

Principles of Wealth

Part 1 - Blessings In The Christian Home

August 23, 1998

11 "Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today,¹² "lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them;¹³ "and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied;¹⁴ "when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;¹⁵ "who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock;¹⁶ "who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end—¹⁷ "then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.'¹⁸ "And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.¹⁹ "Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the Lord your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish.²⁰ "As the nations which the Lord destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God. - Deuteronomy 8:11-20 NKJV

- **Introduction**

As Christians, there are numerous areas where we have been blessed with the wisdom of God and the way we think about things is vastly different from the way the world does. Generally speaking, we think of our children differently than the world or especially things of eternal judgement or eternal bliss. Unfortunately, most Christians don't look different enough from the world when it comes to understanding wealth, money, investing, retirement, insurance, tithing, our vocations, etc. Too frequently, we attempt to imitate the world by borrowing its principles and attitudes rather than seeking out the wisdom of God.

Our church has many young families who are in an asset acquisition phase of life and others who are preparing for retiring from work. We also have others who are contemplating marriage and others who are managing their own businesses. All of these places in life require that we bring the scriptures to bear upon how we think and how we order our steps. I heard a series by Douglas Wilson a number of years ago regarding the Christian household and have wanted to instruct our body with a similar series.

- **We Must Not Forget**

The Israelites were in an interesting situation. They had been promised by their God that they would occupy a land rich in material blessing. This promised land, however, was already occupied by other people. In addition, the current inhabitants had already dug wells and planted crops and raised livestock which was soon to be the possession of the Lord's people. Notice that they were strongly warned by the Lord not to forget where the wealth came from. Notice that forgetting is not an excuse, rather, it is another sin to be confessed. The assets themselves were not of a nature to perpetually remind them where they came from. Therefore God commanded them that they must remember that these assets and those to follow were from the Lord.

- **Wealth and Poverty Come From the Hand of the Lord**

Another crucial point to draw from our opening text is that the wealth that the Israelites were about to acquire belonged to nations whom God's judgement was being poured upon. Too frequently we think that if someone is poor that he is under the curse of God or if someone has great wealth that he is under the blessings of God. While these may be true they do not present the entire picture. There are principles that we must remember:

- There is wealth under the blessing of God
- There is wealth under the curses of God
- There is poverty under the blessing of God
- There is poverty under the curses of God

- **The Blessing of the Lord**

Clearly as children of God, our desire is to be wherever we are under the blessing of God. But we must evaluate our hearts in light of the Scriptures. We cannot separate ourselves from our spending habits or our generosity or our stinginess as though they were not a manifestation of how we think or act. ²³ *Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.* **Proverbs 4:23** We should be guarding our hearts by saturating ourselves in the Word, confessing our sins and repenting from cursed ways. Since our hearts are the starting place for how we think about the issues of life, we must pray for our faithfulness to conduct ourselves in the manner

which pleases Him and pray that our hearts will be soft to His instruction and chastisement.

Therefore, we should seek the blessings of the Lord in all areas, but particularly here. The way you buy a house, or work for an employer, care for your yard, wash your clothes, go out to dinner or run your business are all under the providential blessings or curses of God. **"³Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established;⁴ By knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches." Proverbs 24:3-4**

- **Pursue the Blessings of the Lord**

"²⁸ He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like foliage." Proverbs 11:28 There is obviously a temptation for us to think that the wealth we have is ultimately from our own hands. Such a thought however, is destined for destruction. If our confidence is centered in the fact that we can look around and see evidence of our wealth, then we must beware because we surely will fall. We lose sight of the fact that there are cemeteries filled with people who trusted in their riches. We are easily separated from our wealth; God can take us out of the world or he can direct the moths and rust to destroy it.

Naturally our hearts desire should be to live under the blessings of God. His blessing is something that we should be pursuing each day. Sometimes we would rather have the wealth than the blessing but that road is littered with sorrow. **"¹⁵ And He gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul." Psalm 106:15** This is contrasted with His bountiful blessing which makes our place in life, whether in great wealth, or great poverty a joy. **"²²The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it." Proverbs 10:22**

Remember however, we don't play God like a slot machine where we think that if we do the right steps he eventually will pay out. By faith we pursue the blessing of God in the various realms of our lives and by His good pleasure He pours out goodness to us far beyond what we deserve. Those who teach that faithfulness necessarily produces wealth and that poverty is necessarily evidence of faithlessness are not teaching the whole counsel of God and are presenting a paint-by-numbers gospel.

How then do we seek the blessing of God? Here are a number of areas regarding our finances where we should seek the blessing of God.

- Seek God's blessing in your tithe: **"⁹ Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;¹⁰ So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine. Proverbs 3:9-10** Tithing is not something God instituted so that He can make money or so that we will be sure to know that 10% of our increase belongs to Him and 90% belongs to us. The truth is that all of our wealth belongs to Him and He is not an absentee owner. He doesn't simply dole out wealth and then say do as you please. We must seek God's blessings with all of the wealth He chooses to give and we must manage all of it in the manner in which is pleasing to Him.
- Seek God's Blessing in your generosity: **"⁹ He who has a generous eye will be blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor. Proverbs 22:9; Proverbs 28:27; Proverbs 19:17** Christians are always complaining about the welfare state we live in and how much money is pulled from us and given to others. Although complaining is never permitted, clearly we should see our condition as a curse from God. Our confession and repentance should manifest itself by being generous to the poor.
- Seek God's blessing in your household: **"¹⁴ Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the Lord." Proverbs 19:14; Proverbs 31:10-11; Proverbs 31:31** If a man is seeking a wife, he should first make himself a faithful man over his wealth and then pursue a woman who will honor the Lord together with him. A man who has found this virtuous woman has indeed found a treasure. A godly woman who manages her home well and seeks the blessing of God should be highly praised and cherished. A husband should regularly sing the praises of his godly wife.