

THE DARK SIDE OF MONEY

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Money is central to most people! If you don't have enough ... it can be restricting.

Believers — church-going-people — are often uncomfortable about wealth and prosperity. Especially when they look around at some wealthy people in this world.

Some believe the Bible teaches that money is ungodly. It is better to be poor and humble. Blessed are the poor.

So far we've looked at many scriptures ... showing God's desire to prosper His people and His nation — to bless them with abundance and prosperity.

Also ... famous men of God who were very rich — for example ... Abraham ... Issac (who was envied by those around him) ... Job and King David.

Last week we examined whether scriptures show Jesus as being dirt poor — born homeless in a stable ... and later on — with no place to “lay His head”.

Scriptures suggest that Jesus was reasonably well off — with one home (in Capernaum) ... and maybe two homes of His own. He had sufficient income that meant He needed a treasurer to manage the finances.

So — scripturally — money and prosperity are not inherently bad or evil. It's neutral.

Yet — there is a dark side to money.

It can — and too often does — cause problems and can even shipwreck people's lives — suicide ... divorce ... death!

Money should come with a warning! It does — and scripture gives us those warnings.

And even those without much money need the warning. Some poor people are envious ... jealous ... hate-filled — many even turn to fraud and stealing to “get their share”.

1 Timothy 6:10

10 **For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil,**

This is often misquoted! “Money is THE ROOT ...”

Mark Twain rephrased that: “**Lack of money is the root of all evil!**”

And people with no money can love it — and lie and cheat to get it.

The problem isn't the money. It's the LOVE OF MONEY.

The context:

1 Timothy 6:6-10

6 **Now godliness with contentment is great gain.**

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

9 **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.**

10 **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. (Greedy for money)**

Never content. Always want more — “I'll be happy when I get this house/car/bank account”. GREED!

Prepared to forfeit health ... family — even the truth — to GET MORE.

Our heart needs to be right!

Go after the noble values.

1 Timothy 6:11

11 **But you, O man of God**, flee these things **and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.**

Deuteronomy 8:6-10

6 **“Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.**

7 For **the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land**, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills;

8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey;

9 **a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing;** a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper.

10 When you have eaten and are full, then you shall **bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you.**

God prefers prosperity.

Deuteronomy 8:14, 17-18

11 **“Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today,**

12 lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them;

13 and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied;

14 **when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt**, from the house of bondage; *(the problem is “your heart”)*

17 then you say in your heart, **‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’** *(I’m so smart!!)*

18 **“And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth**, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

BEWARE! Don’t be self-confident. **Watch your heart! REMEMBER IT IS A BLESSING FROM GOD. NEVER FORGET YOUR GOD!**

Psalms 62:1-2

1 Truly my soul silently waits for God;

From Him comes my salvation.

2 **He only is my rock and my salvation;**

He is my defence;

I shall not be greatly moved. (*Focus entirely on God*)

Psalms 62:5-8

5 **My soul, wait silently for God alone,**

For my expectation is from Him.

6 **He only is my rock and my salvation;**

He is my defence;

I shall not be moved.

7 **In God is my salvation and my glory;**

The rock of my strength,

And my refuge, is in God.

8 **Trust in Him at all times, you people;**

Pour out your heart before Him;

God is a refuge for us.

PUT YOUR TRUST IN GOD. He's the answer!

Psalms 62:9-10

9 Surely men of low degree are a vapour,

Men of high degree are a lie/delusion;

If they are weighed on the scales,

They are altogether lighter than vapour.

10 Do not trust in oppression,

Nor vainly hope in robbery;

If riches increase,

Do not set your heart on them. (*Never take your eyes off God — the True Provider!*)

“If riches increase” — as they did for Israel — “DO NOT SET YOUR HEART ON THEM”!

A wise person never takes his eyes off God.

Focus on the Giver — not on the gift!

Proverbs 1:10

10 **My son, if sinners entice you,**

Do not consent.

Proverbs 1:14-19

14 **Cast in your lot among us,**

Let us all have one purse” —

15 **My son, do not walk in the way with them,**

Keep your foot from their path;

16 For their feet run to evil,

And they make haste to shed blood.

17 Surely, in vain the net is spread

In the sight of any bird;

18 But they lie in wait for their own blood,

They lurk secretly for their own lives.

19 **So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain;**

It takes away the life of its owners.

Proverbs 1:19 (NLT)

19 **Such is the fate of all who are greedy for money;**

it robs them of life.

