

HOW TO BE RICH - 2 “The Deceitfulness of Riches”

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 1 Timothy 6:6-10

As we discovered last week, most, if not all of us, would be considered rich in comparison to the world as a whole. An income of \$37,000 would place an individual in the top 4% of all the world's wage earners. To own a car, a television, a cell phone, etc. is what only the rich do according to most of the world's population. To be able to eat out at a restaurant, even if it is McDonald's, is a luxury that a vast majority in the world today will never experience. Most would consider it a luxury to just have enough to eat every day.

While most of us don't feel rich, and are not considered rich in our culture, we still fall into this category in comparison with the rest of the world. Remember, the Scripture has been written to the entire world. Therefore, when we see passages addressed to the rich, we would do well to pay attention. For example last week we dealt with this passage.

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. 1 Timothy 6:17

I WILL NOT TRUST IN RICHES BUT IN HIM WHO RICHLY PROVIDES.

We can use our material blessings to honor and serve God, or we can allow them to distract us and keep us too busy

to have time for God. This one area affects our lives far more than most of us realize. That is, no doubt, why God has spoken so much about money or material things in His word. Money, however, is also one of the major tools Satan uses to either keep people from coming to Christ or keep Christians so pre-occupied that they are ineffective in their witness. If we could only sit down and interview that deceiver...

Video - Craig and Satan

Satan wants you to worship money. Money will be the major competition for your heart. However, most of us are convinced that we don't have a problem with money. We recognize that others do, but we simply don't have that problem. But you may be a lover of money ...

1. IF YOU NEVER HAVE ENOUGH

Isn't amazing that many of us are convinced that our problems would all be solved if we just made more money. While it is true that one of the leading causes of divorce concerns finances, just having more income rarely helps the situation. Financial pressures can affect so many areas of our lives, but our greatest need is usually learning how to handle the money we already earn.

He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver... Ecclesiastes 5:10

We are spiritual beings, and you cannot satisfy a spiritual need with a material object. It is simply impossible. It is like trying to drink seawater to quench your thirst. Instead of quenching your thirst, it will make it worse and actually lead to dehydration.

Have you ever noticed that when many are going through an emotional crisis, they will go on spending sprees? Sometimes the crisis is precipitated by a financial problem in the first place and therefore is made even worse by the unnecessary spending. Even if you can afford the extra money or were even the recipient of a healthy sum, it would only

provide a temporary “high.” A material thing can never satisfy a spiritual need.

Do not overwork to be rich: because of your own understanding, cease! Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle toward heaven. Proverbs 23:4-5

How much money do you have to have to be secure? More than you have. You see money cannot bring true security.

You may be a lover of money...

2. IF YOU HAVE MONEY IN THE BANK BUT NO PEACE IN YOUR HEART

Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, than great treasure with trouble. Proverbs 15:16

Money can't buy happiness, but it sure makes misery more enjoyable. That might be a catchy phrase, but I'm afraid that it's simply not true. “Stuff” does not bring peace. Having a right relationship with God does.

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5

True peace is not based on the amount in our bank account or the value of our mutual funds. Instead it floods our hearts as we trust in the One who controls the universe.

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Isaiah 26:3

You may be a lover of money...

3. IF YOU FIND IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO GIVE.

“If I had more money, it would solve my problems.”

The truth is that more money is not going to...

... keep your kids off drugs.

... make your husband or wife love you

... cure your friend who is suffering with cancer

... give you peace

What is sad yet interesting is that survey after survey has revealed that those who have less give more (percentage) Those who have more give less.

What believers can experience is what the Scripture refers to as “the grace of giving.” It is a God-given ability and desire to give to others in need even when we may not have much ourselves.

Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, there were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

The believers in Macedonia could not be classified as the “rich.” However they willingly gave to meet the need of the believers in Jerusalem, and they did it with joy. They understood true riches. They knew “how to be rich.”

Satan says, “Give when you can afford it. Give when all your bills are paid off. Give when you get that big raise. ...”

God says,

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.” Malachi 3:10

The love of money will rob us of joy and peace. It will cause us to miss the many blessings that God has in store for us. In fact, many will miss heaven, not because they failed to give a certain amount in the offering or to the needy, but

because their desire for “stuff” kept them from coming to God.

I WANT TO BE FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY.

Don't let the love of money keep you from experiencing the peace that only a right relationship with God can provide. Don't let the love of money keep you from coming to Christ. It isn't worth it!