

Ill-Gotten Gain

Ponder: Do you wish you were wealthier?

Scripture: “Better is a little with righteousness, Than vast revenues without justice” (Proverbs 16:8, NKJV).

Have you heard that money is the root of all evil? I have, too, but it’s a misquotation of 1 Timothy 6:10. Money isn’t the problem; the love of it is. It’s not a sin to have money; it’s not even a sin to be rich!

Crucial questions about money (or material wealth in general) are basically two: “How did you get it?” and “How are you using it?” Answering both questions indicates your attitude toward money. If there is a problem, it begins, as always, in the heart.

Decent, God-fearing people have wondered for ages, “Why does the way of the wicked prosper?” (Jeremiah 12:1). Like the inspired writer of Psalm 73, we may struggle with envy when we witness the wicked prospering (v. 3). I certainly have my own problems with sin, but hey, at least I’m trying, right? Yet that fellow who doesn’t care one thing about God has the Midas touch, while I’m putting in overtime trying to keep the wolf away from the door. It doesn’t seem right!

Solomon had more wealth than you and I put together can even imagine. Yet he knew that “better is a little with righteousness, Than vast revenues without justice” (Proverbs 16:8). In another place he said, “Better is the poor who walks in his integrity, Than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich” (28:6). Not all wicked rich people acquire their wealth dishonestly, but some (many?) do. Here’s the question: Would you rather be content with what you have, knowing that you came by it honestly; or would you rather have abundant ill-gotten gain with the guilty conscience that comes with it, not to mention jeopardizing your soul?

By global standards, most Americans are rich. Personally, I figure that God has allowed me to have about as much material wealth as I can handle without putting my trust in it or using it selfishly. Like most people, I’d like to have more. I tell myself I’d use it in wise and godly ways. But others have thought the same, only to become slaves of their wealth.

Let us seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; He will supply all we need.

Song: “Seek Ye First The Kingdom Of God”

Prayer: “Gracious Father, You have blessed us richly with far more than we could ever begin to deserve. If we have food, clothing, and shelter for today, we have more than countless others in the world. Help us to be content with what we have, and to use Your blessings to serve others as well as ourselves. May we seek to be right with you, first and foremost. We pray in the name of Jesus, our blessed redeemer, Amen.