

Living the Christian Life Successfully series!

A Bible, History, Faith, and Mission Course for New Adventist Believers

Lesson 7—Wealth, Faith, Service, and dedication to God

What is the proper relationship between wealth, faith, and our service to God? Is it a sin to be rich? Are we cursed by God if we're poor? What does the Bible say? It was once said by Jesus, "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" (Matthew 19:24). What did Jesus mean? Is it really so difficult? If we are wealthy, what does God ask of us? Should we just give up everything and be poor? If we are without money and poor, does that make us more virtuous? Are we more holy for having thinner pockets? One of the subjects that Jesus spoke many words about was, you guessed it—Money! Let's find out what the Bible really teaches regarding wealth and faith!

- 1. Who is the owner of all riches? (Psalm 50:10-12)**
- 2. In this life, where does Jesus say our focus should be? (Matthew 6:19-21,24,33)** *Should we live this life to gather up all kinds of material riches and goods? Or, should we seek to develop God's righteous character, and further His Kingdom? What is the primary thing?*
- 3. How does God say we should treat riches? Should we pinch every penny for ourselves that we can possibly gather or earn? (Leviticus 19:9,10; 23:22)** *Do we have a responsibility to help those who are poor and needy around us? (Isaiah 58:6-8). Jesus once told a story about the selfishness and greed of sinful men. He told of a man who was so increased with goods! He had gained so much wealth. Then he asked himself what he should do. He decided to tear down his old "small" barn and build a bigger one to store up more riches for himself. God said to him, "Fool, this night shall your soul be required of you." Jesus said this is the danger of covetousness; the danger of laying up treasure for ourselves and not being "rich toward God." (Luke 12:15-21)*
- 4. In the early Christian church, many gave freely of their money to support the work of missions (Acts 2:42-47). Do you think we should be serious about supporting sincere and effective mission efforts?** *Some others in the early church tried to give for show. Ananias and Sapphira sold a possession, gave some of the money to the Apostles, but openly claimed to have given everything to them. This selfish act for self-glory brought the extreme displeasure of God. Both of them dropped dead on the floor for their sin (ref. Acts 5:1-11). We should not give for show, or selfish glory. It is greatly offensive to God! "Do not let your left hand know what your right is doing" (Matthew 6:1-4).*
- 5. How does God say those with wealth should think about money? How should they treat their wealth, and others? (1 Timothy 6:17-19)**
- 6. Are some in danger of trading their spirituality and eternal life for the dollars this world is offering? (Matthew 16:26; Mark 4:19, "...the deceitfulness of riches...")** *Should we put earning the dollar first, or spirituality and faithful service to God?*

7. **Should we treat the wealthy or the poor with a preference? (Proverbs 22:2; Leviticus 19:15; James 2:2-4)** *In James 2:2-4 we can see a practical example of this principle as it may work out in everyday life. We must be sure to follow God's principles of righteousness, judgment, and fairness in all things!*
8. **Should the rich ever exploit the poor to add to their riches? (Proverbs 22:16)** *To be of an exacting spirit, and to shrewdly gather every penny from the poor to make oneself rich would be quite a sinful action indeed!*
9. **In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus what can we learn about riches and poverty? (Luke 16)**
 - a. *We can see a very wealthy man here who lived a life of luxury on the earth, while a beggar was suffering outside of his gates and neglected.*
 - b. *The rich man was not saved by his riches. But, he was lost because of his unrighteousness. Having riches on earth does not necessarily mean having the favor of God.*
 - c. *The poor man had nothing, but he begged for mercy from the wealthy man—even to have the crumbs that fell from his table. No mercy was given. Later, the wealthy man received punishment for his sins, and begged for mercies from God, but none could be given (v.24-26). We must learn how to show mercies and perfect characters in this lifetime!*
10. **What does God say is the responsibility of the wealthier people to those who are poor in the land? (Deuteronomy 15:7-11)** *Note: God tells us that it would be sin in us to give grudgingly or not to give at all. We should look out for the poor among us, and we should extend our hands to help them. This is God's design so that our hearts do not become selfish, greedy, or penurious. The Lord desires that we shall give, help, and lookout for our poorer brethren who are suffering for want or needs in this life. The Lord's blessing will be upon us as we do faithfully His bidding. "God so loved the world that He gave..." (John 3:16).*
11. **Job was a righteous and godly man. He was also a wealthy man. How did Job choose to live for God? Was it wrong for him to be wealthy? (Job 1:1-3; 29:15,16; 42:10,12)** *Job was a man who searched out the cause of the poor. He would look and search to see who was in need and suffering from poverty. Then he would go and put his efforts there to help them. This truly is God's design for His people. Oh, that we might have such a heart to do the purposes of God! Other wealthy men, in Scripture, who used their means to help the cause of God were Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-42).*
12. **Does the Bible teach that we should just give to help any who are poor from laziness, careless, and sloppy living? Must we, who labor hard, support laziness? (2 Thessalonians 3:10-13; 1 Timothy 5:3,16; Proverbs 10:4).** *The Bible teaches that we must help people in a responsible way. If there are poor and genuinely needy members in our families, then we should try to help them. We should certainly not support laziness either. We must seek to help in an intelligent way, those who are truly suffering from poverty. And we should not be weary in well-doing! We must look out for people and help those who certainly should be helped.*

Is it your desire to live a life of dedication, faithfulness, and generosity towards God and His service? _____