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Speaker: Pastor Tyler Hanke
Bible passage or verse: 1 Timothy 6:3-10, 17-19 - NIV
Title of Sermon: The Challenge of Materialism
Series: The Bride vs. Godzilla - #2

3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, **4** they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions **5** and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. **6** But godliness with contentment is great gain. **7** For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. **8** But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. **9** 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. **10** 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.

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. **18** Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. **19** 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.

So, this is week two of our series called the Bride vs. Godzilla. So, what Mark wanted to introduce this church to is the reality that there's a number of monsters that face the church. And if we are not ready for them and know how to fight them, they will wound our health, our intimacy with each other -- our unity -- and our effectiveness to reach the world. And so, last week he started this series with the first monster, which was pluralism. Which is the idea that you can come to God any way that you want. If you come to God with Jesus, that's great, but you could also come to Him from any number of faiths. And what he helped us understand is that the way that you fight that monster is with the uniqueness of Jesus. Preaching that to yourself helps the church grow in its confidence to say -- not in arrogance, but to say -- "Jesus himself said, 'I'm the only way.'" And we need to grow in confidence to say that message. This week's monster is infinitely as deadly, but I would argue far more subtle. It's harder to see, and in the culture that we grow up in, it's almost invisible, though it's massive. It is the monster of materialism.

So, before you shut your brain off and say, "Well, I came in here -- I don't have a lot of money, so this isn't me" or "I don't have a lot of stuff, so that's not me either" -- or, "Tyler, I tithe, so -- let's just skip this one and find another monster" -- hold that thought. Hold that thought. Let's go over some numbers for a second. Did you know that in America, in our nation, we are holding onto, right now, all of us, a consumer debt -- not national debt, consumer debt -- of 15 trillion dollars? That's made up of all of the different debt that we are accruing. So, let me break this out into some averages. The average individual is holding on right now to \$5,000 of credit card debt. The average individual is holding \$16,000 in personal loans, \$20,000 in auto loans, \$40,000 in student debt -- these are averages -- some of you are like, "Mine's much worse than that." And the average person is holding onto \$200,000 in mortgage debt. So, here's why this is a big deal. Because you might have come into this room and you are financially healthy, and that's great. But that kind of monster cannot go unnoticed, and that monster will and is affecting the church. Here's how it's affecting it. If a young person feels called into ministry overseas and wants to be a missionary, and they have a truckload of debt -- almost all mission organizations will not touch them. And it's not because they're arrogant, it's not because they don't believe God can do amazing things in spite of debt -- He can -- but they have seen throughout history that when we send someone into the field with a lot of debt, they don't make it. So, they do it to protect people.

Here's another one. I went to Corban University, and I love Corban -- deeply. But I was in class with a number of other young men that all wanted to be pastors. And yet, you graduate Corban, most people with a large amount of debt -- and this isn't just Corban, this is any university -- but when you go up to a church and you say, you know -- and if a church comes to you and says, "We would love for you to be our pastor; here's how much we're going to pay you" -- if you take that and tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt and try to reconcile them, it almost never works. And so, how many young men have said no to amazing church positions? And I'm not saying the church is stingy. I'm not saying that at all. But how many men or women have said no to a ministry position not because they don't love the church, but because they are absolutely crippled in financial debt? The thing is, you might be fine. You might be financially healthy. But can we agree this is OUR problem? This is massive. And it's hurting people. And so, we need to deal with this thing, because this doesn't just affect our church or our nation. This affected the church back in the time of Jesus.

So, we are in 1 Timothy, chapter 6, and to give you a bit of background, Paul was addressing the monster of materialism. It had seeped its way into the church. What did he say in the first couple verses? He's telling Timothy -- and Timothy at the time was in charge of a number of smaller house churches in Ephesus, a very wealthy area. So, much like America. He said, "Timothy, if you're gonna lead them, you need to understand how to help them manage their money." Now, can God do whatever He wants without money? Absolutely. God needs "this much" to do amazing things. However, He did create money and monetary systems, and I believe He's calling us to operate in a healthy way in them. So, I'm not saying we need to worship money, I'm not saying that it matters more than faith -- not at all. But he says, "If you're gonna handle my money, I want you to handle it my way." And so, what had happened was, Paul sees this motive inside the church that was causing them to dismiss what was real about God and put something above Him.

