

Warning to the Rich

People who love the prosperity ministry, love this verse - 3 John 2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, **JUST AS YOUR SOUL PROSPERS.** NKJV

Selfishness is what clouds the danger with riches - James 3:16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

***Those that are rich feel embolden and think everyone should appreciate them because it belongs to them. While those that need, may appreciate in the beginning but tend to later expect and take advantage. Both the rich and the not so rich both allow riches to define one way or another.**

Question, are we getting definition and instruction from God, or from man? (For example, what does this sound like?)

Acts 2:44-45 - 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they **GAVE TO ANYONE AS HE HAD NEED.**

Acts 4:32-35 - 32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. 34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

We must realize, there is good prosperity... - Ps 1:1-3 - Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. **WHATEVER HE DOES PROSPERS.**

...There is also bad prosperity - Ps 10:4-6 - 4 In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. 5 **HIS WAYS ARE ALWAYS PROSPEROUS;** he is haughty and your laws are far from him; he sneers at all his enemies. 6 He says to himself, "Nothing will shake me; I'll always be happy and never have trouble."

In order to get it right, we are to seek prosperity from God, and seek it for Godly purpose - Ps 122:9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek YOUR PROSPERITY.

"True prosperity" will only be received by trusting in God - Prov 28:25 A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he WHO TRUSTS in the Lord WILL PROSPER.

If we do not walk by Faith, we may mistake rich for poor and poor for rich -

Those that seem poor, but are truly rich - Rev 2:8-9 - 8 "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. 9 I know your afflictions and your poverty — YET YOU ARE RICH! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Those that seem rich, but are really poor - Rev 3:14-18 - 14 "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. 15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 **YOU SAY, 'I AM RICH; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.'** But **YOU DO NOT REALIZE that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.** 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

By allowing money to be our strength, we actually make ourselves weak - 2 Cor 12:8-10 - 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for **MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.**" Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

One of the reasons most people miss the clear message of "the danger of riches" is due to the effects of greed - Luke 12:15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Distinguishing between those whose lives are defined by their riches and those who glorify God through their riches
Some things that the worldly rich see as benefits of being worldly rich

Their wealth is their safety - Prov 10:15 The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor.

There riches bring friends - Prov 14:20 The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends.

Money gives them power over others - Prov 22:7 The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

Certain lies those defined by their riches tend to believe:

- My riches are because I worked hard and deserved it, those that are not rich are lazy and unworthy
- I'm rich because I'm highly favored, those who are not are cursed
- I have so much in order to please me, as long as I give more than others, I'm fine

How we are with whatever wealth we have is a test with how we WILL BE with TRUE RICHES - Luke 16:10-12 - 10 "Whoever can be **trusted** with very little can also be **trusted** with much, and whoever is **dishonest** with very little will also be **dishonest** with much. 11 So if you have not been **trustworthy** in handling **worldly wealth**, who will trust you with **TRUE RICHES**? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

You may be surprise how God defines the importance of the rich and the poor - James 1:9-11 - 9 The brother in **humble circumstances** ought to take pride in his **HIGH POSITION**. 10 But the one who is **rich** should take pride in his **LOW POSITION**, because he will pass away like a wild flower. 11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

What are the risks when you are "defined by your riches"?

One of the dangerous deceptions in life is wealth

Matt 13:22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

Luke 8:14-15 - 14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

Mark 4:18-19 - 18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

Being rich, which is what most people strive for, could greatly jeopardize the path to Heaven - Matt 19:23-26 - 23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "**I tell you the truth**, IT IS HARD FOR A RICH MAN TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "**With man this is impossible**, but **with God all things are possible.**"

Being considered rich can be misleading, as present comfort and desire may obscure the potential for disastrous consequences. - Luke 6:24-25 - 24 "But **woe to you who are rich**, for **you have already RECEIVED YOUR COMFORT**. 25 **Woe to you who are WELL FED now**, for **you will go hungry**."

Those with riches and power will do things to give the impression of being Godly, while ignoring other items needed to solidify it- Matt 23:23-24 - 23 "**Woe to you**, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! **You give a tenth of your spices — mint, dill and cummin**. But **you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness**. **You should have PRACTICED THE LATTER, WITHOUT NEGLECTING THE FORMER**. 24 You blind guides! **You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel**. * You'll assist a few poor individuals, yet resist efforts to uplift the poor collectively.

