

God and the Rest of the Week

Title: Part 4 – How to Be Rich

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Transition: Paul Prays & Seats / Leftovers Prop

As you guys are saying “Hi,” I want to welcome everyone hanging out with us on our app or social channels. Thanks for stopping by! We want you to know we are FOR you so let us know how we can serve you or pray for you. And if this message blesses you then share it with a friend.

Anyone want some leftovers? Not sure what this is actually.

For the past few weeks, we have been in a collection of messages called “God and the Rest of the Week.” Has this been helping anyone at all? It was born out of my own frustration with how I have lived at points in my life, maybe you can relate to this, but we show up for church on a Sunday and then after that we kind of put God on the shelf until the next Sunday or the Sunday after that. Unless something really bad happens, then we pray, right, then we are reaching for Him! So, we have been looking at how God wants to be so much more TO us than that and how He has so much more FOR us than that.

AND the way we have approached this is by exploring how we can take God into things like family, and our work, even how we can walk in His will. Next week we are going to find out how we can invite Him into our schedules and our busyness. And we might even wrap this up in two weeks by looking at a single day and what it would look like to walk with God for a day. If you missed any of this you can get every message on our app or website.

BUT today I've got some questions to get us in the flow of where we are going. These are going to be fun. Actually, probably not, but I think they are important anyway. And I want you to be honest! Don't lie to yourself, this is a safe place to be real and drop the religious pretense. Alright, question number one, just wrestle with this in your head and heart, but:

Which of these two statements creates the most anxiety for you?

A. There is no God.

B. There is no money in the bank.

Aren't you glad you came to church today? But which one of those creates more fear in your heart, be honest, there is no God—or—there is no money in the bank? Try both of them on, how do they feel? Question two:

Does fear of not having enough get in the way of your ability to give generously?

I'm talking about you hear about a need, or you are a Christ-Follower, and you learn what the Bible teaches about the tithe, and you want to give generously, your heart says “yes” but your head says, “Wait, what if we run out. What if we can't make our bills because we helped others? What is going to happen to me?” Does fear of not having enough ever get in the way of your ability to be generous? Number three:

Do you have money in the bank but no peace in your heart?

That is the temptation though right? We think if we can get enough money in our accounts then we will lay our heads on the pillow at night and sleep easy, but the reality is the more you have the more you have to worry about many times. So, how would you answer that? Alright, last one:

How hard is it to do the right thing when it will cost you financially?

Talking personally and professionally. You know doing "A" is the right thing to do, but you also know doing "A" will cost you. So, do you do it anyway or do you choose "B"? Some of you are like, "Are you trying to kill the mood of the room or is this just a gift you have?"

Here's why I asked you those questions. One of the biggest things that will allow you to take God into the rest of your week is a growing trust in your Heavenly Father. In fact, I would argue that you can't take God into the rest of your week if you don't trust that He is good and gracious and going to lead you into something better. God also knows this! So, one of the ways He invites you and invites me to learn to trust Him more is in the area of our finances. AND those questions I think give us an insight into who we are placing our trust in more.

So today, I want to preach a message I am calling:

How to Be Rich

Because here is reality. I was driving in my truck the other day and was listening to the radio and within the time it takes me to get from the church to my house (12 to 20 minutes depending on traffic) I heard an add on the radio for two investment places that promised to make you money but guaranteed you would not lose a penny of it. Both of them predicted another stock market crash and both told you how you could get rich despite it! Within that same ride I also heard an ad trying to get me to buy gold as a hedge against inflation because that's what rich people do. AND finally, I heard about a seminar at some local hotel that would tell me how to get rich by doing this secret real estate method only they can teach me. We live in a culture that is constantly telling us how we can get rich even in this economy.

WHY? Because most of us believe money equals security. If we could just get rich then we would be secure. BUT I want to prove to you why that is not reality. Every single person here today, and if you are watching this within the US, then congratulations you are in the top 10% of the world as far as wealth! You are already rich! *Turn to three people and tell them "You are rich!"* Here's reality... the average household income around the world is only \$2,100 a year! In the US, the average household income is \$70,784 a year! You are so rich!

