

DOES GOD CONDEMN THE WEALTHY?

When Jesus said “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,” was He condemning the wealthy?

In Luke chapter 12, beginning in verse 15, Jesus reprimands the rich man for increasing his profits by expanding his farm operations instead of being rich towards God.

Was Jesus saying that having great possessions is a sin? Does God condemn those who have become successful and achieved financial prosperity? Does God want His people to be poor?

What does the Bible say?

In his letter to Gaius, the apostle John writes, “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul or your life prospers” (3 John 2).

It was the same God Who inspired John to record those words.

In the book of Genesis, you can read the stories of men such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. These individuals served God and they were the recipients of much material possessions and wealth.

The patriarch Job was a very wealthy man. When he realized his mistakes and repented of his foolishness, God blessed him by doubling his possessions!

Clearly, God desires that we prosper. He does not want us to be in the grips of grinding poverty. Living from paycheck to paycheck. Barely able to make ends meet.

However, Christ warned us against setting our hearts on wealth and riches (Mark 10:23).

This attitude is a major pitfall for those who have achieved financial success. It was not having wealth that would keep a man out of the kingdom of God; but it was this mindset of trusting in those riches (verse 24) instead of the God Who provides them!

Prosperity is not a sin.

Wealth and the abundance of material goods are showers of blessings from God the Giver of abundance and prosperity!

When He blesses us, He wants us to enjoy what He has given us.

He also expects us to be grateful to Him, putting our full trust in Him, acknowledging that we need Him for all our needs.

Sadly, man has inclined his heart towards heaping up piles of wealth and riches.

It is never enough. He is never satisfied, never content — wanting more and more of the money as well as the power, the influence and the fame.

He makes the pursuit of money and the accumulation of material goods the idol on which he trusts and relies.

Contrary to what many think and believe, the Bible does not say that money of and by itself is a sin.

However, the Bible does say very emphatically that the love of money, the fixation with money is A root — not THE root — of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10 NKJ).

Covetousness can drive individuals to be disloyal to God. Therein is the sin!

Nowhere in the Bible does God condemn wealth.

When you diligently put all the biblical references together, we can understand the way to true and lasting riches.

And that involves a re-ordering of the priorities in our lives.

In order to be truly successful, to have lasting prosperity, Christ Himself says that our primary focus must be a complete and unconditional surrender to Him.

That requires us to seek FIRST the Kingdom of God, obey His commandments and abide by the way of HIS righteousness.

And then He promises that “all these things” — prosperity, success, material goods — “shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

This is God’s iron-clad promise.

Do we believe it? Are we prepared to do what is necessary to receive the blessings of His promise?

Unfortunately, most everyone become totally engrossed in the accumulation of wealth and riches.

Their primary objective in life is to *GET* — get a higher-paying job, get a bigger house, get a flashier car!

They believe that getting all these material things will bring them happiness and success.

Consider what God counsels us to keep firmly in mind: “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses” (Luke 12:15).

When you live His way of GIVE, the Bible says, “the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endures for ever” (Psalm 112:1-3).

If your way of life is directed by God, obedient to Him and His Way of life, your life will change.

Your entire focus and perspective will change!

God now becomes FIRST in your life.

This is the way, this is the path that leads to true success.

It is the way of cooperation, not competition. It teaches an attitude of service, not getting the best of others.

God does not hate the rich and the wealthy.

He does not favor one over the other (Acts 10:34).

Nor does His word condemn those who have reaped the rewards of financial success.

God loves all of His creation and desires that all enjoy happy and fulfilling lives (John 3:16; 10:10).

And so He has set in motion His laws that produce interesting and abundant lives instead of emptiness and unhappiness; alert minds instead of foolishness and dullness; prosperity instead of poverty; joy instead of heartache and frustration (Deuteronomy 5:33).

God is not against success and achievement. If we practice and keep His laws, if we live His way of give and an outgoing concern for others, we will fully experience the real riches; the true success; the lasting prosperity; the sparkling, joyful, abundant life for all eternity!