Those who treat "the poor" unfairly are doomed!! - James 2:5-13 - 5 Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are POOR IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? 6 But **YOU HAVE INSULTED THE POOR**. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? 8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "**Love your neighbor as yourself**," **you are doing right**. 9 But **if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers**. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. 12 **Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom**, 13 because **JUDGMENT WITHOUT MERCY WILL BE SHOWN TO ANYONE WHO HAS NOT BEEN MERCIFUL**. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

When people live being defined by riches, they are headed to an eternity in Hell - Luke 16:19-25 - 19 "**There was a rich man** who was **dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day**. 20 **At his gate** was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. **The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side**. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' 25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but **now he is comforted** here and **you are in agony**."

- Their life purpose will include displaying their identity of being rich
- Living by overindulging-self is their standard
- They clearly see those that need help and ignore them

Those who think they are successfully balancing “serving riches” and “serving God” must think again - Luke 16:13 "**NO SERVANT CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS.** Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. YOU CANNOT SERVE BOTH GOD AND MONEY."

What appears generous to the world may not be, when measured against the truth. True generosity isn't found in the amount given, but in what is offered relative to what we possess. - Mark 12:41-44 - 41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. **Many rich people threw in LARGE AMOUNTS.** 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. 43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "**I tell you the truth, this poor widow has PUT MORE into the treasury than all the others.** 44 **They all gave OUT OF THEIR WEALTH;** but **SHE, OUT OF HER POVERTY,** put in everything — all she had to live on."

***The rich give in comfort of their riches, the poor give totally trusting in God.**

The overall downfall of those that are defined as rich described - James 5:1-6 - Now **listen, you rich people,** weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. 2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. **Their corrosion will testify against you** and eat your flesh like fire. **YOU HAVE HOARDED WEALTH IN THE LAST DAYS.** 4 Look! The **wages you failed to pay the workmen** who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5 **You HAVE LIVED on earth in luxury and self-indulgence.** You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

- **Hoarding wealth**
- **Not fairly paying (based on God)**
- **LIVING in luxury and self-indulgence**

What exactly should Christians with wealth do?

Christian's who are rich responsibilities described -1 Tim 6:17-19 - 17 **Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth,** which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 **Command them to do good,** to **be rich in good deeds,** and to **be generous and willing to share.** 19 **IN THIS WAY** they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, **so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.**

- **Not to be Arrogant**
- **Depend on God not wealth**
- **Do good**
- **Be rich in good deeds**
- **Be generous and willing to share**
 - **The philosophy of worldly wealthy places the burden on the receiver—to be grateful for whatever is given. But God places the burden on the giver—on the purpose behind the gift and the measure of what is given.**

Example of not being rich towards God -Luke 12:16-21 - 16 And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. 17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' 18 "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.' 19 And **I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'** ' 20 "**But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'** 21 "**This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.**"

All value and wealth are to be invested towards Heaven - Matt 6:19-21 - 19 "**DO NOT STORE UP for yourselves treasures on earth,** where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But **STORE UP for yourselves treasures in heaven,** where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For **WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO.**

Distinguishing Treasures on earth from Treasures in Heaven

- **Valuable now only**
- **Based on worldly value**
- **Value based on self (Phil 3:7-11)**
- **Affects others in a fleshly way, not Eternally**

Our wealth should be a major part of our ministry –

Use it for others for those that don't have - Luke 14:12-14 - 12 Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 **and you will be blessed.** Although they cannot repay you, **you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.**"

We are to be shrewd using it in our ministry - Luke 16:9 I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

The solid purpose for our riches is to give generously - 2 Cor 9:10-11 - 10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be made rich in every way SO THAT YOU CAN BE GENEROUS ON EVERY OCCASION, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Christians who are rich will not let the economy and future forecasts dictate decisions; they will always seek God? - Matt 6:31-34 - 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For **the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness**, and **ALL THESE THINGS will be given to you as well**. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

The two elements that will protect us from “what we have” and “do not have” is Godliness and contentment - 1 Tim 6:6-11 - 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 **People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have **wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs**. 11 But **you, man of God, flee from all this**, and **pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness**.**

The path to gaining contentment - Phil 4:10-13 - 10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of **BEING CONTENT IN ANY AND EVERY SITUATION, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 **I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH**.**