But you don't feel rich do you? You are rich, but you don't feel the security you thought you'd feel. You don't feel the peace you thought you'd feel even though you are in the top 10% of the world's wealthiest people.

That's why so many of the Biblical authors come along and address us rich people. Solomon says, "Whoever loves money never has enough..." James says, "Warn the rich people about this..." Jesus said, "Here are some things you rich people have to watch out for..." Throughout the Bible God uses the Biblical authors to address some things specifically to rich people and today we are going to look at something the Apostle Paul wrote that maybe you have read, but skipped right over, because you didn't think it applied to you.

And here is my prayer, that even though this is a sensitive subject, anytime the church talks about money it feels weird, I get it, but my prayer is that you would connect some of the dots today and see that if we want to take God into the rest of our week then this might be the biggest hurdle of all.

If you have a Bible and want to follow along we will be in **1 Timothy 6**. Again, this is Paul who was a rich guy (remember Paul had a tent making business) but lost it all to follow Jesus. Paul is writing to a young guy named Timothy who he was mentoring and who was helping Paul start churches. Paul tells Timothy that when he gets in front of some rich people then make sure you tell them these things. 1 Timothy 6:17 & 18, Paul writes:

Command those who are rich in this present world [Again, that's you and me, we are rich in this present world, so we are commanded] **NOT TO BE ARROGANT** nor to **PUT THEIR HOPE IN WEALTH**, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

Those are the first two lessons for rich people. The first thing He says is rich people need to understand that they are rich, they need to admit it! This didn't just come from my hands alone. *God has blessed me with more than I need, I am rich!* But then the second lesson is that rich people need to trust God and not their wealth for hope and security. *God has blessed me with more than I need, I am rich. But I will not trust in my riches but in Him who richly provides.* Now we come to verse 18 and this is where we are going to camp out. Paul says and thirdly: (v.18 – Build rest on same “slide”)

Command them to do good,

Let's stop there for a minute. Paul is not saying rich people need to do good like be moral, the rest of the Bible talks about morality, AND he is not saying rich people need to do good like an average person, because the Bible tells all of us some good things we should do. Paul is talking specifically to rich people so he is saying rich people need to do good, like rich person good stuff, the good stuff only rich people can do.

Paul is talking about the margin us rich people have with our time and the margin us rich people have with our money. To which you respond, “But Brian, I don't have any margin with my time or money...” OK, question then. Have you eaten out at a sit-down restaurant with a waiter or waitress in the past month? Raise your hands up... See you had some margin with your time and money! You had enough extra time and money that you could pay someone to wait on you, cook your food, and clean up after you! That's rich people stuff right there! So, Paul tells Timothy to tell the rich people he knows to do good as only a rich person can. This isn't average person good; this is rich people good.

And in case we don't know what he is talking about, he clarifies in the rest of verse 18 with two very specific things. Command them to do good...

to be RICH IN GOOD DEEDS,

He says, “Tell the rich people I don't want them to be average good, I don't want them to be good citizens who help little old ladies cross the street, I want them to learn how to leverage their extra for the sake of serving others as only a rich person can do.”

See Paul knew, because he used to be rich, that rich people have extra time and extra money. And again no one in here feels like they have extra time or extra money, but we do! Think about it. According to the U.S. Department of Labor around 80% of you get Saturday and Sunday off from work. That is unheard of in most the world, that was definitely unheard of in Biblical culture. Most of you will get at least two weeks' vacation this year where you actually get paid not to work! Some of you actually get to work from home, like you get paid to be at home and can knock off around 4 pm! That's unheard of in other parts of our world. They stop working when the sun goes down. See rich people have extra time!

BUT here is why the Bible is so relevant even today, if you were to look statistically, the richer you are in our country the less time you give up helping charities and non-profits. The average American spends 70 days a year watching TV but spends less than 48 HOURS giving their time to serve other people. Every time they do a survey, the less extra time and money you have the more time and money you give and the more or extra time and money you have the less of it you give.

