

THE PROBLEM WITH WEALTH

5:8-6:12

10/16/16

Many people think that money is the answer to all their problems.

Our passage this morning points out the fallacy to that myth.

1. Materialism ends in futility. 5:8-17; 6:1-12

a. We don't ultimately control what we earn 5:8-9

- Don't be surprised when corrupt government officials make themselves rich at your expense.
 - ♦ They have the power to tax and take what they want.
- The larger and more centralized a government becomes, the more layers of bureaucracy and corruption there are.
 - ♦ Your wealth is not safe from corrupt government officials.

b. Money does not satisfy. 5:10

- Money can buy us creature comforts but not contentment.
- Money is like a drug. The more we have the more we want.
 - ♦ I have never heard of a person who said to his boss, "Please, no more raises. I'm making more than I need."
 - ♦ Billionaire John D. Rockefeller was once asked how much money was enough. He answered, "Just a little bit more."

c. The more money you have, the more expenses you have. 5:11

- Taxes
- Maintenance
- Housekeepers, Gardeners, Cooks, etc.
- Bodyguards and security systems
- Money managers, accountants, and lawyers
- The more you have, the more people come after it.
- Family and "friends" expect favors Cf Proverbs 19:4-7
- It is reported that one of the Hunt brothers was asked, "Is it true that you make a million dollars a day."
 - ♦ He replied, "Son, I would starve on a million dollars a day."

d. The more you have, the more you worry about it. 5:12

- You lay awake at night stewing about how to keep what you have.
 - ♦ You worry about how the stock market is doing. The price of oil, gold, cattle futures, etc.
- At the age of 53 John D. Rockefeller was the world's only billionaire.
 - ♦ He made a million dollars a week, but he lived on crackers and milk.

- ◆ He couldn't sleep because of worry.
- ◆ It wasn't until he started giving his money away that he found relief from all his worry.

e. The more you have, the more you can hurt yourself by holding on to it. 5:13

- The Temptations were a pop singing group in the 1960's and 70's.
 - ◆ They started out as a group of high school kids having fun singing on the street corner.
 - ◆ Then somebody from Motown heard them and they suddenly became rich and famous.
 - ◆ Their wealth led to their self-destruction. Today all but one is dead.
 - ◇ One shot himself because of his alcoholism and broken marriage.
 - ◇ Another used his money to buy drugs. He was found dead with a bullet through his head after being thrown out of a drug dealer's limousine.
 - ◆ Life was simple until they became wealthy.
- With wealth comes all kinds of dangers.
 - ◆ Pride and various temptations
 - ◆ Calloused spiritual life because you don't recognize your need for God
 - ◆ Spoiled kids and fake friends
- How many of you have thanked God that you aren't rich?

f. The more you have, the more you have to lose. 5:14

Proverbs 23:4-5 Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration *of it*.⁵
When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For *wealth* certainly makes itself wings Like an eagle that flies *toward* the heavens.

- ◆ There is no investment that is totally secure.
- ◆ War, inflation, depression, theft, risky investments, health problems

g. The more you have, the more you will leave behind. 5:15-16

When John D. Rockefellers died someone asked his attorney how much money he left behind. The attorney replied, "All of it."

h. Money does not lead to happiness. 5:17

- The pressures of wealth can remove the joy of life.
- Wealthy men often look back with longing to their earlier days when life was simpler and less troublesome.

Henry Ford: "I was much happier as a mechanic, working in a shop."
- William Randolph Hearst amassed one of the greatest fortunes of our time.
 - ◆ He built a huge opulent castle in southern California.
 - ◆ His last years were spent sitting in his basement, playing over and over the movies of his longtime live-in girlfriend, actress Marion Davis.
 - ◇ He was trying in vain to regain a degree of his past pleasures.

i. God does not give everyone the ability to enjoy the things He gives them. 6:1-2

- I know people who have worked hard all their lives and saved their money for a comfortable retirement only to die of a heart attack or become an invalid.
- Other save all their lives only to lose it all because of something over which they have no control.
 - ♦ War, stock market crash, etc.

j. Money does not necessarily bring enjoyment and satisfaction. 6:3-9

- Big houses, new shiny cars, and the latest electronic gadgets don't bring happiness.
 - ♦ They don't bring harmony at home or peace of mind.
- If this life is all there is, then life is futile.
 - ♦ If we can't enjoy the good things of life now, it is better to have never been born.
 - ♦ If there is no God there is little hope.

8 Both the wise and the fool die

9 It is better to enjoy what you have than to lament about what you don't have.

k. We are unable to control our destiny. 6:10

- God alone controls everything.
- He controls the future.
- We can't dispute with God about your life.

l. We don't know what is best for us. 6:11-12

- Only God knows what is best for us.
 - ♦ Prosperity is not always good, and adversity is not always bad.
- Often it is the times of hurt and pain where we grow the most.
 - ♦ They force us to pray, persevere, and trust God.
 - ♦ Those are the times that shape us.
- We have all known kids whose parents gave them everything they wanted
 - ♦ Most end up spoiled brats.

Proverbs 20:21 An inheritance gained hurriedly at the beginning Will not be blessed in the end.

Hebrews 12:6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

- My dad was a part of what has become known as *The Greatest Generation*.
 - ♦ They were shaped by the poverty of the Great Depression and the horrors of World War II.
 - ♦ They understood pain, disappointment, struggle, and heartache.

- ◇ It is those things that made them for the most part frugal, persevering, industrious, courageous, and strong.
- ◆ Unfortunately, too many of them didn't want their kids to go through what they went through.
- ◇ The result was the '60's generation.
- ◆ Look at the baby boomers today- they are a mess.
- ◇ My generation has grown up to be the corporate leaders and politicians that of our day
- ◇ They are immature, self-centered, greedy, and corrupt.
- If you have been going through hard times, I hope that you will thank God.
- ◆ Ask Him to use your suffering to shape you into what He would have you to be.

2. The ability to truly enjoy life is a gift from God. 5:18-20

God not only gives people the ability to make wealth, it is only God who can give us the ability to enjoy wealth.

- All that we have is a gift from God.
- Thank God for:
 - ◆ Good food
 - ◆ Healthy taste buds
 - ◆ A digestive system that works
- Gratitude brings joy.
 - ◆ We are not grateful when we think that we deserve what we get.
- That is why thankfulness is so important to happiness.

Thank God and trust Him

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

Galatians 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.