

Small Group Questions

1. How does God really feel about the rich? Defend your answer with Scripture.
2. What are the two common misconceptions that often prevent Christians from moving enthusiastically in the marketplace? In what ways do you struggle with these misconceptions?
3. Read Luke 18:23 and Mark 10:21-22
Why did Jesus tell the rich man to sell his possessions?
What was the rich man's problem?
In what ways do you identify with the rich man?
4. Is wealth a blessing or a curse? Read 1 Timothy 1:6-19 and discuss what Paul said is the problem and solution for those God has entrusted with riches.
5. Wealth is a gift from God but it needs to be brought under the power and authority of our Lord. What obstacles hold you back from doing this? What steps do you need to take in order to bring your wealth under the power and authority of the Lord? Pray for one another in this area.

February 8, 2009

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THE REDEMPTIVE ROLE OF WEALTH

Two misconceptions that often prevent godly Christians from moving enthusiastically into the marketplace

1. Success is something Christians cannot handle well
2. The belief that God despises rich people

Two Case Studies in Social Reconciliation

Capernaum

- A widow's son and the Centurion's servant

Jericho

- Bartimaeus - The blind beggar
- Zaccheus - The rich tax collector

Wealth is a gift from God but it needs to be brought under the power and the authority of our Lord. Redeemed wealth has a key role in God's plans to establish His kingdom on earth.

Jesus never opposed wealth, per se.

He objected to idle wealth and its control over those who have it.

This is clearly seen in the dialogue He had with the rich ruler.

(Luke 18:23; Mark 10:21)

"And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property." (Mark 10:21-22)

- Why did Jesus tell the rich man to sell his possessions? Not because wealth was evil, but because the young man was controlled by it
- The rich man's problem was his inability to see wealth as a means to benefit others instead of a crutch to shore up his own insecurities

Wealth: Blessing or Curse?

- When people are controlled by wealth they fail to enter the kingdom of God and miss the fullness of life
- Jesus assured Peter that because he had chosen to follow the Lord, he would “receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life” (Luke 18:28; also see 18:29-30)
- Peter stood to be entrusted with more, not less wealth, but it was not meant to be hoarded; it was given so Peter could do good with it
- Paul admonished “those who are rich... not to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17)
- Wealth is not the problem but attachment to it is. “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10)
- This attachment is extremely deceitful because it makes people think that they own wealth when in reality it is the wealth that owns them
- This in turn causes them to devote the bulk of their time and energy to maintaining wealth instead of liberally using it to do good
- God entrusts people with riches to bless others because wealth is a renewable resource and He is the generous replenisher
- Paul wrote, “Instruct [the rich] to do good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed” (1 Timothy 6:18-19)
- Sharing makes wealth the most enjoyable

A Lesson from Acts

The parallel tracks of taking care of the needy and the salvation of the lost.

CARING

Acts 2: 44, 45
Acts 4: 32 – 34
Acts 6: 1 – 3
Acts 11: 29

SALVATION

Acts 2:47
Acts 5:14–16
Acts 6:7
Acts 12:20–24

Poverty is not “the lack of” but “the fear of lacking”

“Pride of having it” or “the fear of lacking”

Philemon and Onesimus

- A case study in marketplace reconciliation
- A kingdom financial plan or... How to use material wealth to generate eternal wealth.

“But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either” (1 Timothy 6:6-7).

Three Forms of Capitalism

- Moral
- Amoral
- Immoral