



DEAN WELCH – TEACHER

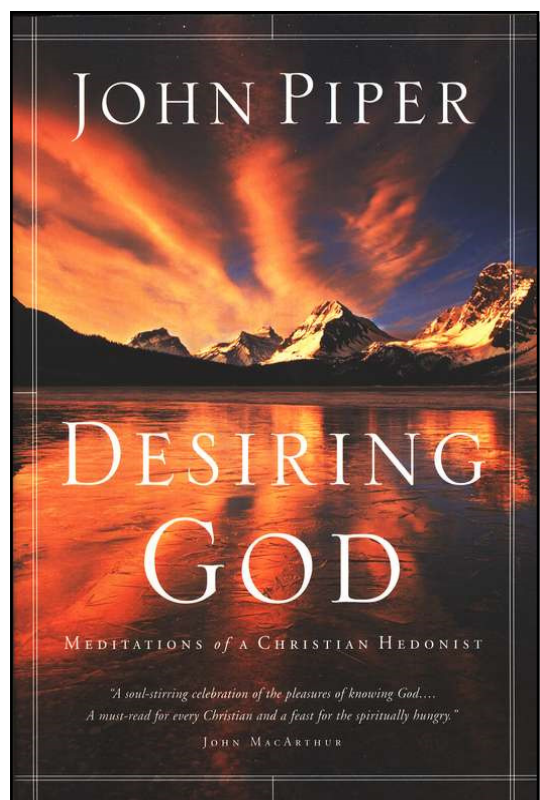
*it all goes back*  
**IN THE BOX!**



# WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

**MAY 16, 2010**

**LESSON #7** FROM THE **MASTERWORK** SERIES STUDY OF:



# *it all goes back* IN THE BOX!



Money, money, money—it's the rich man's world. Or at least so says the hit song of the 70's by ABBA. You have the words in your chair or on your table, so follow along as we wrap up Week 7 of our study by John Piper about how we should each be *delighting in God*—especially in using our money! [USE YOUTUBE LINK TO PLAY VIDEO OF MONEY, MONEY, MONEY: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETxmCCsMoD0>]

Was that a fair assessment about money today? In today's world, how do we measure success, generally? (**MONEY**) Yes. Many of us have adopted the slogan of "*he has who the most toys wins!*" It seems that anxiety, pressure, ulcers, stress are as common as khaki pants and golf shirts. But the good news we'll see, I pray, is that you can find joy, peace, and happiness in the struggle and delight in God by using your money according to His Plan.

I've asked a couple of you to pass out the new, crisp one dollar bills that I had stacked up front as you came into the classroom. This stack of money helps put this whole topic into perspective, doesn't it? I want you to hold the dollar bill in your hand and feel it. Now smell it. Let's talk about what  **blessings**  can come from money. Now what  **dangers**  come with money? You have to ask yourself: "When you finally get the ultimate possession, when you've made the ultimate purchase, when you buy the ultimate home, when you have stored up financial security and climbed the ladder of success to the highest rung you can possibly climb it, and the thrill wears off—and it will wear off—then what?" IT ALL GOES BACK IN THE BOX. [GET MONEY BACK & STACK IT UP FRONT IN PLAIN SIGHT.]

Although we still don't particularly *like* Piper's phrase, *Christian Hedonism*, I pray that you understand more and more each week what he's really saying about how we are to *delight in God*. I remind you from Week One what John Piper said as the bottom-line message of this 9-week study: "*God is most **glorified** in me*"

when I am most **satisfied** in Him.” That’s the basis of what he calls “Christian Hedonism.” So with that in mind, can someone tell me what seems to be our foundational memory verse from **PSALM 37:4 (NIV)**? *“Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”* As I have asked each week throughout this series, **would someone share a moment when you found JOY in God this week?** Now, on the other side, will someone tell us **what is the one thing that KEPT YOU FROM joy in God this week?**

So, how is **MONEY** related to our *delighting in God*? Piper tells us that *“money is the currency of Christian Hedonism in the sense that what you do with it – or desire to do with it – can make or break your happiness forever.”* Turn to **1 TIMOTHY 6: 9 (CEV)** in your Bible and follow along: *“People who want to be rich fall into all sorts of temptations and traps. They are caught by foolish and harmful desires that drag them down and destroy them.”* Now, what’s the trap in this verse? [NIV: “MANY FOOLISH AND HARMFUL DESIRES THAT PLUNGE MEN INTO RUIN AND DESTRUCTION.”]

