### “Take Hold of the Life” Steve Finlan for The First Church, Sept. 28, 2025

**1 Timothy 6:9–12, 17–18**

9But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. 11 But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called . . .

17 As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but rather on God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, 19 thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

This passage contains some of the most frequently misquoted material in the Bible, especially the line “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim 6:10), which is often misquoted to say “money is the root of all evil.” In fact, there are other motivations to evil besides money. Some are motivated by love of fame and adulation. Some are motivated by revenge, or by sexual desire. But money is right up there with the rest of them, and especially does the *love* of money lead to evil. If you are tempted in that direction, or if you are tempted by any of the other motivations to evil, you need to fight the good fight of faith, and take hold of the promise of eternal life (6:12). Put your values *there*, in the spiritual realm. Store up for yourselves a treasure of good for the future, so that you “may take hold of the life that really is life” (6:18).

The author gives advice to those who are materially rich. Let them not be arrogant or put their hope in riches, but rather on the God who richly provides our spiritual needs. Be rich in good works, be generous, and share. *That’s* how you prepare a good future life for yourself, and the future life is the one that really is life. *This* life is full of illusion and many people are self-deluded by riches, pleasures, social status, and the attention that they receive. These things are not only shallow, they are fleeting. Only real spiritual achievement is enduring. Only that can be called the “real life.”

There is another way to talk about worldly things. One can talk about money and other worldly things as “natural goods,” which can be loved, but should not be loved more than God. In fact, these things should be loved “not outside of God, not *apart from* God, but in God, and should kindle our loving gratitude to Him as the Giver of all gifts” (Alice von Hildebrand, “Introduction” to Dietrich von Hildebrand’s *Transformation in Christ*).

Whether one puts a big contrast between worldly things and heavenly things, or takes the approach von Hildebrand takes of subsuming the worldly under the heavenly, it is imperative to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; then all these things will be added unto you (Matt 6:33).

Get your priorities straight. Lay up treasures in heaven, which cannot decay, cannot be corrupted, cannot be stolen; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt 6:20–21). And spiritual treasures make for real life.

Put first things first. That means put God first. Put spiritual living first. Value that most of all. If you need to make money, then make money, but don’t *love* money. Don’t put any idol in place of God. Look for the truest meanings and the most beautiful and good values for living. Set your heart on God.