

Be Rich Toward God

True discipleship in Christ impacts absolutely everything in a believer's life, including his attitude and his use of material and monetary things. Jesus warned about the sin of covetousness and taught against every form of greed. In a parable, He described how a man became a fool before God and was condemned because he lived his life storing up *"treasures for himself"* but was *"not rich toward God"* (Luke 12:21). All of us are simply stewards of our lives and of life's blessings. What are we doing with what God has granted us?

Selfish ambition may be advantageous for a time, but in the long run, it destroys a person, robbing him of the things that matter the most. The sad reality is that a man can possess everything monetarily and have nothing. *"Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction"* (1 Timothy 6:9). Our Lord's teaching on this subject reflects God's wisdom from ancient times: *"Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies toward the heavens."* (Proverbs 23:4-5)

Earthly gains are meaningless, if they have not been used to invest into spiritual treasures. *"The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."* (1 Timothy 6:10). We live in a prosperous nation, and many, if not most, have lived at ease with many comforts for so long that we have come to expect them, thinking that they are necessities. As the apostle urged Christians to prepare a *"bountiful gift"* for needy saints, he expressed concern about brethren being *"affected by covetousness"* (2 Corinthians 9:5). No believer is above deceiving himself by the deceitfulness of his own riches.

Therefore, be rich toward God. Long ago Israelites were instructed, *"Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce"* (Proverbs 3:9). *"...God loves a cheerful giver"* (2 Corinthians 9:7). Thus He is looking for you and me to be bountiful sowers - sowing the seed He has given us in order to increase the harvest of righteousness (9:6, 10). God has chosen us *"to be rich in faith"* - whether we are rich or poor (James 2:5). He calls us *"to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share"* (1 Timothy 6:18). The church is commanded to take collections: *"On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper"* (1 Corinthians 16:2). Are we giving God the first of all we have? Or is it our left-overs? If God audited us, would He say that we were rich toward Him?