

**Victory of the Lamb – Influencer – Not Getters but Givers – 1 Timothy 6:17-19**  
**February 5, 2023 – Pastor Bill Limmer**

Albert F. Siebert was born October 18, 1879, in Dayton, Ohio, the son of a Lutheran pastor. After graduation from Wittenberg College, Mr. Siebert pursued a sales career with National Cash Register Company of Dayton. After nineteen years, he left NCR to accept a position as a sales manager of A. H. Petersen Manufacturing Company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to sell their newly engineered lightweight electrical hand drill. After a disastrous fire, the company was forced into bankruptcy and Mr. Siebert bought the remaining assets. Starting in 1924, he called it Milwaukee Electric Tool Company. The new company expanded its line of tools and thrived but ran into financial problems during the depression of the 1930s.

The company not only survived but prospered far beyond Mr. Siebert's expectations. In 1952, he elected to give his entire interest in his company to God, using Siebert Lutheran Foundation to accomplish this gift. He died in 1960 but lived to see the beginning of the impact the Foundation would have. The Siebert Lutheran Foundation has helped fund the education basically every pastor in our network of churches. The Siebert Foundation help with the cost of this structure and our recent ministry expansion project, my position here was initially funded by the Foundation. The Siebert Lutheran Foundation in its history has granted roughly 135 million. Talk about investing for **Influence**.

Today we are continuing our series Influencers and we are going to see **How can we invest for the greatest influence of all?**

1 Timothy 6:6-10, and 17-19 <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. 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.** <sup>18</sup> **Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.** <sup>19</sup> **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.**

First step for influence with our giving that we learn about in this part of Scripture is to be content. What does it mean to be content? To be content a person is satisfied and happy with their current situation and does not desire more. An example would be the person who enjoys a simple life with their family, friends, and hobbies, regardless of wealth, career, or success. They find joy in the simple things and do not seek more possessions or status.

When I was doing youth ministry and campus ministry whenever students would graduate high school and begin college and I would ask them what they wanted to study or to be it was usually a profession that brought a lot of bank. Not so much to save 10% of it, not so much to give away 10% of it but to have a whole lot of money to live spend on themselves. They wanted earthly gain. They wanted to be rich. That may have hit closer to home than someone of us wanted it to because desiring wealth is not only a youth thing but a human thing. Because greed makes us think if we have money we can have anything and everything including happiness.

I'm not sure how many of us would call ourselves materialistic but . . . About eight years ago two missionaries from Zambia came for about a 10 day visit the campus ministry I was a part of at that time in Madison. When I picked them up at the airport in Chicago, this was the size of their suitcase (visual aid suitcase) . Notice I said their suitcase, and not suitcases. The two men had put their belongings into one overhead bin size suitcase. And you know what the kicker was, they were absolutely content. I have a feeling that if these missionaries looked inside my closet or yours they would have trouble not coming to the conclusion that we are materialistic.

Here is the thing about all the things we have and we want. They not only wear out, they not only tarnish, they not only fall apart, they perish. For example when I was in high school my parents did something totally outrageous, they bought me the best basketball shoes even though I was a bench player. I can still picture those shoes. White low top, leather converse. They are long gone. I'm sure they are deteriorated in a landfill somewhere. How many things do you have now or that you have just have to have will be around in 5, 10 or 50 years? What we so often fail to realize is that all the things we accumulate are not going with us. 1 Timothy 6:7 **For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.** Or another way of looking at it is, there are no U-Hauls behind hearses. **(picture of hearse and UHaul).** But God's love never falters. God's love never fades. God's love is unconditional and everlasting.

We can be content, not because our closets are full, not because our garages are full, not because our storage units are full, not because our retirement accounts are full but because of Jesus. Hebrews 13:5-6 says, **Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."** Money's main lure is the power it supposedly gives and the pride it feeds. Straight up the thought is if you have money you have hope. Now money is not the root of all kinds of evil. It is the love of money that is root of all kinds of evil. The love of money is the gateway drug to destruction. The use of your money shows where your hope is.

