

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF WEALTH, TO YOU?

By Nino Boezio

We may look at the very wealthy with awe and admiration. We perhaps wish to be like them. Those with vast financial resources appear to be able to buy and do almost anything.

One of the greatest advantages of wealth is it provides options. A wealthy person can choose whether to work or not. He or she will decide what hobbies, interests and leisure activities are to be pursued. A relatively poor person does not enjoy as many freedoms, since the use of his or her time will be largely dictated by other people and circumstances.

There is a downside to wealth however, which is true with almost everything. Human beings have a deep inner need to be productive and creative.

Sometimes wealth has been used as an excuse to do nothing and whittle away one's existence on rather worthless pursuits. We note how some retirees may not live too long, simply because they lost a purpose to life and aren't feeling satisfied. Even with vast financial means, a retired individual may not find something to do that is truly stimulating and motivating to have them carry on.

Wealth can control people rather than the other way around. Instead of providing the person security, the person looks for multiple ways to make the wealth secure. Sometimes the amount of money accumulated is never enough, since there is also a risk that a substantial amount of it can be lost due to unforeseen factors. Also if one develops a terminal illness and faces death, money is not going to solve this situation.

There is much said about wealth from a biblical perspective. Some of the great persons of the bible were wealthy. But it should be noted they often got to that point later in life, when they were mature about how the wealth could be used. It was also not the primary focus.

One of the contributors to the book of Proverbs stated that he would prefer neither to be very wealthy nor very poor (Proverbs 30:8-9). Vast wealth leads to forgetting God and provides a feeling of self-sufficiency. On the other hand, poverty can cause a person to take something that does not truly belong to him or her. Ideally, it is best to land somewhere in-between the two extremes of either great wealth or severe poverty.

Jesus added an additional perspective by stating the following: *Matthew 19:24 (NKJV) And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.*

Despite speculation as to what the eye of a needle truly represents, it is clear that it will be a very small opening.

As mentioned previously, there were godly individuals of the bible that became wealthy. But they had gotten to the point where the wealth was not the focus.

In light of what said in the book of Proverbs, Jesus' reference was a warning as to how wealth diverts a person's attention away from God. It puts a person into a situation where reliance is heavily put upon their riches.

It's clear from other biblical references (James 2:5), that poor individuals given their limited means, become reliant on others for their existence, which includes looking to God for help and in building faith. The development of faith becomes a critical component in the Christian journey, which can be somewhat mitigated from those with vast financial resources.

Like anything, wealth has its advantages but also its downside. Wealth provides people with more options in life. But it has a very strong tendency to divert one's attention away from what is truly important when we consider the spiritual perspective.

There are wonderful things in store for those who rely and seek the help of God for their existence and this includes the development of faith. Wealth often proves to be a problem in the pursuit of these other goals.

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