

Quiet Time Study: "How to Be Rich" (follow up to PE Church of Christ sermon series)

Deuteronomy 8:10-18

- What warning was God giving to His people about how His blessings might affect them?
- What is an essential attitude to adopt to prevent material possessions becoming a source of arrogance?

1 Timothy 6:6-10

- What does this passage say we should be content with?
- How would you summarise the danger of pursuing worldly wealth?
- Do you see the implication in vs 8-9 that those who have more than they need are considered "rich"?
- This is the consistent Biblical view of wealth - excess over basic needs. How does this differ from the world's view?

1 Timothy 6:17-19

- What according to this passage are two temptations that rich Christians have?
- Why do you think rich people tend to be more arrogant than those who are not?
- Why do you think rich people tend to place their hope in their wealth rather than in God?
- Why do Christians in need not struggle with these challenges as much as Christians who have excess?
- What is the key point in this passage about how we can prevent our hope migrating away from God to our money and possessions? Why and how do you think this works?
- By being generous we store up treasures in the Age to Come. How do you think this works?

Many of us are richer than we feel and think we are. We do not feel rich because we tend to (1) benchmark ourselves against people who have more than we do and (2) spend all (or more than) we earn, leaving us with no excess at month end.

- *To what extent do these conditions describe you?*
- *Think of a few practical steps that you can take to guard against falling into these traps.*

Luke 18:18-23 and Luke 19:1-9

- How would you contrast the responses of these two wealthy men to the challenge of Jesus?
- What does this tell us about their respective attitudes to their wealth?
- What was the ultimate/eternal outcome of each of their responses?
- What do these stories tell us about how Jesus viewed the value of money and possessions?
- How does Jesus' view differ from how the world typically views personal wealth?

2 Corinthians 8:1-7

- Paul held up the Macedonian churches for their rich generosity in giving towards needy Christians in Jerusalem, and encouraged the Corinthians to also excel in this "grace of giving".
- We usually think of grace as something given by God to Christians, but here grace is something given through Christians.
- Why and how is being generous to other Christians a way of expressing God's grace?

2 Corinthians 8:13-15

- What according to this passage is the purpose of having plenty (excess)?
- Paul quotes an Old Testament scripture about God providing manna for his people in this passage about generous giving. What is the main point he is making by doing this? (*Clue: what was the ultimate purpose of God providing the manna and His specific instructions for how it was to be collected?*)

Luke 12:22-31

- In the immediate context of generous giving (vs 21), why does Jesus go to great lengths here to explain how God takes care of His people?
- Seeking God's Kingdom means to submit to His rule and reign. What is the relevance of this to God providing for His people?

- Many Christians want to give more generously but are concerned about their future in uncertain economic times. What assurance can such Christians take from these words of Jesus?

Matthew 6:19-24

- What are some examples of treasures on earth?
- What are some examples of treasures in heaven that will last into the Age to Come?
- Jesus taught a lot about money, knowing that money is God's biggest competitor for our hearts.
- What did Jesus mean by saying that our treasures lead our hearts? (vs 21)
- Having healthy (good) eyes was a figure of speech in Jesus' day referring to generosity, while having unhealthy (bad) eyes referred to stinginess. How does this add to your understanding of treasures that will last into the Age to Come?
- Jesus very bluntly states that we cannot serve (literally meaning "be a slave to") both God and money.
- Analysing what we spend our money on reflects what we value, where our hearts are and who/or what controls us. If someone had to analyse all your expenses over the past three months, would they conclude that your heart is fully committed to God and aligned with His priorities?

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

- We are called to be willingly generous, giving from our hearts rather than out of compulsion.
- What should our main motivation be to give with this attitude?
- Why is it so important for disciples of Jesus to love the things that God loves?

Luke 14: 31-33

- Is there anything at all that Jesus does not expect us to give up if we are to follow him? (vs 33 literally means that disciples of Jesus must "say good bye to all their possessions")
- Why then does Jesus (usually) allow us to keep our money and worldly possessions?

Psalms 24:1-2

- Is there anything at all that does not belong to God?
- To whom then does your money, savings and possessions really belong?

*Key to understanding how we are to view the money and possessions that Jesus allows us to keep is the concept of **stewardship**. A steward is defined as someone who handles affairs on behalf of someone else in his absence. Stewards do not own what they are entrusted with, but are responsible and accountable for using what is placed in their care for the benefit of the owner.*

How can you better use God's money and possessions that He has entrusted to you, to benefit Him?

Proverbs 30:7-9

- The wise man who wrote these words knew the dangers of pursuing worldly wealth, especially how his security would migrate with it away from God.
- How does this principle relate to the key passage in this series, **1 Timothy 6:17-19**?

Putting it into Practice

Head: Memorise **1 Timothy 6:17-19** and **Matthew 6:24**

Heart: Do an honest self-assessment of (a) how rich you actually are as opposed to how rich you feel, and (b) how generous you are towards God and His people in need.

Hands: Make a specific pledge (as a % of your income) to be rich in generosity to God and His people in 2016, applying the principle of GIVE, SAVE and then LIVE OFF THE REST. Also be accountable to another disciple for how you manage your finances and how generous you really are.