So, here's what he said. He starts in verse 5, and he says: "They were preaching godliness as a means to financial gain." Notice his order. And notice what he just combined. He said, "godliness" -- so, these people were in the church and they're preaching godliness. Is that a bad thing? No. It's not a trick question. That's not a bad thing. They're preaching godliness, and this is why it's so subtle. This isn't a Christian versus non-Christian thing. This gets in our culture. So they came in and they said, "Godliness is a good thing, as long as it leads me to a better position in this life." So, they had taken God from the throne of their heart, put Him in second chair, and they put money in first chair. And that's what all of us are in danger of. So, Paul says, "Timothy, let me teach you. First, we need to address our motive in handling money. You need to address what's in your heart before you address what's in your wallet. Otherwise, your wallet will eat you." First let's address our motive with money, then he wants to teach us how to practically handle money.

So, there's our two movements: Our motive with money and our practice with it. So, he begins, and he says, "I want you to have the right attitude in your heart." So, what's the first thing he points out? He says, "I want you to have an attitude or a motive of contentment." Contentment is your and my ability to say that where I'm at is okay. That I have what I need and I'm going to be fine. But some of you have come into this room, or some of you watching online, you're like, "Tyler, I'm not fine. I'm not okay financially -- in fact, I'm hurting. So, how do I get to that place where I can say where I'm at is okay?" I'll get there. Stay with me. He says, "I want you to be content. Can I teach you how to be content, Timothy?" Here's the first thing that he does. The very next line, he says, "You came into this world with nothing. The only thing you had to your name was your umbilical cord, and that was taken away from you with a pair of scissors. And you will leave this life with nothing."

So, what has he just done for you? If you want contentment, but you don't quite understand it -- you're like, "What do I do? I'm just" -- if you're looking at your life, and it's tunnel vision, it's very difficult to get a

new perspective. So, what he's doing is, he's said, "Come back with me. Step back. Now look at your life. From the 10,000-foot view, what do you see?" He says, "You came in with nothing, and you will leave with nothing." And he spends the rest of our text, the rest of this section of Scripture, describing something that comes next. So, he said, "If you're going to understand money well in this life, understand that this life is part one of two. This life, no matter how difficult it might be for you right now," he says, "this is part one, and there's a part two." So, what does that help you do? If you're here tonight, or you're watching online, and your life is difficult -- please understand that what is is not forever. What is for you right now is not forever. God says, "There's something coming. The age to come, I can't even describe how beautiful it is to you. So, hang in there." Contentment. But we have begun to believe a lie. Culture gave it to us. And here's the lie: If I'm wealthy, I'll be happy. So, Lord, I'm gonna stay in a sour mood. I will stay uncontent. I will stay angry, because I don't have what I think I need. And so, then there can cause division in the church, because those that don't have a lot look at those that came in with nice cars, and they say, "Well, they clearly got that by, you know, ungodly means." And they can cause the poor to think poorly of those that are wealthy.

You see how this monster, no matter what amount of money you came in with, it can begin to cause division. And we begin to look at the people in our same church with a poor attitude. But a number of different people have noticed something. The wealthy noticed something about this lie. Is it true that if you are wealthy, you are happy? You could probably maybe easily say no, but let me read you something. This is from Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones, the famous Welsh physician who became a pastor. He said, "Of course, the fallacy which underlies the pursuit of money is a very old one. It is this: if you are wealthy, you are happy. Quite by accident, it has been my lot to be able to study a large number of wealthy men at close quarters. Such as the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, Rudyard Kipling and King Edward the seventh. And many other wealthy prominent members of British nobility. Here is my conclusion that I have arrived at after watching them. They are intensely miserable people."

Jim Carrey, the famous comedian, said something very similar. He said, "If I had one wish, it would be that everyone would become wealthy and famous so that they could discover it amounts to nothing." When you look at contentment, the first thing you need to begin to do if you want this attitude in your heart is pull yourself back. Because where you are right now is not forever. Now, some of you might like the idea of contentment, but you're like -- "So Tyler, I'm with you, but how do we measure this thing?" What does contentment mean to you? So, Paul anticipates this. He says, "Can we measure this together from the same spot? Let's measure this from the same spot." Did you notice where he put it? Did you notice where he put the bar? He wants you and me to understand what the basic is. Like, the bottom level. I guarantee you when he was sharing this, he squatted down. He said, "Here's the bar." In the next verse, he says, "If I have food and clothing, I can be content." Anything above that bar is wealth and affluence. And that's not a bad thing! I'm not demonizing wealthy people. But he says, "Let's all measure from the same spot. No matter how difficult you think life is, we can learn, as Christians, to be content. Here's the bar. If I have food and if I have clothing -- anything above that, I say 'Thank you, Lord, for the extra that you have given me.'"

