

1 Timothy 6:9

Authorized 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.

Analysis

But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare (οἱ δὲ βουλόμενοι πλουστεῖν ἐμπίπτουσιν εἰς πειρασμὸν καὶ παγίδα, hoi de boulomenoi ploutein empiptousin eis peirasmon kai pagida)—'those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a trap.' Boulomai means to will, desire, determine. Peirasmos is temptation, trial. Pagis is snare, trap. The issue isn't having wealth but desiring to be rich—the heart attitude.

And into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition (καὶ ἐπιθυμίας πολλὰς ἀνοήτους καὶ βλαβεράς, αἴτινες βυθίζουσιν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰς ὄλεθρον καὶ ἀπώλειαν, kai epithymias pollas anoētous kai blaberas, haitines ythizousin tous anthrōpous eis olethron kai apōleian)—'and into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.' Bythizō means to sink, submerge, drown. Olethros and apōleia both mean destruction, ruin—spiritual and eternal.

The desire for wealth is spiritually lethal. It leads to temptation, entrapment in foolish lusts, and ultimately destruction. Paul isn't exaggerating—the love of money has destroyed countless lives and souls. Pursue contentment, not riches.

Historical Context

The ancient world had vast wealth inequality—a tiny elite controlled most wealth while masses lived in poverty. The desire to escape poverty and join the wealthy was strong. Paul warns: this desire is a trap leading to spiritual ruin. Better to be poor and godly than rich and destroyed. The church must not adopt worldly values—wealth is dangerous, contentment is safe.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the desire to be rich differ from having wealth—why is the desire especially dangerous?
2. What 'foolish and hurtful lusts' typically accompany the pursuit of wealth?
3. Why does Paul use drowning imagery—how does love of money 'plunge' people into destruction?

Interlinear Text

οἱ δὲ βουλόμενοι πλουτεῖν ἐμπίπτουσιν εἰς πειρασμὸν
G3588 **But** **they that will** **be rich** **fall** **in** **temptation**
G1161 G1014 G4147 G1706 G1519 G3986

καὶ παγίδα καὶ ἐπιθυμίας πολλὰς ἀνοήτους καὶ
and **a snare** and **lusts** **into many** **foolish** and
G2532 G3803 G2532 G1939 G4183 G453 G2532

βλαβεράς αἴτινες βυθίζουσιν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰς
hurtful **which** **drown** **men** **in**
G983 G3748 G1036 G444 G1519

ὕλεθρον καὶ ἀπώλειαν
destruction and **perdition**
G3639 G2532 G684

Additional Cross-References

Acts 8:20 (Parallel theme): But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Proverbs 15:27 (Parallel theme): He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

1 Timothy 3:7 (Parallel theme): Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Matthew 13:22 (Parallel theme): He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

2 Peter 2:3 (Parallel theme): And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

Ephesians 4:22 (Parallel theme): That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Mark 4:19 (Parallel theme): And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Jude 1:11 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

Proverbs 20:21 (Parallel theme): An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.

Proverbs 21:6 (Parallel theme): The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org