



A Word For Today



You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free!

Rich and Blessed!

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1 Tim 6:9

But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. NLT

Are you “rich?” This was a question put to me by my three year old granddaughter recently. First of all I was amazed that a three year old child would even understand the concept of what it means to be *rich*. Then again, the idea of “being rich” is glorified in everything we read and see on TV and what Hollywood exports to the world. Yes, even our children's cartoons and story books glorify the idea of “being rich.”

The question then becomes, “What does it really mean to be “rich?” The dictionary defines this as *having an abundance of what is considered valuable*. In our modern day world, what people value most is money. When most people (including professing Christians) talk about being *rich*, or of having *abundance*—they naturally think in terms of finances, or other things that money can obtain for them. In this world's system (which for now is ruled by Satan), the more *financial abundance* (wealth) one possess the more *power*, and personal *freedom* they can obtain to achieve their goals in this life.

There are two perspectives for “being rich” that we as Christians are given, however, we can only choose to live by one of these perspectives. First is the world's perspective for being rich, which involves possessing an *abundance* of what is considered *valuable*. The second perspective, on being rich is the Biblical view, which all true followers of Jesus Christ are commanded to follow.

In the early 1960's the doctrine of (financial) “prosperity” was made popular by many well known Charismatic preachers and has invaded much of modern day Christianity. Since that time, *possessing the blessings* of having an “abundance” of what the world considers *valuable* such as money, possessions, lands, etc. has become the focus for many professing Christians. This has become known as living the *abundant life* that Jesus is said to have promised His followers. Many have been taught and have come to believe that living the *abundant life* is equated to having the power and freedom that a Christian is meant to have in this world as a child of the King. Therefore, we should not live beneath our privileges as a child of the King. This kind of thinking is rooted in false teaching that misuses the Scriptures to teach what is false.

The Biblical Definition for Being RICH

Before we look at God's perspective on “being rich,” it must be made clear what Jesus meant concerning the *abundant life* that He mentioned when He said... **“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10) NKJV.** The context from which this statement is made, has to do with false shepherds (hirelings) who allow God's people to be stolen from, killed and destroyed through ministers and ministries who are greedy for what they can get from the sheep and by false shepherds who allow false teachers (wolves) to destroy them. Jesus went on to say in this text... **“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them (John 10:11-12) NKJV.** The abundant life then is a life that is free from false ministers and wolves (false teachers) and is shepherded by THE WORD (Jesus).

The Apostle Paul warned us of these kinds of ministers and ministries who would use “wealth” as the bait for

their false prosperity teachings. **These people** (false teachers) **always cause trouble. Their minds are corrupt, and they don't tell the truth. To them religion is just a way to get rich (1 Tim 6:5) NLT.**

Those who profess to be Christians and have embraced the world's perspective for being rich, are being corrupted by the spirit of this world (Satan's anti-Christ spirit) and if they are not awakened to the truth, will end up being destroyed by the error they hold. Paul went on to define God's perspective on being rich or what it means to have true wealth. **Yet true religion with contentment is great wealth... After all, we didn't bring anything with us when we came into the world, and we certainly cannot carry anything with us when we die... So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content (because we are wealthy)... **But people who long to be rich (to have more than enough) fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. (1 Tim 6:6-10) NLT.****

The above text states that we are to consider ourselves *wealthy if we are content* with having *just enough* to eat and *just enough clothing* (to survive). This is not what those who preach the false concept of the *abundant life* tell us. In their eyes just having enough to survive is NOT viewed as being wealthy or as being blessed with prosperity. Desiring to have *more than we need to survive* is *covetousness* because it is the desire to be *rich*. Remember to be rich means to possess an *abundance* of what is considered valuable. When we have just enough to survive, we won't have build bigger kitchens with more storage for our *abundance*, nor will we have to build more clothes closets or find bigger houses to store our *abundance of things*. Jesus was very clear about this fact... **Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses (Luke 12:15) KJV.** There we have it—Jesus Himself telling us that abundance is not the abundant life! The abundant life that Jesus promised us, is a life that is lead by Him (the truth—the word) and is free from false ministers and their false teachings that destroy us.

