

There is a difference between temporal wealth and true riches

Of all the many good things God has created and of all the many pleasant things He makes possible, some are more long-lasting and more fulfilling than others. In this world, the good things we can acquire and the good activities we can engage in are not even to be compared to the good things of the life to come. And, the truth is, if we do not give priority to our eternal blessings, our blessings in the here and now will give us grief in the long run.

The members of the church in Laodicea illustrate what can happen if we do not keep our priorities straight. The Lord said, “For you say, ‘I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked’” (Rev. 3:17). Even though they were very prosperous materially, these individuals were spiritually destitute. And what is truly sobering is that they were completely out of touch with the reality of their situation. They were ignorant of just how poor they were in the things of the spirit.

The problem is not that worldly wealth is inherently evil. It is simply that treasures of a temporal nature tend to draw our attention away from God. The more comfortable we are in this world, the less we tend to think about God. Thinking we’re secure, we let enjoyment become our primary focus and our thinking begins to drift away from spiritual priorities. Paul said it simply: “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction” (1 Tim. 6:9).

Jesus taught about a certain rich man who gave no thought to spiritual matters. “But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’” (Lk. 12:20). Jesus concluded, “So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God” (Lk. 12:21).

In the Bible, we are urged to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Mt. 6:20). *There is a difference between temporal wealth and true riches.* Let’s think about the difference this week — and learn from our thinking!

Monday: Luke 12:13-21

Key Idea: A person may be rich physically but poor spiritually.

Questions for Family Growth: What was it about this man that was so foolish? What is “covetousness”? In v.15, what did Jesus say our lives do not “consist in”? If that is not what life is about, then what is the main thing in life?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 17:26.

Tuesday: Luke 16:19-31

Key Idea: A person may be poor physically but rich spiritually.

Questions for Family Growth: If possible, which kind of life would most people choose: the one Lazarus had or the rich man's life? If a person had to choose between the two lives, which would be the better life? What would your choice say about the kind of person you are?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 17:27,28](#).

Wednesday: 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Key Idea: It is possible to be rich both physically and spiritually.

Questions for Family Growth: What does Paul say the physically rich person should be warned about? Should we set being materially rich as a goal? What does [1 Tim. 6:9,10](#) say? What should those who already have physical riches do? What do [vv.18,19](#) say?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 18:1](#).

Thursday: Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

Key Idea: Physical riches would disappoint us if we were not also rich spiritually.

Questions for Family Growth: What made Solomon qualified to give advice about wealth and pleasure? What did he say he had found out about these things? What is the best thing to get out of life? Consider [Eccl. 12:13,14](#).

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 18:2](#).

Friday: Matthew 6:19-34

Key Idea: God wants us to put our treasures and our hearts in heaven.

Questions for Family Growth: What are some of the problems that go along with treasures in this world? How do we go about laying up treasures in heaven? What is it that, above all, God wants us to seek? See [vv.32-34](#).

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 18:3](#).

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