

Biblical Perspective on Wealth

Key Verse

Proverbs 10:22 - The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.

Exploring The Bible

I. God's Promises on Wealth

Deuteronomy 8:18 - You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

Question: Who gives you the ability to create wealth?

Answer:

Question: What does the ability to create wealth confirm to us?

Answer:

Here God promises to give His people the ability to create wealth. God is not running a welfare program where He just hands out money. We have to take the responsibility to take the abilities God gives us to create wealth and then actually create some wealth.

Proverbs 10:22 - The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.

Question: When God blesses, what do we get?

Answer:

This is a great promise. God declares that His blessing produces wealth without sorrow or trouble. There are a lot of people in the world who have created wealth without the blessing of God, but the sorrow and troubles that accompanied that accumulation of wealth were painful.

Read *Deuteronomy 15:1 – 6*

Question: What should not exist in the land the people are about to possess (verse 4)?

Answer:

Question: What was the condition for getting the blessing of the Lord (verse 5)?

Answer:

Question: What does God promise additionally (verse 6)?

Answer:

God declares here that He does not want His people living in poverty and lack by making the incredible promise that if His people would follow His ways and obey His laws, no one would be poor. God's desire is to prosper people. This is a small sample of verses, but it shows that God is in the business of blessing us so that wealth can be produced. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Solomon are all a testament to God's blessing producing vast amounts of wealth. But there are other verses that talk about other aspects of wealth.

II. Poverty

There are those who believe that being poor keeps you free of worldly desires and allows you to be closer to God. Some even encourage taking a vow of poverty. But what does the Bible say about poverty?

Proverbs 6:10-11 - A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Question: What is this person doing (verse 10)?

Answer:

Question: What is the result?

Answer:

Proverbs 21:17 - Whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.

Question: What do you have to love to become poor?

Answer:

These are just a couple of verses that talk about poverty and lack. Laziness and loving expensive luxuries are causes of poverty. There is nothing in the Bible that suggests that someone who is poor has God's special favor and love. God does promise to uphold the

cause of the poor because many times they are being oppressed. Poverty always comes because someone is violating God's ways or oppressing someone else. It is not anything God loves, honors, or wants.

III. What Did Jesus Say

But wait! Didn't Jesus say some harsh things about riches and rich people? If God is not for poverty and delights in blessing people with wealth, why did Jesus say some of the things He said?

In order to understand what Jesus was saying about money and riches, we need to understand the cultural belief of the day concerning money. The Jewish religious leaders believed and taught that God only entrusted His truth to those who were wealthy because they had been faithful to use what was entrusted to them to build wealth. They taught that all of the Old Testament prophets were wealthy because God wouldn't entrust His truth to someone who had not been faithful to use the resources entrusted to them to build wealth. We don't know if all the Old Testament prophets were wealthy but a belief system that makes wealth a sign of God's approval and entrance into God's inner circle of trust is a perversion of the truth of the verses we studied at the beginning of this lesson. Jesus confronted this perverted belief in wealth throughout His ministry. With this background let's look at several from Jesus' ministry about wealth and money

Matthew 13:22 - As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

Question: What choked out the seed for this man?

Answer:

What is the deceitfulness of riches? In the context of the Jewish belief about riches, the deceitfulness of riches is the deception that riches get you close to God. Therefore, you spend your energy and focus pursuing riches rather than pursuing God's Kingdom.

Read *Matthew 18:18-29*

Question: What did the ruler ask Jesus (verse 18)?

Answer:

Question: What did Jesus tell the ruler he lacked (verse 22)?

Answer:

Question: What did Jesus say about the rich entering the Kingdom of Heaven?

Answer:

When this ruler asked Jesus about eternal life, he was probably expecting an answer confirming his entrance into the Kingdom and eternal life because of his wealth. Instead he is confronted by his love of money which was keeping him from the Kingdom. When Jesus told the crowd how hard it was for the rich to enter the Kingdom, you can now imagine the shock of the crowd considering what they had been taught about riches and God's favor. If the rich have a hard time entering the Kingdom, then who can be saved? Jesus response was that it is not about the amount of wealth that gets you into the Kingdom, but it is about the power of God.

Matthew 6:31-33 - Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Question: What did Jesus promise to be provided to those who seek first God's Kingdom?

Answer:

Jesus is not for poverty. Jesus clearly states here that if we pursue the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, all our needs will be provided. When God provides, He doesn't provide the bare minimum for us to get by. His provision is abundant. Jesus is teaching His disciples and us that if we pursue His Kingdom, the abundance that others were seeking as a sign God's acceptance would be provided to us.

IV. Summary

God clearly has promised to bless His people financially. But this doesn't mean that everyone will be a millionaire, nor does it mean that if you do have wealth you are automatically in the good graces of God and bound for the Kingdom. But God's financial blessings are abundant. Our responsibility is to manage what God gives us so that it grows and also to release some of this wealth to fund the needs and works of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Practical Exercise:

Have you ever described what financial abundance would look like in your life? Many times we hope and wish for the things God has promised rather than clearly defining them and putting them before the Lord.

Let's take a few minutes and think about what abundance should look like in your life and then take a piece of paper and write it down. Make it as detailed as you want. Then put it before the Lord as your declaration of abundance in the area of finances.