

The Risk Of Riches

Joe Slater

Contrary to popular belief, money is not the root of all evil. The “love” of it is “a” root of “*all kinds of evil*” (1 Timothy 6:10). Think about this: You don’t have to be rich to love money; and those who are rich don’t necessarily love money.

Three questions help to determine whether wealth endangers your soul: 1) How did you get it? 2) How do you use it? 3) What is your attitude toward it?

Wealth may be earned, inherited, or freely given to you. It may also be obtained through theft, fraud, or other dishonorable means. Both Old and New Testaments condemn those dishonest practices while commending work, inheritances, and giving.

Wealth may be used for good or evil. One reason for working is to “have something to give to him who has need” (Ephesians 4:28). The rich fool in Jesus’ parable (Luke 12) used his wealth only selfishly. Paul praised the brethren who gave cheerfully and generously to help the poor and support the preaching of the gospel.

How you obtain wealth and how you use it may be affected by your attitude toward it. As seen earlier, it’s not money itself but the love of money that is a root of all kinds of evil. Greed (covetousness) motivates people to acquire it dishonestly and use it selfishly. Material wealth becomes a virtual god. The righteous patriarch Job said, “*If I have made gold my hope, or said to fine gold, ‘You are my confidence’; if I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gathered much . . . this also would be an iniquity deserving of judgment, for I would have denied God who is above*” (Job 31:24-28).

Riches carry risk. You can successfully manage that risk by obtaining wealth legitimately, putting it to godly use, and viewing it as the temporary tool that it is.

Let The Children Come

Children are special gifts from the Lord (Psalm 127:3). Most would agree, though some might find them inconvenient, even bothersome. The disciples of our Lord found themselves among those who preferred that children “be seen but not heard.” The inspired record is clear in describing Jesus as having a different attitude toward children. As parents were bringing their children to Jesus so that He might lay hands on them and bless them, the disciples began rebuking them (Luke 8:15). One might speculate that the disciples, being aware of the great burden Jesus bore in His daily ministry, were thinking of blessing children as an interruption or distraction. Not so, for Jesus made this an important teaching point for His disciples, saying, “*Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God*” (Luke 18:16, NKJV).

Jesus identifies childlike trust and humility as essential traits of discipleship. On another occasion, when the disciples seemed most concerned about who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus placed a child before them, saying, “*unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*” (Matthew 18:3-4, NKJV).

While we must love and provide for the best interests of our children, let us never forget the great lessons we must learn from them! “Jesus loves the little children” and so must we by seeing to, not only their physical and emotional needs, but also their spiritual and eternal well-being.

--Glen Elliot (Greenbriar, AR)

I Want To Go To Heaven (Just Not Right Now)

The late country music singer Joe Diffie had a hit song back in 1993 entitled “Prop Me Up Beside the Jukebox (If I Die)”. The song expresses the sentiment of a good ole boy who, should he kick the bucket, wanted to have his lifeless body posed in the honky tonk he dearly loves. Though the song is tongue-in-cheek and supposed to be funny, it’s anything but humorous. One line in the chorus goes, “Lord I wanna go to Heaven, but I don't wanna go tonight.” Sadly, this may very well express the true feelings of many Christians today.

A close examination of oneself may reveal that we love this present world too much and lack the spiritual maturity to truly desire and look forward to our heavenly home. The Scriptures warn us about placing too much affection in earthly things because it will dampen our longing for the spiritual. Jesus said we must lay up treasure in heaven, not on the earth (Matthew 6:19-21), because our heart will be where our treasure resides.

Christians may also feel this way about the second coming of Christ. We all say that we’re looking forward to His return just as long as it’s not today, next week, or in our lifetime. Our Savior said, “*Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching.*” (Luke 12:37) If we are not eagerly waiting for Christ to come again, then perhaps we’ve got some spiritual growing yet to do. Could it be that we are so richly blessed with family, friends, and material wealth that we have no desire to be with the Lord?

Peter encourages us to be ready and enthusiastic about going to heaven. “*Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things (the Day of the Lord), be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.*” (2 Peter 3:14-15)

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX)