

DEEP SIX STUDY

October 18th, 2026

Awakening – “Upward and Away”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS *(You can view the full message online at capecodchurch.com/watch)*

Opening: At just 22 years old, Barnabas Bates led the Cape Cod Awakening, a spiritual renewal that changed the course of churches and towns across the Cape toward authentic, Christ-centered faith. He then left for Bristol, RI, where he was appointed as pastor for a successful church and began rubbing elbows with wealthy academics and businessmen. He had arrived – and his faith withered away as a result. How does that happen? How can success – and the pursuit of it – pull us away from our faith?

1. How Success Changes What We See and Love (2 Timothy 4:9-10)

- In his second letter to his protégé Timothy, the Apostle Paul complains that his ministry partner Demas has deserted him, “because he loves the things of this life.” Apparently, the material things and values of this world (comfort, security, success) became more important to Demas than his work for the Kingdom of God.
- How, exactly, does success lead us away from our calling to follow God? There are three clear ways that the pursuit of “success” (wealth, fame, power) can change what I see and what I love:
 - a. It Magnifies What I Dislike – The more worldly comfort and success we achieve, the less tolerant we tend to become with discomfort, difficulty, sacrifice and disillusionment.
 - b. It Minimizes What it will Cost – “Walking away” will never tell you what you will lose if you trade your faith for “success.”
 - c. It Morphs Good Things into god Things – The pursuit of wealth and success isn’t inherently bad – until it becomes the *ultimate* thing in our lives, an *idol* that takes the rightful place of God.

2. How to Move Upward Without Walking Away

- Paul wrote his letters to Timothy from prison shortly before he was executed. In the same passage in which he complains about Demas’ abandonment, he shows us three ways that we can move “upward” *without* walking away from our faith:
 - a. Don’t Interpret Suffering as Punishment or Proof (2 Timothy 4:6) – Paul saw his suffering – his trials and difficulties and discomfort – as a gift he had willingly given to God, not as punishment or proof that he was on the wrong track. We must avoid the temptation to walk away from our faith when things get tough to pursue the easier, more comfortable life of worldly “success.”
 - b. See Success as a Gift to be Managed (2 Timothy 4:7-8) – God’s blessing on our lives should be viewed and appreciated as gifts to be managed (stewarded), not as a means to escape the “mundane” life of faith. The more God blesses us with resources and success, the more faithful it should make us to our calling to follow and serve him – and bless others.
 - c. A Commitment to Church Community (2 Timothy 4:11-12; Acts 15:36-40) – If you want to build a life of faith while “climbing” toward success, it IS possible – but you must make a strong commitment to staying and serving with a local church, where deep relationships can be made and your dysfunction can be healed.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. All verses are NLT unless otherwise noted.

Proverbs 3:5-7; Matthew 6:24-33; Matthew 16:24-26; Luke 16:10-11; John 16:33; 1 Timothy 6:9-10

Video of the Week: [Matthew 6:19-23: True Wealth and Generosity](#) by Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Has the worldly success (increased wealth, fame or power) you've experienced in your life ever felt like it was pulling you away from your faith? Explain your answer.
2. "Walking away will never tell you what you will lose if you trade your faith for success." What, exactly, DOES someone lose if they stop living out their faith in order to chase a life of worldly success?
3. As mentioned in the message, the pursuit of wealth and success can easily become an idol in our lives. How would you define the word "idol"? What are some other potential idols we can have?
4. Read 2 Timothy 4:6 again. In general, how hard would you say it is to "fight the good fight and finish the race" (i.e., live out our calling to follow Jesus) while also achieving worldly success? Explain your answer.
5. The Apostle Paul gave up everything (family, wealth, status) to live out his calling to tell the world about Jesus. Do you think we're all called to do that? Why or why not?
6. How, exactly, does being deeply connected to a local church community (i.e., attending, serving, and giving there) help us to "move upward without walking away" from faith?