

Shadrach Youth Ministry

Don & Karin Litchfield
Administrators, 260-447-8732
dlitchfield6@verizon.net
www.shadrachyouth.org

2536 E. Fairfax Ave.
Ft. Wayne, IN 46806
260-447-8732

Other Staff:
Reimar Schultze, 765-452-1638
Michael & Carla Hubbard,
616-846-5419

Is it Wrong to be Wealthy?

This is a touchy question in the Christian American Culture. Let's face it, we have a lot of things in our country ... and we naturally enjoy that! Sooo, let's look at the Bible for our answers instead of man's opinion or even as opposed to looking at what has been modeled for us by men we respect. Good idea?

As I look at the Old Testament, I see wealth as a sign of God's approval upon men. How many times did God tell the Israelites: if you will do all my commandments, I will give you many cows, goats, sheep, much land and many children? Things would go very well for the Israelites if they kept God's laws. They even would be blessed in their battles against foreign enemies so they could gain even more material things. Yes, material blessing and victories were the fruit of obedience. There were some warnings about wealth, but overall, the Kingdom of God was about the things of this world. In those days, the blessings were of this world. The sacrifices were of this world.

Then I look at the New Testament. The Kingdom is no longer of this world. No longer do we sacrifice animals. No longer are we told by God to go take someone's land so we can have their stuff. The 'stuff' that we are to fight for is all in the spiritual realm. In fact, as I searched my concordance for 'riches' and for 'wealth', I could not find *any* verses in the New Testament that promised these would come for believers or that we should seek after them. In fact, all I found were *warnings* about accumulating earthly wealth! Now, I'm probably losing some of you so I encourage you to read on as I am not done yet!! Let's first look at some of these references:

1 Tim. 6:8 – "But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these."

1 Tim. 6:9 – "But those who want to be rich fall into temptation..."

Matt. 19:23 – "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'I assure you: It will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven'"

James 5:1 – "Come now, you rich people! Weep and wail over the miseries that are coming on you."

Matt. 6:25 – "Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

In fact, the Beatitudes say in *Luke 6*: "*Blessed are you who are poor...*"; "*Blessed are you who are hungry now...*"; "*Blessed are you when people hate you...*"

I know some of you will not be convinced because we have been indoctrinated to believe otherwise, but the Word clearly tells us that it is a serious thing to be wealthy. If Christians were always supposed to be wealthy, don't you think Jesus would have set the example? Okay, well, how about the apostles? Even, the early church was despised because they gave away nearly all they had.

So what are we to do in a land where it is literally hard to live in poverty – especially if you have a good, Christian work ethic?? Here in America, if you don't buy stuff, your friends and relatives will GIVE you their extra goods!! It's hard to go without. I believe the key is in two points: 1) "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God...and all these things shall be added unto you." And 2) in John the Baptist's instruction to those who came to him and asked him how they could avoid the judgement to come, you would think he would have told them to quit sinning, but he tells them, "The one who has two shirts must share with someone who has none, and the one who has food must do the same." The answer is in not seeking after material possessions—rather seek after spiritual ones. Then your basic needs of food and raiment will be provided by God. The second is in freely giving to those in need.

I know there simply are some occupations where you just make a lot of money. Some people are naturally gifted in bringing in a lot of finance. That is a gift from God in order to give it away— it is not a permission slip to ignore the Scriptures warning against wealth. If we seek first the Kingdom, then the excess things we have will be funneled into the Kingdom because that will be our heart's desire. Perhaps we might have a roomy home, but it will be used for the Kingdom. Perhaps we have money for nice vacations, but we will prefer to send those who are Kingdom workers on vacation rather than go ourselves. We will prefer to send money overseas to spread the gospel over spending money here for a nicer, faster car or a another piece of jewelry. The amount of money that the wealthy should give away is much more than they/we realize. It could be that some with great wealth should be living in a simple home and driving a simple car and directing their money toward the Kingdom. Bro. Helm discusses this in his book, *A Voice in the Wilderness*, pages 286 and 287. "If we are not sensitive to the Holy Spirit, we'll not press on to discover what God wants us to do with our wealth. If we love God more than we love our possessions, we will be anxious to learn God's will and give gladly what He reveals." Bro. Helm mentions that if we have cars in the garage or carpet on the floor, then we are wealthy. It would be good to review these pages.

So, what are you doing with your wealth? Most American youth are wealthy in comparison to youth elsewhere in the world. Pray with an open heart about this matter. Seek out places to give extra clothes and items where it is more greatly needed. Seriously consider giving \$25+ dollars to the Kingdom rather than buying that new CD, piece of technology or clothing. God may then give you even more things than you ever desired – then you can give some more!! You can't outgive God. He will reward you either in spiritual breakthroughs or in material provision. Just don't stop giving!! Jesus will look after you well, but the Holy Spirit may ask you to give away again and again, leading you to live a simple life. Let me tell you, the joy and peace will be great! We need to obey the Holy Spirit and give, give, give our material things! Seek, seek, seek the Kingdom! –Karin

