COMMAND THOSE WHO ARE RICH

I Timothy 6:17 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.

The word command means to pass on a command from someone else, just as it does in I Timothy 1:6, As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer.

“About 9.2% of the world, or 689 million people, live in extreme poverty on less than $1.90 a day, according to the World Bank. **In the United States, 10.5% of the population – 34 million people – live in poverty as of 2019.** For an individual in the US, the poverty line is $12,880 a year or about $35.28 per day.” By any reasonable world-wide standard, most, but certainly not all, Americans are rich.

The Commands

“Not to be arrogant” Ezekiel 16:49&50 “Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.”

“Nor to put their hope in wealth” I Timothy 5:8 anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Ephesians 4:28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

Luke 12:16-18 And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain.’ ”

Luke 12:19-21 “’And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink and be merry.” But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

Proverbs 23:4&5 Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust in your own cleverness. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like and eagle.

I Timothy 4:10 (NASB) For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

Psalm 42:11&43:5 (NASB) Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God. (See also Psalm 42:5)

“who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” The world we live in, though marred by sin, shows abundant evidence of God making a beautiful world for us to enjoy.

I Timothy 6:18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

Luke 12:48b “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Acts 4:33d-35 And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

The Reward of Obeying the Command

I Timothy 6:18 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.

Matthew 6:19-21 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Matthew 6:22-24 “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness. No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

“Healthy” is literally *“haplous”* which means single. “Unhealthy” is *“poneros*”which means evil. The eye fixed on God is single and healthy. The eye fixed on both God and money is unhealthy and evil. We cannot “take hold of the life that is truly life” if our eye is “unhealthy,” that is, fixed on God AND money.

Guard What Has Been Entrusted to You

I Timothy 6:20&21 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all.

Jude 3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people.

2 Timothy 2:16 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

“What is falsely called knowledge” is almost certainly a reference to the teaching of the gnostics, whose name comes from the Greek word *“gnosis,”* meaning knowledge and from which we get our English word agnostic, meaning I don’t know (if there is a God).

“The opposing ideas” of the gnostics were first of all that the books we now have in our New Testament were not all of God’s revelation to His people. Most of the gnostic writings we have now were “Gospels” written long after the person who supposedly gave them had died, given usually by an unseen voice. They often contradict each other and the New Testament and are filled with strange ideas.

They usually believed that matter, including the human body, was intrinsically evil and therefore could not have been created by a good God, but that the original Creator created beings who created beings who created beings etc. until one of them created evil matter. This made the God of the Bible an inferior created “god.” It also meant that Jesus couldn’t be God in human flesh.

I John 4:1-3a Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.

They believed that spirituality was all about knowledge gained from extrabiblical sources and that what one did with their body had no effect on whether they were truly “spiritual.” They were usually incredibly sexually immoral.

“Some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.” Evidence suggests that Nicolas of Antioch (Acts 6:5) became a gnostic and that the Nicolaitans mentioned in Revelation 2:6&15 followed his teaching.

Paul began this letter by saying “Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord” (1:2). He ends it by saying “Grace be with you all.”

Things to Remember

Being arrogant about wealth leads to greater sin and judgment.

Christians should work hard to be able to provide and have something left over to be generous with but should not put their trust in wealth.

Our hope should always be in God.

Those who are wealthy should be generous and in so doing lay up for themselves treasure in heaven.

Avoid godless chatter.

Be careful to hold to the truth that was “once for all delivered to the saints.”