Why do we need to learn to do that? Because if I take the bar and I move it myself, and I put the bar of the basics here, but God calls me to live somewhere down here -- I will forever point the accusatory finger at my God and say, "You have not given me what I deserve. And I will be unhappy." But if the bar's down here, then whatever God gives me above food and clothing, I will praise Him and thank Him for what He has done. And the good things He has given me in this life. Because see, you and me, here's our problem. And this is why this message is so difficult in America. We are living in one of the most affluent ages in the most affluent country in the world. And so, maybe without even realizing it -- and I'm not trying to shame you, because I do this too -- we can begin to move the bar without realizing it. Because we become so accustomed to what we have. So, here's what we do. I don't just want food -- I

want a lot of food. And I want options to my food, and I want good food. I don't just want clothes; I want nice clothes. I want brand-name clothes. I don't just want transportation; I want my own car. I don't just want a car; I want a nice car. And I deserve this.

One of my foster daughters -- she refused to get a job. And I said, "Help me understand. You know, you're a single mom, let's figure this out. Why are you not working?" She said, "Because I can't get there. I can't get to my job." And I said, "What do you mean, you can't get there?" She says, "I don't have a car." I said, "Kay -- help me understand how you couldn't ride a bike, or get a ride from a friend, or take the bus" -- and before I even finished saying the word "bus," she goes, "Bus? We." And I was like, "You not working -- ew." Just kidding -- I didn't say that. Why would she say this? That was normal for her. That was an insult for me to say "Take the bus." Why would it be an insult to her? Because she moved her bar. She moved the bar. What is base level to this young lady is her own car, and "I will not move forward in this life unless I get my base level." If you and me as the believer do that, we can miss incredible opportunities to advance the gospel, or to better ourselves, because we're like, "God, you're not giving me what I deserve."

What is contentment? What does it look like? It looks like my old neighbors, Michael and Katie. Before Audrey and I bought the house that we are in, we were renting a house. That's where we were foster parents. And I had two of the most incredible people for neighbors, ever. We didn't live in an amazing part of town. There were commonly police driving by, and checking on things, and there were shootings, and there was drug activity, and the homeless population where we lived was huge. It was not uncommon to have homeless sleeping on our front porches in the morning, because so many of them walked by the area. So, one time I asked Mike, because I knew he was a retired firefighter, and he was teaching at the local college, and his wife was a trauma nurse. They made plenty of money. But their house was very modest. It wasn't very big; it wasn't new at all. And we had just had a shooting, so I was, like -- we were all agitated, and I was like, "Mike, why don't you move?" What he said will stick with me for the rest of my life. He said, "Tyler, if I move, who will pray for these people? Who will walk these streets and pray, and ask that God would keep this neighborhood safe? If I leave, who's gonna do that? If I leave, who's gonna walk out in the morning with a fresh cup of coffee and chat with the person that was drugged out last night and really needs to process life with somebody? If I leave, who does that?" He said, "I could leave. I have all the money that I could ever want. I could buy a new house; I could buy a bigger one. But should I?"

See, for everyone else -- for non-Christians, they have one question. Can I buy it? You, as a believer, you have two questions. And really, it's just a different one. It's not "Can I?" It's "Should I?" Now, I'm not trying to make you feel bad -- if you have a nice house, if you have an amazing car, I'm not saying you got that with immoral means and that you didn't pray. But can we all just be honest enough to ask -- am I buying something or doing something because I can or because I asked the Lord, and this is where He's leading me? Don't look around -- it's like, "Well, that person has a Garmin watch, so clearly they have a lot of money." Like, don't do that. We don't need to compare. And I'm not shaming you if you are wealthy. What he's asking you to do is, where's my heart? Where's my heart? What's my motive? And so, looking at this, he gets rather nervous, I think Paul does, so he's looking at this church and he's going, "Okay, I don't think you understand the alternative. So, if contentment isn't working for you, if you don't want that," he says, "if you want to put money on the throne, let's do that. Let me just show you how that's gonna work out for you." And he begins to list what's going to happen should you put money on the throne. He says -- this is verse 9 -- "This individual who wants to get rich will fall into temptation and a trap, many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people around them into ruin and destruction, and will cause them to wander from the faith and pierce themselves with many griefs."

Your attitude doesn't need to be contentment. You can choose to put money on the throne -- that's your prerogative. God won't stop you. But here's where your life goes. It goes to financial ruin. It goes to destruction, it goes to broken relationships, it goes to a weak and wounded faith. Can we just look at where -- let's just look at Oregon for a second. And I'm not -- this is not me trying to shame you, let's just look at our state. Do you know how much money we spend on lottery tickets every single year? One billion dollars. Now, if you've ever bought a lottery ticket, I'm not shaming you. I'm not saying you're foolish. I'm not saying that you're immoral. I'm not. But our culture is going, "Man, if I could just win this. If I could just win this, then I could pay off my debt. Then I could buy a new house. I would bless the church -- I would. If I could win this, I would give." No, you wouldn't. No you wouldn't. And people don't. We are absolutely desperate for "get rich quick"-type realities.

