



No Growth - Riches

A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.

Psalms 37:16

Ruling - 2 Samuel 23:3

Idols - 1 John 5:21

Craving - Proverbs 24:1, Ecclesiastes 6:7

Highminded - 2 Timothy 3:4

Eyes/Ears - Matthew 13:15, Acts 28:27

Selfishness - Proverbs 1:19, Isaiah 56:11

Is the righteous better off with the little than the many riches of the wicked? The many great and glorious advantages of God's favor and blessing, the enormous serenity and satisfaction of the mind, which is infinitely more desirable and comfortable than all earthly possessions, the consolations of God's Spirit, and the assurance of everlasting happiness. The human heart should be for God Himself. That begins with His Word to help us fellowship and communicate with the One who made us. Similarly, husband and wife, getting to know each other over time, will possess all: what mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.

The righteous with the little will seek dependence on God, and their heart will be towards Him. They will not be occupied with riches in their heart because they do not have much to prohibit their relationship with God. Besides, with not having much, they will continue to seek Him. The righteous with the little is like coffee: the beans are not too rich or not too bitter, but a balance is just right. Meanwhile, wicked men's riches come with many encumbrances: with the wrath and curse

of God, the torment of their consciences and passions, the dreadful expectation of an after-reckoning, and endless miseries. The wicked shall suddenly be lost and gone, but God will maintain the righteous in their happy estate.

For believers, let us be satisfied that God will make all work for good to us. Let us not discompose ourselves at what we see in this world. A fretful, discontented spirit is open to many temptations. The little allotted to the righteous is more comfortable and profitable than the ill-gotten and abused riches of ungodly men. The portion comes from a hand of special love. God provides plentifully and well, not only for his working servants but for his waiting servants.

They have that which is better than wealth, peace of mind, peace with God, and peace in God; that peace which the world cannot give and which the world cannot have. God knows the days of the believer. Not a day's work shall go unrewarded. Their time on earth is by days, but heavenly happiness shall be forever. This encouragement will be a real support to believers in evil times. Those who rest on the Rock of Ages have no reason to envy the wicked with the backing of their broken reeds. What is right with riches? What is right is when it comes through the grace and mercy of God. In Proverbs eight, verse eighteen is under the call to wisdom. Riches is in this first key verse, and God introduces and mentions durable ones. However, many would think of physical wealth, although it is spiritual instead. In verses seventeen through twenty-one of this chapter, God knows our hearts and minds. The following verses are about how we are to be with Him. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honor *are* with me; *yea*, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit *is* better than gold, *yea* than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, amid the paths of judgment: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." The blessing of Abraham is the gracious heavenly gift that Abraham received as part of God's plan to create a new nation on earth. However, what God gave to Abraham is sometimes misused in prosperity theology to

claim that believers today can be just as wealthy and successful as Abraham was in the Old Testament. However, the misconception for the blessing of Abraham is his relationship and love for God. How he lived among his family before the Lord, the love and conduct among others is what many do not interpret, fail to acknowledge, and understand.

Abraham, who was Abram before God changed His name, was already rich in cattle, silver, and gold, as stated in Genesis thirteen, verse two. He had a heart for God and expressed his care for the Lord, as in verse four of the same chapter. Abraham had an obedient heart towards God, did not ask for blessings in things, but was granted, and lived in righteousness, which is right doing.

God speaking to Abraham in Genesis seventeen indicates the relationship was with God: clean, pure, and listening to instructions from Him. Chapter eighteen, verses one through ten, demonstrate how Abraham addresses others, and verses eighteen to thirty-three show his concern for others.

Therefore, are we living in this fashion as Abraham did? Do we have a close relationship with God above all others? Do we esteem other people more than ourselves? If we do all these things well, why should God not grant these abundant blessings like Abraham? Chances are we are not there or not there yet. The reason is we do not live like that right now. Our hearts are not in the right place, and God sees that, so why would he do that knowing we will not live the way he desires us to live? All have sinned and come short, as at the beginning of Romans three, verse twenty-three. Still, God sees the path ahead if he would grant the riches we ask for, such as these riches: doom.

