

HOW TO BE RICH - 1

1 Timothy 6:17-19

This series of messages is not on “How to Get Rich,” but rather, “How to Be Rich” in a way which honors God. Have you ever noticed that most rich people either will not admit that they are rich or don’t even seem to know it.

If you were to ask someone whom you regard as rich if they were rich they would probably say “no” for they know someone who is richer than they are. So - what is rich? A Gallop Poll revealed some interesting results. People who earned \$30K per year were interviewed and asked how much money someone would have to make before they considered them rich. The average answer was \$74K. The same question was asked of those making \$50K per year. Their answer was \$100K.

Some of the top wage earners in the U.S. were asked how much they thought someone had to have in the bank before they could be considered rich. The answer was \$5 million. The truth is what it takes to make us feel like we are rich changes the more we get.

While we may not feel rich, most of us are rich and should use our resources to serve God. To be rich is to have more than the mere essentials of food, clothing, and shelter. In today’s terminology, it means to have discretionary dollars.

Think of what the rest of the world regards as rich. For example, most people in the world could consider anyone who owns a car as being very rich. This makes sense when you realize that only 3% of the world’s population actually own an automobile.

[Throw out 2 \$1 bills] Three billion people will work all day to earn that amount of money.

The median income, figured in 2005, for families in Orange County was \$60,365. The median income of the chief wage earner was \$42,363. Of course with the cost of living in this area a family may not have a lot left over after paying the

monthly bills. However, compared to the rest of the world, anyone making \$37K per year would be in the top 4% of wage earners. Anyone making over \$45K would be in the top 1%.

Should we feel guilty because we have so much? Most of us don’t have to worry about having food, or a roof over our heads. In fact we park our cars in little houses which are much nicer and larger than entire families live in across the world.

Have you ever noticed that financial blessings are the only ones we apologize for. We feel guilty when we should feel grateful for God’s blessings. When God blesses us with more than we need, we should give Him the glory and use what He has given us to honor Him.

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.
1 Timothy 6:17-19

Whether we feel rich or not, compared to the rest of the world most of us are classified as the rich. Therefore we should carefully heed the Scripture addressed to the rich.

Our spiritual condition is not determined by our lack or abundance of wealth. However, if we are going to truly follow God we must let go of our stuff.

Luke 18 records the story of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus.

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: “Do not commit adultery.” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal.” “Do not bear false witness.” “Honor your father and your mother.” and he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.” So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and

distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” And those who heard it said, “Who then can be saved?” But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” Luke 18:18-27

Stuff still keeps people from coming to Christ, and stuff keeps many Christians from serving God as they should. When you stop and think about it, what is all the wealth in the world compared to your eternal soul?

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Mark 8:36-37

1. RICHES MAKE IT HARDER TO DEPEND UPON GOD.

Very few of us have to depend upon God to receive “our daily bread.” Of course He is the source of everything we have, but sometimes it is easy to forget. We need to be reminded

Nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

We must never forget who it is who gives us all things. While it is good and wise to plan and save for our future, several events over the last few years have shown how undependable riches can be.

2. RICHES DISTRACT US FROM TRUE PRIORITIES

Think of the things we do with our surplus that keep us from doing what we know we should be doing. Vacations, sports, television, etc. - while they may not be necessarily bad in themselves, when they come between us and our service to God they can destroy our spiritual lives.

The highest form of joy for the believer is to bring glory to the Lord. True gladness comes when believers..

...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...

Matthew 6:33

3. RICHES BRING A GREATER RESPONSIBILITY

Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share.

The duty of the rich (which describes almost all believers in the U.S.) is to use their resources to meet the needs of others.

...to whom much is given, from him much will be required... Luke 12:48

We are to live our lives in view of eternity.

...storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.