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, most people still believe that money brings happiness. Do you? Whose happier: the man with five children or the man with \$5-Million? The one with five children, because he doesn’t want anymore! Think about what ruin and destruction you have seen come from the love of money. *I read an article in the newspaper recently about a couple who won \$48.6 million in a lottery several years ago. After winning, the woman said, “We had one month of good times—and three years of misery.” It changed their lives. The woman said, “I’d trade it all for a normal life. It’s not worth it. Health and happiness is what I want.” The woman, Lynette Nichols, is a recovering alcoholic and tranquilizer abuser. She has had three pacemaker operations since her big lottery win. Jimmy Nichols, her husband, writes, “More bad than good came out of this.” Jimmy filed for divorce several months after the big win and legal bills have topped over \$200,000 on both sides.*

Now, look at **verse 10** of **1 TIMOTHY 6**, as we continue: ***10**The love of money causes all kinds of trouble. Some people want money so much that they have given up their faith and caused themselves a lot of pain.* So many people get this verse wrong. It's not **money**, but what? Yes, the **love** of money. If we use our money for others in order to delight in God, we are blessed. People who constantly crave more wealth and more possessions are caught in an endless cycle that only ends in disillusionment, ruin, and destruction. **If the love of money can cause such ruin and destruction, why do people fall for such temptation?**

Listen to these very insightful words by a very wise man about money from **PROVERBS 30: 7-9 (NCV)**: ***7**"I ask two things from you, Lord. Don't refuse me before I die. **8**Keep me from lying and being dishonest. And don't make me either rich or poor; just give me enough food for each day. **9**If I have too much, I might reject you and say, 'I don't know the Lord.' If I am poor, I might steal and disgrace the name of my God."* Is that a prayer that you honestly desire to pray?

Recently, I read the results of a informal survey where eighty men were asked if they were having financial problems. All eighty men answered, "Yes." One man responded with, "I don't have any problems money can't solve." How many of us have at least thought the same words? Patrick Morley, in his book [Walking With Christ In The Details of Life](#), tells about several men who went on a mission trip to Haiti where they met a 19-year old boy who loved Christ deeply. He impressed them so profoundly that they invited him to visit the United States. Upon his arrival, a whole new world opened up before this young Haitian's eyes. He had never slept between sheets, never had three meals on the same day, never used indoor plumbing, and never tasted McDonald's.

While traveling the U.S., this godly young man made many new friends. At the end of a six-week-long visit, his sponsors hosted a

farewell dinner in his honor. After dinner several members of the group offered warm parting remarks. Then they asked the young Haitian if he would like to say anything. "Yes," he said as he rose. *"I want to thank you so much for inviting me here. I have really enjoyed this time in the United States. But I am also very glad to be going home. You have so much in America that I'm beginning to lose my grip on my day-to-day dependency on Christ."*

Is that you too? Do you have "so much" that you find it hard to keep a grip on your day-to-day dependency on Christ. Or worse, have you lost your grip? When we don't need to depend on Christ, we won't. Our natural tendency is to depend on self not Christ. Depending on Christ is an act of the will by faith, not the natural disposition of our heart. I came across four great diagnostic questions that really convicted me about this thought this week and I'd like to share them with you so I won't feel all alone. These are courtesy of Andy Stanley. You have a copy of these, so answer them to determine where you've placed your trust?