What's another one? Gambling addiction. The American Association for Gambling Addiction predicts that in our country, there are 10 million people that struggle with this. They struggle with gambling addiction. Ten million. Do you wanna know how much those ten million lose every year? Six billion dollars! How many homes is that? How many lost jobs? How many ruined marriages? How many broken bank accounts? From six billion dollars in our country alone. Now -- don't get haughty, don't get arrogant, don't look at that and go, "Oh my gosh, I could never do that to my family." How many times -- and don't raise your hand, please -- how many times have you fought with your spouse over overspending? How many times have you argued over credit cards? How many of you -- and I'm not trying to hurt you; I love you. I do. And this goes to me just as much as you. How many times have you bought a car that you really don't need? And let me just say, I've done it. Okay? Can I be the first? I went to a dealership with six grand in cash, and I said, "Sir, you show me all the vans that are \$6,000 or less." He goes, "You got it." Dirtball didn't do it. He showed me a \$6,000-van, and then he was like, "Hey -- I got this thing, you might be interested" and he showed me the \$18,000 van. Oh, my gosh. It was nothing like the six! And he hooked me. And I bought it. And it was a terrible decision. And it plunged us even into more debt than we were already in. Why did I do it? The first one had four wheels and an engine. The other one had four wheels and an engine, and extra. I didn't need that. So, before we make fun of the person with gambling addiction, can we just ask this question to ourselves -- how many times am I buying something because I can, versus buying something because I should? How often are we praying and going, "Lord, do I need this? Are you calling me to this? Did you give me a raise so I could buy more stuff, or did you give me a raise so it would be easier for me to bless other people?"

See, for some of you -- and I'm not trying to beat you up. I love you. But some of you just need to stop, and you need to say, "Lord, I've abused your money. I've misused it, I have credit card debt coming out my nose, because I don't know how to stop." Let's not make fun of the gambling addict, because that problem, that heart of "I want more" can get into me and you just as easily as it could if we were in the casino. We can have this problem too. So, we need to constantly be asking, "Lord, what's my motive? What would you like me to do with this money?" Because it's not ours. It's not ours! So, for some of you, you can tune me out at this point, because you need to do some heart work. You just need to, where you're sitting, pray. And just repent, and go, "Lord, I have mishandled your money. I am so sorry. I'm gonna be different." You need to leave and go cut up your credit card. You need to go home and you need to sell your car, and I've been praying that you would! Not in arrogance. But what's more important, the new car or your family and its finances? Let's be different, church! Let's be different! Different with our money.

Now -- he wants to end with this second point. He says, "Okay, should you have wealth, let's handle it well. Let's practice good financial stewardship." So he jumps to verse 17, and he says, "If you want to win with money, then do it my way. Do it God's way." Here's an example. I've borrowed my father's truck a number of times. And whenever I do, he kinda pulls me aside. He goes, "Okay, if you're gonna drive this truck, here's some things that you need to know. Cause it's my truck, I want you driving it my

way. It's a diesel truck, so when you turn it on it's a little different than a gas truck. It's really long, so check your mirrors. Remember you gotta back" -- like, he goes through the whole spiel every time. How arrogant would it be of me if, once he does that, if I was like, "How dare you teach me how to drive a truck? I'm fine. I know how." That would be awful. But do we not do that sometimes with money? It's not ours. God says in verse 17 that He's the one that doles all this out, so if you're wealthy, I love you, it's because He gave it to you. And He says, "Use this my way. If you don't, that's arrogant." So, there's his first point. He says, "If you want to practice this wealth, don't be arrogant. Don't. I love you, child of God. It is not your money. It's mine. Use it my way."