The pursuit of money is not the same as the pursuit of happiness let alone the pursuit of God. Don't set your hope on uncertain riches, but on God who richly provides everything for our enjoyment.. Our hope is in God not his earthly gifts to us. God is always better than gold! I know plenty of people who control their money instead of letting their money control them. Here is the common denominator – they are content. **How can we invest for the greatest influence of all? Be Content.** Be thankful for what you do have and remember these earthly things are temporary but God's love is eternal. And it is God who provides peace and security.

Jesus is enough or is it Jesus and a home, Jesus and a car, Jesus and a bank account, Jesus and the latest tech, Jesus and \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank.)

To those who are already rich 1 Timothy 6:17-19 **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.** <sup>18</sup> **Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.** <sup>19</sup> **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.** We are rich in God. He has provided every good thing we have. God provides richly and daily clothing, shoes, food and drink, shelter, all we own and all we need to keep our body and life. We are already rich. God provides for us. He has blessed us so we can be a blessing to others. We are not to hoard but to help. We are not to accumulate but to distribute. God's well won't run dry We are to be a dispensary of God's good gifts not a hoarder of God's good gifts. When we start hoarding our love for

God starts decreasing and our love for the gift starts increasing. So important that you and I love God, the gift giver, more than the gifts he gives.

We are rich. God is invested in us. In fact, he gave us the greatest gift of all, Jesus. And Jesus is the most generous and influential person of all time. Some examples of Jesus generosity are: Jesus saw the people who were hungry and fed the 5K. Jesus had time to heal a woman who had spent all of her money on medical care. But here is the best, Jesus treasured your eternal life and so he gave up his life not for himself and what he could get out of it but for you and what you could get out of it. Jesus invested in your eternal life. 2 Corinthians 8:9 says, **For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.**

For those of us who may not know or who have forgotten, Jesus lived a perfect life of generosity paying the price for sin, even sins that we would deem unforgivable even of sins of discontent and greed. Jesus paid the price for all of discontented striving for things that will not last Jesus met and defeated our discontent and greed by giving us not just food, clothing, shelter, skills and abilities, but Jesus gave his life. He gave not only until it hurt but until he died. His perfect life and innocent death is the ransom price that makes us rich with God . . . forever. Did you catch that last word – Forever. Through Jesus Christ you are so rich that heaven awaits all who believe.

Have you considered how rich you are in Christ. We are rich in Christ. When we pray, we are not praying to a pauper, we are praying to the one who has no lapse of knowledge or wisdom, who rules over absolutely everything and everyone, and who most importantly loves you more than in anyone ever could. You are rich pray! When we read God's word, we are bringing out hearts and minds into the golden nuggets of God's truth about life and eternity. These promises are the gift of power of eternity through Jesus. When we worship, we are in the presence of royalty, the King of Kings, Almighty God. What a blessing! When we are receiving the Lord's Supper the value of this meal is far greater than a 7-course meal, because in it we receive forgiveness of sins, and where there is forgiveness, there is also new life and salvation. When we recall our baptism, we remember whose family we are in and that we are coheirs with Jesus Christ. We are rich!

Have you ever forgotten that you are rich in Christ? Or maybe you are hearing this for the first time and you never knew that you could be rich in Christ When we forget that we are rich in God: 1. We will put our hope in money because it can get things temporarily. 2. We will store up for ourselves treasures that will perish, spoil, deteriorate. 3. We will think we are rich, or poor based on the accumulation of earthly things. 4. We will think we have earned what we have. 5. We will think we are great by what we shared. 6. We will struggle to help those in need because we aren't sure we will have enough to get what we want. 7. We won't share Jesus and his good news because we will think He is not that big of a deal.

**How can we invest for the greatest influence of all? Remember you are rich in Christ.**

And when we remember we are rich in Christ, the Holy Spirit will lead us to 1. Be content. 2. Put our hope in Jesus and not in this world. 3. We will share God's blessings with others generously and exuberantly. 4. We will live in peace and security and calm. 5. We will share Jesus and his good news with others God's love and so invest in their souls. And that will be an investment that will be the greatest influence of all.