Sowing and Reaping

If we are willing to live our life with being content with having just enough for our personal needs, then when we are blessed with more than enough (abundance) we will have the opportunity to cheerfully sow into the lives of those who are truly in need. Giving always comes down to our motive. If covetousness has taken hold of our life, we will not sow or give away our abundance cheerfully. Thus, we may *grudgingly* or *sparingly* give to others out of a sense of duty, or because we want more abundance to come to us as a result of our giving, only to be consume upon ourselves. If this is the case it will be hard to let go of our *abundance* that we depend upon to make us feel *secure, powerful* or *free*. As a result, giving becomes a way to ease our conscience. **But this I say, He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully... Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity (out of duty): **for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:6-7) NKJV.****

When we are free of covetousness and are willing to live and be content with having our personal needs met, then we are promised that *God's grace will abound towards us*. God's *grace* consists of his approval—His gifts—His favor, which come through His divine influence upon our lives. These aspects of His grace are the means for ensuring that we will have everything *we need* (not covet) along with an *abundance of His grace* to be used for doing good works to others. A righteous person who is content with having *all sufficiency in all things* or being satisfied with having just enough for all things, will cheerfully sow his *seed of abundance* to those in need. This person will be given seed for abundance by God for sowing abroad. **And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: As it is written, "He (the righteous giver) has dispersed abroad; he has given to the poor: his righteousness remains for ever" (2 Cor 9:8) NKJV.**

When this seed of abundance is sown, we who give righteously will see it being multiplied and thus be blessed with *continual abundance* to sow into others lives. When the seed of abundance comes into people's

lives, it is sad to say that many eat (use or keep) their seed of abundance given to them by God—instead of sowing it into the lives of others. It is God alone who gives us seed (abundance) for sowing and who gives us our bread for eating—this represents His provision for our need (not greed) for our survival (not self indulgence). May we not eat our sowing seed and always be thankful and content with our bread of life (Jesus). **Now he that furnishes seed to the sower both furnishes bread for your food, and will multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness (2 Cor 9:10) NKJV.**

The seed of abundance that we are to sow into the lives of others—has a twofold purpose. First it is for meeting the needs of God’s people—and second it is for the purpose of causing sincere praise and thanksgiving to God to come forth. This was demonstrated when the Christians in Greece gave their seed of abundance to the church in Jerusalem that was in terrible need. This is the context for this text used to teach us the true principle of sowing and reaping. This text goes on to say that God gets the glory when we sow our abundance and live a life of *sufficiency* (just enough) and contentment in order to sow our seeds of abundance... **Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causes through us thanksgiving to God.... For the administration of this service (of sowing) not only supplies the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God... Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men. KJV**

The abundance that God blesses us with, is different than the abundance that we are able to get through our own efforts or deceptive means. When we scheme and work to become rich (acquire abundance for our own selves), and then turn around sow *some* of that abundance as offerings (with selfish motives as mentioned above) and proclaim this as a blessing from God, we are deceiving ourselves and hiding our sin of covetousness. **The wicked man does deceptive work** (sows deceptively), **But he who sows righteously will have a sure reward... As righteousness leads to life, So he who pursues evil** (sows un-righteously) **pursues it to his own death... Those who are of a perverse heart are an abomination to the LORD, But the blameless in their ways are His delight (Prov 11:18-20) NKJV.**

Job was a righteous rich man who understood that life was not found in having abundance, and that pride would destroy those who worked to have abundance for themselves. Those who desire abundance for themselves will be enticed by covetousness and many sins of the flesh... **If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, And because my hand had gained much... So that my heart has been secretly enticed... This also would be an iniquity deserving of judgment, For I would have denied God who is above (Job 31:25-28) NKJV.**

Those who embrace and teach false prosperity doctrines that say it our right to live the *abundant life*, as an excuse for covetousness, are turning the hearts of God’s people away from Him and away from preaching the true Gospel message that requires death to self in order to live for Christ. The word of God clearly warns us of these things... **You who love all devouring words** (i.e. false prosperity teachings), **You who** (have a) **deceitful tongue... God shall likewise destroy you forever... the man who did not make God his strength, But trusted in the abundance of his riches, And strengthened himself in his wickedness" (Ps 52:4-7) NKJV.**

As stated, if we are blessed with abundance (more than we need) we must realize that abundance is the seed we are to disperse abroad—not keep. **If riches increase, Do not set your heart on them (Ps 62:10) NKJV.** Jesus warned us of what a stumbling-block riches are to people... **"Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! 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."** (Mark 10:24-25)

So in answer to my granddaughters question, “Are you rich Grandma?” I must honestly say, yes I am rich—I have way more than I need to survive. This means I am blessed with abundance, and now I must use that abundance for the glory of God. May we allow God to speak to our hearts about our motives for giving and receiving from God. Like the Apostle Paul I too had to learn (the hard way) how to be content with having my needs met. Now I can also say as Paul did... **Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.(Phil 4:11-12) NKJV †**