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## 1 Timothy 6:10—Root of All Evil

First Timothy 6:10 presents one of the best-known dictums of the Bible: “the love of money is the root of all evil” (KJV).

The NRSV tones down the declaration considerably: “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” Nevertheless, the traditional (and probably more accurate, though hyperbolic) translation persists at a popular level.

**Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*** (1478): This medieval masterpiece features one story (“The Pardoner’s Tale”) in which the main character boasts that his motto is *radix malorum est cupiditas*.

Readers were expected to know enough Latin to recognize the direct citation of 1 Timothy 6:10—“Love of money is the root of all evil.”

**The O’Jays, “For the Love of Money”** (1973): The title of this soul classic clearly derives from 1 Timothy 6:10. The song is best known for its melodic repetition of a single line: “Money, money, money, money, money . . .” The verses describe all the negative effects that a “love of money” can bring, including stealing from one’s mother or robbing one’s brother. But then the bridge drops the words “love of” to declare simply, “I know money is the root of all evil.”

**Pink Floyd, “Money”** (1973): The same year that the O’Jays scored a huge hit with their song “For the Love of Money,” the progressive rock band Pink Floyd released its iconic album *Dark Side of the*

*Moon*, which included what would become the band's best-known song, "Money." Again, this song was based on 1 Timothy 6:10. It noted with irony that some people (Christians?) like to say, "Money is the root of all evil" but "you never see them giving it away."

In another book, I commented on the song:

It's a fun song, but there are two things wrong with the lyrics. First, informed religious people (those who know their Bibles) realize that it is the *love* of money rather than money itself that is the root of evil. And, second, people often do give it away. Religious people, and, for that matter, many non-religious people, give away vast amounts of money every day, week, month, and year. They sometimes do it anonymously and they often do it sacrificially, in ways that they cannot possibly receive anything in return. They just give their money away, sometimes without even expecting any acknowledgment or appreciation for what they have done.

1. Mark Allan Powell, *Giving to God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 129–30.