

ROOTS

Scripture Reading: Read 1 Timothy 6

In the late 1970's, a television mini-series took America by storm. It is estimated that 85% of all television homes saw all or part of the mini-series. The name of the series? Roots. Some of you reading this devotional may have seen it. The series was based on Alex Haley's novel, *"Roots: The Saga of an American Family."* It traces the history of a young African man who was captured in 1750 and taken into slavery and how he and his descendants fared over the next 120 years. The final episode of Roots still ranks as the 3rd highest watched show in television history. What is interesting about both the book and the series is that it is not what it appears to be. Haley originally claimed the basis for the mini-series was his own family tree that he allegedly traced back to an ancestor in a village in Africa, a claim that was disputed by researchers and challenged in court. As a result of the five-week trial, Judge Robert J. Ward, who heard the case, concluded that, "Alex Haley perpetrated a hoax on the public." Haley was forced to admit that he had copied material from another author's work and he had to pay a settlement to the author.

Roots, greed and a hoax all linked together in a book and a mini-series. Believe it or not, they're also linked in today's chapter reading. In verse 10, Paul states, *"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."*

Through the years, I have heard many folks, and not a few Christians, perpetuate the hoax that money is the root of all evil. That's not what Paul says. He says "the love of money" is a root of all kinds of evil, not money itself. In other words, it's not the money or possessions that are the problem; it's our attitude towards it. This is similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 6:24.

There were folks in Paul's day (and, they still exist in our day!) who were obsessed with obtaining money. They were striving and lusting after it. It had become their god and they, in effect, worshipped it. Sadly, they wandered away from the faith in their passionate pursuit of wealth. This is why Paul spends so much time in 1 Timothy warning the rich believers in Ephesus (a city known for its trade and wealth) to be careful and to use their finances to invest in the kingdom rather than consuming it on themselves. Paul recognized the trap and understood that a lustful love of money would be the root to all kinds of evil (literally "all the evils"). History supports his contention for it's filled with examples of how the love of money has led to theft, deceit, jealousy, hatred, pride, immorality, threats, violence and murder. No fruit of evil is beyond the realm of possibility when the love of money root is planted in our lives.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Do you have some ungodly weeds that keep springing up in your life? They may be caused by an underlying love of money root. It's not enough to chop off the weed above the ground. You have to let God deal with the root too. Review what Paul has to say about money in today's chapter. Then, pray for the Lord to remove the love of money root and teach you how to view money from his perspective. You want him to teach you how to work with money rather than worship it.

Take-a-way: *When we have money, it's OK. When money has us, we're in trouble.*