What is wrong with riches? What is wrong with it is it does not come from God but through dishonest gain. Ungodly ways where man does not profit. That corrupts the heart that they do not desire to know God but how they could increase their greed. Some people join impious organizations to accumulate riches and various things but must cater to the ones who provide the avenue to achieve that success.

The difference between the ungodly and the godly is God causes all things to work together

for good for those who are obedient to His Word and follow after righteousness. However, the enemy uses people and does not care to work things for the good of the individuals he possesses but for his purpose until he no longer has any use for them. God gives choices, but the enemy forces, which is a big difference.

Why many people do not have riches? There are many reasons, such as spiritual, ancestral, verbal, psychological, educational, or environmental. The situation differs from one person to another. Every person's circumstance is unique because we all live differently. No one can be identical in terms of status.

In Matthew nineteen, verses sixteen through twenty-six, Mark ten, seventeen to twenty-two, and Luke eighteen, eighteen through twenty-five give the story of the rich young ruler. The three Gospels have similar narratives of this rich young man. However, the Gospel of both Matthew and Mark has a particular part where Jesus states to that wealthy person he lacked something: sell and give to others. However, it further specifies that the ruler was sorrowful because he had great possessions, while in Luke, it said he was very wealthy. Having riches can easily enable a person to keep the commandments if they want to do it.

Jesus knew the heart of this rich man and where it lies with his riches. The Ten Commandments should not be a problem for the young ruler to maintain: at least half. Notice Jesus mentions only five. What are the other five? Commandments one through four deal with gods and God, while the last one is not to covet. Based on what Jesus said, the rich young ruler seems to lack these five: The riches appear to be the young man's god, seeing he left sorrowful and coveted salvation. Though Christ spoke so strongly, few who have riches do not trust in them. The earnestness of men in this matter is like their toiling to build a high wall to shut themselves and their children out of heaven. These are the temptations of a high and prosperous condition. Christ's words show that it is hard for a rich man to be a good Christian and have salvation. The way to heaven is a narrow way

to all, and the gate that leads into it is straight, particularly to rich people.

More duties are expected from the rich than others, and more sins easily beset them. It is hard not to be charmed with a smiling world. Rich people have a big account to make up for their opportunities above others. It is impossible for a man who sets his heart upon his riches to get to heaven. Christ used an expression denoting a difficulty altogether unconquerable by the power of man.

Nothing less than the Almighty grace of God will enable a rich man to get over this difficulty. Who then can be saved? If riches hinder rich people, are not pride and sinful lusts found in those not rich and as dangerous to them? Not that rich people can receive deliverance from their worldliness, but free from it. However, Christ does not upbraid them; though it was little that they had forsaken, it was their all and as dear to them as if it had been more.

Riches may tempt people who possess them to behave like a ruler. They may act bossy by ordering people around and giving instructions to those they may feel superior to. People with riches usually are not just. They do not fear God and think they are one. Most people who possess expensive are cheap, greedy, and show very little concern for others. They want you to listen to them and not vice versa.

Pharaoh is a prime example of how riches can dominate a person and affect a country and a whole nation. Through this King of Egypt, he made the Israelites build treasured cities, as in Exodus one, verse eleven. Pharaoh also tries to convince the Hebrew midwives to destroy the male children but keep the female in verses fifteen through sixteen. Even during conversation, Pharaoh shows no compromise, only to intimidate and dominate, as in the discussion with Moses, the servant of God. "And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice," as in Exodus five, verse two.

The riches of Pharaoh and Egypt impacted the children of Israel, and they complained about how it was better when they were under his rule than experiencing the freedom they had now. Pharaoh's wealth image affected the children of Israel when they were free from Egypt, and they complained about how it was better back there among the Egyptians. The

riches consumed the minds of the Israelites, and most of them were willing to tolerate the bondage there for the privileges given. The children of Israel openly expressed their disapproval of the conditions and leadership of Moses as to where they were now.

