

Is Money The Answer To Everything?

Introduction. There will not be one rich man in heaven. There will not be one poor man there either. Rich or poor and wealth or poverty are measurements of this material world. They are human evaluators and class distinction makers. In an age that prompts us to place our trust in material values, we need to be returning to biblical values.

The only people who will be blessed to enter the realm of heaven are faithful children of God. The faithful will be there because of God's mercy and grace, Christ's sacrifice and as a reward for their faithfulness, not by wealth. Yet, how do we learn not to succumb to the pull of earthly riches? How do we learn that money is not the answer to our problems?

I. ***Count Your Blessings***

A. Realize that God is the giver.

1. God does indeed give us everything (Ecclesiastes 5:19; Job 34:19; James 1:17).
2. The Bible tells us about legitimate means to increase our financial resources: honest labor (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12), skillful business dealings (Proverbs 10:4), inheritance (Proverbs 13:22) or by giving to others (1 Timothy 6:18).

B. Give God the glory.

1. Whether we have a lot or a little, what we have comes from God because it is God's in the first place (Psalm 24:1; 50:10-11).
2. In a generation that has almost forgotten the phrase "thank you," it is not surprising that God is overlooked in times of success and good fortune (Ephesians 5:18-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

C. Give God your best.

1. A farmer with a successful crop of wheat does not wait until he gets to the bottom of the granary, the scrapings of the crop, to choose seed for his next sowing.
2. We will reap what we sow (2 Corinthians 9:6-7, 9-11). What are you giving? Do we give God the leftovers or do we give Him the firstfruits (Proverbs 3:9-10)?

D. Seek God's wisdom in using your blessings.

1. With blessing comes the responsibility to use your resources to the glory of God, not hoarded for selfish purposes. The man in Matthew 19:16-26 had received a full measure of possessions in life, but failed in his stewardship (1 Timothy 6:17-19).
2. God is not subject to the whims of the stock market. He does not give dividends only after profitable years of productivity. He gives more and more. Investments made with God are not covered under

the FDIC, but you can have open doors to eternal life. So what are you doing with God's blessings?

II. **Consider Bible Examples**

A. The rich can magnify God.

1. Abraham.

- a) No matter how well blessed Abraham was, he never forgot God (Genesis 14:17-24). He left his comfortable home for a journey through the desert at God's call (Hebrews 11:8-9, 16).
- b) Do you think that God will be ashamed to be called your God? Abraham is a man who gets a triple "A" rating in handling riches.

2. Job.

- a) This man is another outstanding character who was rich, but did not lose his integrity. When tragedy struck Job, he faced it like a man with God at his side. Job teaches us that we can lose it all and still give God the glory!
- b) He demonstrated patience by facing every degradation that man could face. His foolish wife implored him to curse God and die. His closest friends and comrades became miserable comforters to him. However, he wrestled with his affliction and tried to understand why it had happened to him. God rewarded Job's patience and blessed him with far more than he had before (Job 42:10-17).

3. Solomon.

- a) No man ever enjoyed the enormous quantity of wealth that God showered upon him (2 Chronicles 1:11-12, 14-17; Ecclesiastes 2:4-10).
- b) Nevertheless, he knew that riches cannot fulfill the deepest needs of mankind (Ecclesiastes 4:6-8). Financial prosperity is merely a tool that ought to be freely used to the glory of God.

B. The poor can magnify God.

1. The widow.

- a) Concerning the poor widow, it was not the quantity that she gave, but the quality that caught our Lord's attention (Mark 12:41-44).
- b) She gave her all, without reservation, and God was glorified by her act.

2. The Macedonians.

- a) These people gave beyond anything Paul had anticipated. In spite of their own limited resources they gave willingly and joyfully to help others.
- b) They were able to accomplish this because they "first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

3. The brethren at Smyrna.
 - a) These people were described as poor but rich (Revelation 2:9).
 - b) It was not their financial success that made them rich; it was their genuine faith and trust in Christ (Psalm 37:16).

III. **Realize What Money Cannot Buy**

- A. A relationship with God.
 1. There is nothing that we can do or offer that will compare to the free gift that God provided through His Son on the cross (Romans 6:23).
 2. Reception of the gospel must be based upon a willing response (Romans 4:19-25). This is regardless of our physical circumstances or our financial situation.
- B. A good name.
 1. A good name involves reputation, appreciation and admiration that is brought to mind when we think of someone (Ecclesiastes 7:1; Proverbs 22:1; 28:6). A name is given to us when we are born, but our success or failure to live up to that name is apparent at our death.
 2. The most costly and elaborate funeral will not change the memories that others have of us. It is not the words engraved on our tombstone that testify to our manner of life; it is the impressions we left on the hearts and lives of others.
- C. Satisfaction.
 1. Is it possible to have enough? Solomon suggested that one who had accumulated much still longed for more (Ecclesiastes 5:10). Riches cannot bring satisfaction.
 2. Before we reach the day of judgment, let us remember, "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death" (Proverbs 11:4).
- D. Comfort in sorrow.
 1. Sending a bereaved family a check for \$10,000 may help pay for the funeral costs, but it cannot console their sorrowing hearts. David's wealth and position could not comfort his mind when his child was near death (2 Samuel 12:16-17).
 2. Paul said that our God is the "God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). God is able to comfort us in our tribulations, and as a result, we are able to comfort others.
- E. The return of a loved one.
 1. The Pharaoh of Moses' day lived in splendor and wealth, but when death visited his home his son perished (Exodus 12:29-30). None of his magicians and astrologers could give life to his son. Nor could his vast wealth to buy back his son's life.

2. Riches could not roll back the clock, nor bring back the dead. No one can control death (Ecclesiastes 8:8). We only have one hope of escape (Hebrews 2:14-18).
- F. A home in heaven.
1. Whatever we have accumulated in material goods will remain behind (Job 1:21; Psalm 49:16-17). The foolish rich man was soon going to leave all behind, and face a greater question about his soul (Luke 12:18-21).
 2. The church at Smyrna was "poor but rich" (Revelation 2:9-10). It was their faithfulness that counted! A home in heaven is not guaranteed by wealth or poverty; it is by God's grace and His provision through Christ.

Conclusion. Having the proper respect for God helps us to rely upon God. It helps us differentiate between what we want and what we need (Matthew 6:8). It allows us to perceive what is important and what is not important. It reminds us of our great need for God every hour of every day and causes us to petition His help (Hebrews 4:14-16; James 5:16-18).

Money is not everything! Countless men and women have labored under the delusion that if I had just a little more money my problems would be solved. Yet, the solution to all man's problems is a relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. Then the wealth that God blesses man with would be used for His glory (Matthew 6:19-21).