

Lesson Notes:

Lifestyles of the Rich & Famous

While not all individuals that obtain fame and fortune become spiritually corrupted; wealth and notoriety can cause us to lose focus of the truly important aspects of life. This can lead to a life filled with despair and sorrow. All too often we see this in the lifestyles of famous athletes or movie stars. In **Matthew 16:26** Jesus said, “What profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul”? Jesus and James warn us in scripture not to focus on material wealth while losing our souls and destroying our relationship with God in the process. Below is a discussion of scripture that reminds us to strive for the eternal and not the material things of this world.

Scriptural Principles

Wealth & Riches

- 1) **Wealth can cause us to pursue or value material items over our relationship with the Lord.** – In **James 1:9-11** James warns the 12 tribes of Israel that wealth is fleeting and passes away as a flower in the sun. Jesus tells us in **Matthew 6:19-21** to lay up everlasting treasures in heaven and not upon this earth where they may be stolen or pass away. Jesus goes on to state in **Matthew 6:24** that we can not serve two masters (God and pursuit of wealth) but must make a choice between the two.
- 2) **Recognize where your Wealth comes from.** - James tells us in **James 1:16-18** that our all gifts are from God.
- 3) **Put away all forms of Wickedness** – James goes on to state in **James 1:21** that we are to put away all forms of wickedness. Many wealthy people get caught up in sinful lusts that are easy to pursue through their material wealth.
- 4) **Be a Doer not just a receiver.** – James tells us in **James 1:22-25** and **James 2:14-24** not to be content with our salvation but to become a “doer” for God. This is especially a challenge for those with wealth as there are so many earthly treasures that they can buy and thus take up valuable time that could be better utilized serving the Lord.
- 5) **Care for the Widows and Orphans** – James tells us in **James 1:26-27** and Jesus tells us in **Matthew 22:37-40** that we are to care for others. Tragically, millions of dollars are wasted frivolously every year which could go toward the support of orphans and the poor.
- 6) **All too often we are partial to the Wealthy** - James warns us not to hold the wealthy in higher esteem than the poor in **James 2:1-5**.

- 7) **Pride produces Strife but humility produces a blessing** – James tells us in **James 4:1-6** that pride leads to strife in one's life but humility brings God's blessings. In **James 4:13-14** James warns against boasting.
- 8) **Oppression by the Rich over the Poor brings judgment.** – In **James 5:1-6** James lists the judgments that will befall those that oppress the poor. In the parable of the sheep and goats Jesus warns of judgment for those that oppress the poor (**Matthew 25:33-40**).