In Exodus seventeen, verses one to three, the people travel on foot to the wilderness of Sin to Rephidim, where there is no water. The children of Israel murmured at the end of verse three, "Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" Another instance where the people gain influence by riches in Egypt with Pharaoh is when their leader was at the Mount in Exodus thirty-two to visit God. The golden calf in Exodus thirty-two was made in light of Moses going up to the mountain to see Him for a period. At the end of verse one, the Israelites did not know what became of Moses, allowing them to make the image. Aaron devises the plan with the gold jewelry, and others arise and participate in ungodly activities. All of this took place due to the Israelites' memory in Egypt under bondage: the riches and the lifestyle of how Egyptians lived as the children of Israel witnessed and experienced in the land of Egypt while in bondage.

Riches can cause temptation to have idols. Solomon is an example of a man who loved the Lord, walked according to His statutes, and built His temple, as in First Kings three, verse three, and chapter six, verse one. He experienced God's grace, love, and salvation. Solomon received spiritual understanding from God, as in First Kings three, verses ten through fourteen, and Second Samuel twelve, verse twenty-four, respectively. Nevertheless, the wisest man received riches because he initially did not ask or ponder for these things in his heart except for wisdom upon request. However, the richness overall that Solomon received led to idolatry through the strange woman he loved.

Riches will attract others and cause anyone to fall into other sinful ways like Solomon. His weakness for women made him cater to their needs as these ladies received help for what he had. The danger of riches is the social environment. The public will see you with the wealth and attempt to cling to you with their

ungodly ways. Therefore, if Solomon did not have this weakness for women, he would not be involved in idolatry, but the riches caused the entourage of these ladies down that path. Riches will cause a person to lust for more. Solomon's fatal error was to seek power, success, and an increase in wealth. He sought unholy alliances with heathen nations and other nations. Solomon had many foreign wives and concubines to seal these alliances, which produced more and more glory, as in First Kings ten, fourteen through nineteen, and First Timothy six, verse nine.

Riches will cause some to be conceited and betray others. Most people in this position will expect respect based on their possessions because of their achievements. Today, people are more conscious than ever about themselves and what they have compared to others. Someone in the neighborhood gets a new car, and some of the neighbor's behavior changes towards them. Paying attention to what others have and are doing instead of themselves.

Haman of Esther three, verse five, saw that Mordecai did not bow to reverence him and became angry. The behavior led the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, to create mischief against Mordecai. Haman tries to get rid of him and everyone else, similar in verse six of the same chapter. Haman receives a promotion from King Ahasuerus and is seated above all the princes. The fact he receives reverence from everyone else except Mordecai is his focus and determination, above other things. Riches can drive others to fall into temptation with their eyes and ears. Believers who receive the blessing of God have to be on their guard twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. The enemy will use the riches as an avenue to lure the people of God into sin and pull them out into his domain. It is hard to find many believers with riches and success because the flesh will get in the way and mess up their lives, creating an unholy lifestyle that can easily beset a believer.

In Second Samuel eleven, verse two depicts David up from a nap and rising from his couch to the roof of his palace, which in the cool of the day was the pleasantest part of an eastern house. The royal home is on the height of Mount Zion and looked down upon the open

courts of the residences in the lower city. In one of these, he saw a beautiful woman bathing. David's grievous fall was consequent upon his long course of uninterrupted prosperity and power, which had somewhat intoxicated and thrown him off his guard. The success may have put him in a relaxed position to encounter such a view, leading him to fall into temptation and give into sin with her. Riches cause most of the owners thereof to express a selfish attitude. Not only do they fail in the way of neglect of duty, but they are actively responsible for action. Being worldly and not spiritually minded, they are "greedy" after gain. People with riches have their minds occupied in the physical, which makes it difficult for them to hear anyone. Especially God, speaking to their heart.

Is the righteous better off with the little than the many riches of the wicked? There are many potential dangers with it. However, there are great benefits that can help others, but it all depends on the relationship with God for believers that determines it. The pitfalls of being domineering, the attraction of idols, the association of lust from the world, and the egotistical attitude that can arise are all possible with possessing riches.