

# SAVE

## SERMON 2

SCRIPTURE

FOCUS:

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-11

GAIN

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# SAVE ALL YOU CAN

## INTRODUCTION

It was dubbed the “Miracle Car” scam ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle\\_cars\\_scam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle_cars_scam)). Robert Gomez of California claimed to be heir to a \$400 million estate. He claimed that his father needed to liquidate a large number of cars from the estate. But Gomez said he didn’t just want to sell the cars to the highest bidder. Instead, he announced that God impressed upon him a plan to reward committed Christians for their years of devotion and service with these cars. So, Gomez committed to practically giving away these cars. He told his targets that they only needed to pay a fraction of the actual costs of the cars to cover court, legal and tax fees.

According to Gomez, you could own a Cadillac for \$2,500 or a two-year-old Mercedes for \$3,000. You could buy anything from a Ford Taurus to a Rolls Royce from him for just pennies on the dollar. Nationwide, the scam brought in over \$20 million, without Gomez having delivered a single car.

So, how could a stranger from California swindle 4,000 Christians out of \$20 million in just a few years? He played on their greed. The victims didn’t think they were being greedy. They thought God was blessing them financially for their faithful Christian living. Because that is a really good motivation for living a holy life, right? If you live a holy life, God will bless you, hopefully, with a new car!

The sad part of this story is how quickly the scam worked its way through so many churches. Pastors announced from the pulpit that God had prepared a blessing for His faithful followers. At the advice and counsel of their pastors and other church leaders, Christians wasted no time going to their banks and getting their cashier’s checks (the scammers were wise enough to only accept untraceable cashier’s checks).

We might be tempted to laugh at how easily and quickly these Christians fell for the scam, if it weren’t so sad. But how many of us are tempted on a regular basis to equate God’s blessings with financial blessings? Listen to the sermon text this morning and you will see how, even in the early years of the church, Christians were being led astray by the power of money.



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<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. <sup>9</sup>Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup>For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. <sup>11</sup>But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

In his sermon, written over 200 years ago, John Wesley reflected on the parable of the dishonest manager (Luke 16:1-13) and laid out three principles for wisely handling money. Last week, we looked at the first principle: we are to gain as much money as we can. God called us from the very beginning of creation, before sin ever entered the world, to work. We are to earn as much money as we can, as long as it falls within the boundaries of not hurting the bodies or souls of ourselves or others, in order to do good for ourselves and others. This week, we look at Wesley's second Biblical principle of handling money: save all you can.

### 1. REFUSING TO WASTE

When Wesley says, "save all you can," he is not talking about storing money away in savings accounts, IRAs or CDs—he is talking about refusing to waste money. You work hard for your money, so refuse to throw it away on things that don't last. Don't spend ridiculous amounts of money on luxury items, like trendy clothes or expensive cars. Don't waste it on feeding the desires of your eyes and your pride. Save your money so you can use it for eternal purposes.

When you purchase an item, many factors come into play. The primary one is this: "Will the item fulfill my needs?" Let's use a car as an example. You can choose from many cars, but, for simplicity's sake, let's imagine just two cars—one that works fine, but is cheaper; another that is nicer, but more expensive. Suppose you have a twenty-minute commute to work. Which car will take you to work every day? Both cars will fulfill that need. But, as we all know, the vast

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majority of people do not see a car as simply a means of transportation. Instead, our cars make statements about us—statements like “I’m cool” or “I’m wealthy” or “I’m faster than you” or “I’m more successful than you.”

When a person buys a car, it is not enough to find one that will simply transport us from one place to another. We want one that makes us *feel* good. We want one that makes us *look* good. But, instead of asking ourselves if the car is cool or fast or popular, what if we ask, “Is this car a good value?” and “Is this car reliable?” and “Does this car meet my needs?”

Such questions are not limited to buying big ticket items like cars. We face a similar dilemma when purchasing items like clothes, electronics and food. Am I buying the clothes that meet my needs, or the clothes that make me feel good about myself and impress others? Am I buying this electronic device because it’s the best deal or because it’s the newest model and I want to be the first of my friends to have one? Am I buying this food because it is the best and healthiest fuel for my body or because it is easy and comforts me?

When we ask these questions of how we can avoid wasting our hard-earned money, the simplest answers are not always the right answers. Go to a fast food restaurant and compare how much it costs to eat an unhealthy meal verses a healthy one. At most places, you can buy two or three high-calorie, high-cholesterol, high-fat, high-sodium burgers for less than you can buy a single healthy salad. When you approach food as fuel for your body, how do you best avoid wasting your money? On something that will taste great and make you feel good, or something that help your body function better? Sometimes you can have both, but not always.

## 2. GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT

In 1 Timothy 6, Paul calls us to embrace contentment. Contentment is contrary to our culture. Contentment says we should find a place where we are satisfied, but our culture tells us we will never be satisfied. Our culture says we should always strive for more—that settling for less than what we think we deserve is being lazy and that we should never be satisfied with what we already have.

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That is why 4,000 American Christians believed a story too good to be true. They were convinced that God wanted them to have more. They were convinced that God didn't want them to be satisfied with what they already had. God wants you to have the best, after all!

Paul would say, "Yes, but be careful how you define 'best.'" The best, Paul says in our passage, is "godliness with contentment." Not "godliness with success" or "godliness with wealth" or "godliness with a new Rolls Royce."

Contentment means that we discover what "enough" is for our life. How big of a house is "big enough" for our family? How fast is "fast enough" for a car to get me to work and back? How "tasty enough" is the food we eat for dinner? Then, we let "enough" define how we will live.

This goes completely against our culture's teaching that you should buy the biggest house you can afford (or even bigger than we can afford); that you should buy the nicest car the bank will allow you to purchase; that you should reward yourself for a hard day's work with food that makes you feel good.

When we allow a lender to tell us how much we can afford to buy, we can get into a lot of trouble. The fact is, the bank and the salesman don't want to bring us contentment. They want to sell us something.

### CONCLUSION

You see, at the heart of it all, our spending habits are not really a money issue. They are a spiritual issue. Where do we find the affirmation and acceptance and joy that every human needs? Do we try to find it in people and possessions? Or do we find it in our Lord Jesus Christ?

Do you know where I often find great displays of contentment? Watch the news when they report on people who have lost everything in a natural disaster. You'll see a lot of pain and brokenness, but, every once in a while, you will hear someone say, "We lost everything, but that's okay, because we still have each other. We'll just start all over again." I guarantee you that nine out of ten of those people would have never said that the day before the rain or the flood

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affected them. But every once in a while there comes a crisis in our lives when we have to choose to either let our possessions define us, or to find our identity, value and joy in something greater than anything we could own or possess.

Maybe for some of you, that day is today. Maybe God is speaking to you right now about your spending. Maybe He has revealed to you that you have been wasting the money you work so hard to earn on items that only bring fleeting happiness. Maybe He wants to show you the greater things you can do with the money you gain. Maybe He is encouraging you to learn to be content with the necessities of life so you can be a blessing to others.

How will you practice contentment this week?



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