If you have a business, I love that. You are managing it for a time. If you have a bunch of money, I love that. You are managing it for a time. If you have incredible land, resources, homes -- that's great. You are managing it for a time. And He says, "It's mine, and when you remember that you don't get arrogant." He says, "Put your hope in me, because money is fickle." Now, I know you know this, but can I just give you a phenomenal example -- God is so good. Sometimes the examples just write themselves. They just came out of twitter this week -- it was awesome. So, I was following a twitter battle with Elon Musk. If you don't know who that is -- and I don't know how, but -- he's the richest man on Planet Earth. He is worth 240 billion dollars by himself. So -- he's the man who owns Tesla, so he sends this tweet out, and it kind of wounded the relationship Tesla had with another company. Stock that day in Tesla dropped tens of billions. That day. Because of a tweet! Like, he sends this stupid message on his phone, clicks "SEND," and the world's like, "Oh my Lord!" and they lost it. Then, he realizes the mistake that he made, and so he sends another tweet. Just the next day. Stocks shot right back up. To the level that it was. He fixed it. But can we all appreciate how pathetic money is? If money can be unseated from its throne by a tweet, then it is too weak and pathetic to help you rule your heart. And God says, "Don't put it there." He created money -- don't demonize it. Don't demonize the wealthy and don't lift up the poor as if they're all godly. Don't do that! He says, "Money is a tool. I'm God, and leave me in my place. Because I'm strong enough to handle when you lose your job. I'm strong enough to handle when you don't have money and when you do have money. I can help you last through that. You need to trust me. If you do, then money will become a tool rather than a god." You hear what I'm saying? If money is so pathetic that a tweet unseats it, we have no business putting it in our heart and making it the goal. He says, "Don't be arrogant. Trust me."

Here's the second thing he says. "I want you to be rich in good deeds. I want you to be rich in good deeds." Money was always designed to help you accomplish the original mission. Houses burn, cars burn, money burns. People don't. People are forever. And he says, I would rather you just unload your bank account on human beings so that when we get to Heaven, we can celebrate together that more friends were brought in by our decisions. I want you to think about your house for a second. My parents were some of the most unbelievable examples to me of just letting go of their stuff. There has not been a single year of my life as a human being where there was not a non-related person from our -- like -- so, someone not in our family -- living in our home. Always. There has never been an empty room in a house that I have grown up in, ever. There's never been one. We had college students there, we had drug addicts there, we had people from prison there. We had a witch once! That was great. And they were always saying this. They were like, "If I have this room -- God has given me this house for a reason, and I'm gonna fill it." When I was younger, like really, really little, Dad was always letting people borrow his truck, and it bugged me. I'm -- like, they make fun of me to this day for this. Someone would be, like, "Can I borrow your truck?" Dad was like, "Yup." Didn't even need to think about it. And for whatever reason, I was like oddly attached to this. I was like, "No, don't give your truck away!" And he was like, "Calm down. Calm down. It's not mine."

Now, I'm not saying we be foolish. And if you've got an amazing car, I'm not gonna like come out and test you. Like, "You need to let me borrow your car. Did you hear my sermon?" No, don't -- we're not

being silly. But if it's not our money, then the stuff that we buy with it is not our stuff. And I'm not arguing for bad stewardship of your things. But he says, "I would rather you be rich in good deeds than rich in stuff." Finally, he says, "I want the thing that marks you as a believer to be generosity. I want it to be generosity. When people think of you, I want them to associate the level of your generosity with your God." And if they look at you and they think, "Wow, that person's kinda stingy" -- what does that say about the God that you serve? When you look at your budget, is there a line item for blessing people? Like, here's a really easy way to tell if you get this text. How easy is it for you to give stuff away? Not to be silly with your money, but how easy is it for you to bless other people, and just let it go?

There was an individual that my dad told me about one time. He was a multi-millionaire. He had developed a mechanism -- he has a patent on it -- that has to do with the chairs that you all sit on. Not these, but like, swivel chairs. So, every time you buy one of those office chairs, he makes more money. He makes a lot of money. So, he went to his financial advisor, and he said, "I want you to put a cap on everything that I take in. Everything. Any extra money, from salary or whatever, cap me right here." Now, he made millions on top of that. But he said, "I want you to limit me, and any extra money, I want it going in an account so that I know how much to go give away." How many of you need to limit yourself so that other people might be blessed? Now, am I saying that we need to all drive beater cars for the kingdom? Am I saying that we all need to go downgrade our house? No. Please don't hear me saying that. And I don't want you walking out of here feeling guilty whenever you buy something new. Did you notice what he said when he says he gives money out? Did you notice what he said why he does it? He said, "I give this out for their enjoyment." God is not against you enjoying a boat. God is not against you enjoying a vacation home. I don't think. I don't see that in the text. What I do see is that what should follow your financial journey is people just being blessed in the wake of your movements. Where's your money going and why is it going to different places? Can we all just agree from here that from here on -- and maybe you're doing this already, and I don't mean to insult you -- but can we just agree moving on from here, the question is not "Can I buy something?" -- the question is, "Should I buy something and what is it doing?" You and me will either trust God and use money, or we will trust money and use God. Let's all choose wisely.

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