- (1) Which of these statements creates the most anxiety for you:  
(a) There is no God, or (b) There is no money in the bank.
- (2) Does your lifestyle or debt or fear of not having enough impede your ability to give?
- (3) Do you have money in the bank, but no peace in your heart?
- (4) How hard is it for you to do the right thing, when it's going to cost you financially or morally?

How'd you do? Remember we are to *delight in the LORD*—not the material trappings of this 21<sup>st</sup> century life. I pray this quiz convicted you to **re-think** where your trust is placed so that you will not end up like so many of the rich of our times.

Just as **1 TIMOTHY 6:9** clearly reminds us that what we do with our money can destroy us, the question for becomes, when will we learn? I asked each of you earlier this week in a mid-week email, if you were rich? I gave you the statistic that if you make \$47,500 a year or more, you are in the **TOP ONE PERCENT** of richest people in the world! Did you hear that—the top one percent in the

world? I hope you checked it out for yourself at the website I gave you ([www.globalrichlist.com](http://www.globalrichlist.com)). DID YOU KNOW? Three billion people live on less than \$2 per day while 1.3 billion get by on less than \$1 per day. Seventy percent of those living on less than \$1 per day are women. But the average working American lives on \$97 per day. Congratulations, You're rich.

So, let's read **1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19 (CEV)** and see how many commands are given to the rich—that's us: *<sup>17</sup>Command those who are rich in this present world **not to be arrogant** nor to **put their hope in wealth**, which is so uncertain, but to **put their hope in God**, who richly **provides us with everything for our enjoyment**.* How about in that verse? What **three commands** can we find directed to the rich? The first part says we are not to be arrogant—in other words, **be humble!** Next, **trust God not wealth.** And, finally, **enjoy what God gives you.** Look carefully at that verse and please be amazed at what we're told—that God richly provides us with EVERYTHING for our enjoyment. WOW!

Continuing with **verses 18-19:** *<sup>18</sup>Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. <sup>19</sup>In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.* Here we see what command? We should use our wealth to do good to others; we should share; we should put our money to work. In other words, **employ what God gives you.**

You may be asking what's the big deal about my money? Well, there's a fundamental connection between our spiritual lives and how we think about and handle money. We may try to keep our faith and our finances separately, but God sees them as inseparable. Turn to **MATTHEW 6:19-21 (NLT)** and let's look at these verse from Jesus' Himself, from the Sermon on the Mount, about real treasures: *<sup>19</sup>"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup>But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where*

*moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

Why did Jesus tell us not to collect treasures on earth? Was it because earthly treasures are bad? **No, because they won't last!** See, it's not because wealth *might* be lost; **it's because wealth will always be lost. It all goes back in the box!** Either it leaves us while we live, or we leave it when we die. No exceptions. **You'll never see a U-Haul behind a hearse!** Why? Because you can't take it with you! So, where should we collect treasures? Jesus doesn't just tell us where *not* to put our treasures. He gives us the best investment advice you'll ever hear in verse 20: **"Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven."** Jesus is not against our storing up treasures for ourselves. No. He's all for it! In fact, He commands it. Jesus has a treasure mentality. He wants us to store treasures. He's just telling us to stop storing them in the wrong place and start storing them in the right place!

I remember when I was young, 5-6 years old, and every Sunday I would get money from my daddy and the first thing I'd do is put ten percent in church as my offering. I never thought anything about it at all. It was as natural as breathing. Sunday after Sunday after Sunday. I got money from Daddy and always put in my offering. If I got a dollar, I put in 10 cents without hesitation. Why was it so easy then? Why is it not the same today with my money, possessions and wealth?

