

Living God's Way in Today's World

Week 8 – How Does Wealth Affect You?

Scripture: James 4:13 - 5:11

Message Mate

- Wealth is more than about what you own or spend, it is a barometer of your heart, whether you are accumulating wealth, are wealthy or been ripped off by a wealthy person or corporation. How does wealth affect you?
- It is important to have a good business plan and steward finances well, but it is necessary to question your worldly self-confidence and motives for gaining wealth. As righteous wealth earners, it is important to know and follow God's will, rather than making your own plans and trusting in your own ability to make them happen. If you know God's will and don't do that, it is sinful. (James 4:13-17)
- In James 5:1-6, James is addressing the ungodly rich people who are hoarding wealth and not using it for Kingdom purposes and are accumulating of wealth by defrauding the poor and not paying them for their work. It is important to ensure that employees and subcontractors are paid fairly. Another problem of the ungodly rich is the use of the legal system to bring unjust lawsuits against poor people who do not have the resources to defend themselves.
- Even when you are suffering injustice from a corrupt employer, business or are in a difficult workplace, be patient and endure in difficulty. Like a farmer can control some things (getting the ground plowed and planted), others cannot be controlled (weather), you may not be able to control some things in your workplace, but you can influence the culture with heavenly wisdom, and you can grow peace around you. Stand firm and trust God. But be careful not to carry the difficulties of work home and take it out on those who did not cause it, don't grumble against one another, or you will be judged. Persevere for the Lord is full of compassion and mercy. (James 5:7-11).
- We are called to be righteous with regard to wealth. Righteousness is being in right relationship with God and following His will which is evidenced by godly character and conduct. As followers of Jesus, in right relationship with God, we are to use our wealth according to His will and this will be evident by the motives of our heart (character) and the way we treat others (conduct).

Some Questions to Consider

1. How does wealth affect you? Are you in the stage of wealth accumulation, having acquired wealth or struggling in a difficult workplace (perhaps at the hands of those more?

2. James 4:15 says, "Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" Have you found that you are able to discern the Lord's will in certain situations? What helped you discern His will? How do you discern the Lord's will in relation to finances?
3. What has motivated you to gain wealth? How have you felt called to steward the wealth that God has provided for you?
4. There are many stories of wealthy people or corporations not treating staff or subcontractors well. According to James 5:1-6, what are the consequences for the actions of the ungodly rich? How does this influence your thinking about motives and strategies for accumulating wealth?
5. Have you been unfairly treated or in a difficult workplace? Are you now? How did you or could stand firm and be patient. In the last two weeks we have consider influencing the culture around you and bringing peace. Has you consider how you can do this in your circle of influence (home, workplace, community group)?

Pray –

Throughout this series in James we have been talking about righteousness which is: **being in right relationship with God and following His will which is evidenced by godly character and conduct.**

As followers of Jesus in right relationship with God, we are to use our wealth according to His will, and this will be evident by the motives of our heart (character) and the way we treat others (conduct).

Give thanks for the blessings of wealth that God has given you.

Pray that God would help you discern His will and use your wealth for Kingdom purposes.