be rich some day:

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich.”

• *2 Corinthians 8:9 (KJV)*

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² The basic form of money in the New Testament era were coins made of copper, used primarily for small everyday exchanges. The most sought after form of portable wealth was silver. Gold was only exchanged between kingdoms and those of great wealth.