It doesn't say gain — of itself — is wrong. But pursuing it by greed is wrong. And following dubious ways to get it.

Proverbs 11:28

28 **He who trusts in his riches will fall,**

But the righteous will flourish like foliage.

Don't trust in riches!

The riches are neutral — but — we mustn't trust in our investments and bank accounts.

Proverbs 28:6

6 **Better is the poor who walks in his integrity**

Than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich.

Better poor and honest — than rich and dishonest. It doesn't say poor is better than rich — that it's more spiritual to be poor.

If you couldn't "cope" with wealth ... it would be better to stay poor. But that is not God's ideal — think of Abraham ... Job ... King David ... etc.

Proverbs 30:7-9

7 Two things I request of You ("You" — God)

(Deprive me not before I die):

8 Remove falsehood and lies far from me;

Give me neither poverty nor riches —

Feed me with the food allotted to me;

9 Lest I be full and deny You,

And say, "Who is the Lord?"

Or lest I be poor and steal,

And profane the name of my God.

Abraham ... Isaac ... Job ... David — had no problems being rich — but many people do. They don't have sufficient wisdom or self-control.

In the USA ... a vast number of lottery winners go bankrupt at a higher rate than average Americans. Many lottery winners struggle with suicide ... depression ... drugs ... and divorce (referred to as: The "Curse of the Lottery").

The heart is all important.

Luke 12:13-21

13 Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

14 But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?"

15 And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. (*The man with "I" disease — the man who is the centre of his universe*)

17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?'

18 So he said, ‘**I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.**

19 And **I will say to my soul**, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” ’

20 **But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’**

21 “**So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.**”

Beware covetousness — getting — purely for yourself.

This man put his confidence in his wealth — his assets. And WAS SELFISH!

Luke 8:9-15

9 Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “**What does this parable mean?’**”

10 And He said, “**To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, *that Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.***’

11 “**Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.**

12 **Those by the wayside are the ones who hear;** then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, **lest they should believe and be saved.**

13 But **the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy;** and these have no root, **who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.**

14 **Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.**

15 **But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.**

One group lost out because of cares ... riches and pleasures (Greek: Hedone) ... of life.

Mark 10:17-27

17 Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”

18 So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

19 You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ ”

20 And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.”

21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, **“One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”** *(Jesus was offering this man to join His team. This is an instruction to one man in this particular situation — not to everyone)*

22 **But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.** *(He had great possessions — or they had him!!)*

23 **Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!”**

24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. **But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!**

25 **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.”**

26 And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, “Who then can be saved?”

27 But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.”

Go and sell. Be poor? The rich young ruler had an opportunity to join Jesus and His team.

The key to understanding this is in verse 24. It is hard for those WHO TRUST IN RICHES.

You can't have 2 masters. You can't serve God and mammon.

Luke 16:13

13 **"No servant can serve two masters;** for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon."**

14 **Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him.**

15 And **He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts.** For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Ephesians 5:5

5 **For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**

A covetous man is an idolater! They won't be in the Kingdom!

Don't forget. **Even a poor person can be covetous!**

1 Timothy 6:10

10 **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 6:17-19

17 **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.**

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

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

Don't trust in uncertain riches. Be generous!

It's all about the heart!

James 5:1

1 **Come now, you rich**, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you!

Misery! Because they're rich?? Let's read the context.

James 5:2-6

2 **Your riches are corrupted**, and your garments are moth-eaten.

3 **Your gold and silver are corroded**, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. **You have heaped up treasure in the last days.**

4 Indeed the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, **which you kept back by fraud**, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. (*Defrauded their workers*)

5 **You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.**

6 **You have condemned, you have murdered the just**; he does not resist you.

These rich people are corrupt! They exploit and abuse others!

James 5:5 (THE VOICE)

5 **Your life on the earth has been one of luxury, pleasure, and endless consumption;**

James 5:5 (NIV)

5 **You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence.**

These people could have been generous to others? But they were selfish ... greedy ... uncaring.

Mark 8:34-37

34 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "**Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

35 **For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.**

36 **For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?**

37 Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

What if we could acquire the wealth of the whole world? One day we'll be joint inheritors of the whole universe — incredibly wealthy.

There is no point in chasing wealth and prosperity today rather than putting God first. If we are patient ... one day we'll inherit!

So ... prosperity comes with a warning. It has a dark side. And even poor people can succumb.

PROSPERITY itself is not a sin. WEALTH is not a sin. MONEY is not a sin. The key is what's in our heart — LOVE FOR GOD ... or love for money?