So, today, when my Heavenly Father blesses me with such a wonderful life, an education, a profession, the ability to work and earn money, why is it not the same thing? Why is it harder to give \$100 out of \$1000 when I make it? Do we lean more today on our money, possessions, and wealth? Listen to the words of the wisest man to ever live from ECCLESIASTES 5:10 (NASB): ***<sup>10</sup>He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.***

People forced to part with their wealth have been thrown into agonizing desolation. Did you hear that six armed gunmen broke into the deposit boxes in a London bank and stole valuables worth more than \$7 million recently? A woman whose jewelry was appraised at \$500,000 cried, *"Everything I had was in there. My whole life was in that box."* What a sad commentary on her values! What if all we hold dear was tied to our material prosperity? To lose it would mean losing our reason for living. Misery is often the result of our attachments to the world, when we should be delighting in the LORD with our money.

I close with a story to help you put this in perspective from John Ortberg's book "When the Game Is Over, It all Goes Back In the Box": There is an analogy that comes from the world of games. It was used quite some time ago by psychologist James Dobson. I first learned it from my grandmother. My grandmother taught me how to play the game Monopoly. Now, my grandmother was a wonderful person. She raised six children. She was a widow by the time I knew her well. She lived in our house for many, many years. And she was a lovely woman, but she was the most ruthless Monopoly player I have ever known in my life. Imagine what would have happened if Donald Trump had married Leona Helmsley and they would have had a child. Then, you have some picture of what my grandmother was like when she played Monopoly. She understood that the name of the game is to acquire.

When we would play when I was a little kid and I got my money from the bank, I would always want to save it, hang on to it, because it was just so much fun to have money. She spent on everything she landed on. And then, when she bought it, she would mortgage it as much as she could and buy everything else she landed on. She would accumulate everything she could. And eventually, she became the master of the board.

And every time I landed, I would have to pay her money. And eventually, every time she would take my last dollar, I would quit in utter defeat. And then she would always say the same thing to me. She'd look at me and she'd say, "One day, you'll learn to play the game." I hated it when she said that to me. But one summer, I played Monopoly with a neighbor kid—a friend of mine—almost every day, all day long. We'd play Monopoly for hours.

And that summer, I learned to play the game. I came to understand the only way to win is to make a total commitment to acquisition. I came to understand that money and possessions, that's the way that you keep score. And by the end of that summer, I was more ruthless than my grandmother. I was ready to bend the rules, if I had to, to win that game. And I sat down with her to play that fall.

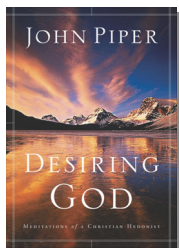
Slowly, cunningly, I exposed my grandmother's vulnerability. Relentlessly, inexorably, I drove her off the board. The game does strange things to you. I can still remember. It happened at Marvin Gardens. I looked at my grandmother. She taught me how to play the game. She was an old lady by now. She was a widow. She had raised my mom. She loved my mom. She loved me. I took everything she had. I destroyed her financially and psychologically. I watched her give her last dollar and quit in utter defeat. It was the greatest moment of my life.

And then she had one more thing to teach me. Then she said, **"Now it all goes back in the box—all those houses and hotels, all the railroads and utility companies, all that property and all that wonderful money—now it all goes back in the box."** I didn't want it to go back in the box. I wanted to leave the board out, bronze it maybe, as a memorial to my ability to play the game.

“No,” she said, “None of it was really yours. You got all heated up about it for a while, but it was around a long time before you sat down at the board, and it will be here after you’re gone. Players come and players go. But it all goes back in the box.” And the game always ends. For every player, the game ends. Every day you pick up a newspaper, and you can turn to a page that describes people for whom this week the game ended. Skilled businessmen, an aging grandmother who was in a convalescent home with a brain tumor, teenage kids who think they have the whole world in front of them, and somebody drives through a stop sign. It all goes back in the box—houses and cars, titles and clothes, filled barns, bulging portfolios, even your body.

**1 TIMOTHY 6: 6-8 (NIV)** says, *<sup>6</sup>But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup>For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. <sup>8</sup>But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.* Does the love of money keep you from delighting in the Lord?

**Let’s Pray.**



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