I get how this happens though. I am rich, so I can tell you from firsthand experience why this is. Rich people have more options with their extra time! Rich people are rich in options. We go to Rays or Bucs games, we go out to dinner with friends, we go to a movie for 2 1/2 hours, we go chill at the microbrewery for hours on a Friday night, we have options on Saturdays like season passes at Busch Gardens, we have free hotel nights on our rewards card, rich people have all these options for their extra time. Whenever there is an extra night of the week, or an extra-long weekend, or an extra vacation week we sit around as a family and figure out how we can spend that extra time on... ourselves! How can we fill up our extra time with the most amount of pleasure?

So, you get to the end of the year, and someone asks you if you were rich in good deeds this year and your response is like mine... "Who has time for all that? I don't have any extra time to serve others." And you get to the end of a decade, to the end of a lifetime, and we were so blessed, so rich, but we have nothing to show for it. BECAUSE we live in a country, in a culture, that takes all our extra time and gives us all these options of ways to spend it on... ourselves.

Paul says you want to know how to be rich, you want to know how to bring God into the rest of your week? You have to be rich in good deeds! You have to take some of that extra time and invest it into serving others not just yourself. Paul says BEFORE you spend up every second of extra time on yourself, and pleasure, and making another family memory, you are going to have to make a conscience and strategic decision to set aside some time so that you can be rich in good deeds like only a rich person can.

Then he goes on, in case we didn't feel convicted enough, in verse 18:

and to be **GENEROUS** [now he is talking about our money, be generous] and willing to share.

Be generous and be willing to share, that is Paul's advice. Again, we read that and think, "Well I am generous, and I share... I buy 2 or 3 boxes of Girl Scout cookies every year. I drop a \$50 in the offering basket every now and then..." Paul says I am not talking about average people here; I am talking to you rich people! I want you to give and be generous like only a rich person can. This is not about average; this is beyond average because you are beyond average, your rich!

The reason Paul says this is because the same thing that applied to time also applies to money. Survey after survey. The more money you have, the less you give. Not only are rich people rich in options for their time, but rich people are also rich in options for what to do with their extra money! So, without ever even thinking about it, we submerge ourselves in the culture and we spend all our extra money on our lifestyle. As rich people, living in a rich country, we have tons of options for our extra money. There is always something else to buy... something we just have to have.

AND, what happens without us even knowing it, we use all the options, all the things we can spend our extra money on as an excuse to use up all our margin until we say, "Give... I don't have any money to give! I would like to, and the cause seems worthy, but I just can't because I spent it all on... well me."

Paul says that is not how you be rich. That is how you be selfish as a rich person. AND what your Heavenly Father wants is for you to learn a lifestyle of generosity. God doesn't want you to be a reservoir of His blessing; He wants you to be a river of His blessing! WHY? Because it builds our trust in Him as our true supply!

AND you would think we would get that. You would think the more we had the easier it would be to give some of it away, but survey after survey shows the opposite. And I get it, I mean it's easy to give \$1 out of \$10 because what can you do with a buck? And it is easy to give \$10 out of \$100 because you still can't do a whole lot with \$10 bucks. And it is even pretty easy to give \$100 out of \$1,000 because it makes us feel good. "Hey look at me I dropped a Benjamin..." BUT when you talk about giving \$1,000 out of \$10,000 that check is harder to write because you start thinking about all the stuff you could do with \$1,000. And when

That's why Paul told Timothy to tell these rich people, be generous in good deeds and with their money. Not like average good, but generous like only rich people can be generous. AND to do that you have to plan ahead otherwise all you have is leftovers, yuck!

Look, can you imagine how differently people might look at the church in our country today if we had out given and out served everyone else over the past 30 or 40 years? You can't dislike someone who serves you. You can't hate someone that is generous to you. If the church had just taken just this one piece of Scripture and applied it for the last 30 or 40 years I think the perception of the church would be dramatically different today. Because you can't easily dismiss someone who comes to your rescue. I think one of the biggest ways the church in America can grow in the next decade is if we out give and out serve the rest of the world because it breaks down barriers. That's what FOR Pasco is all about!

As rich people though, we have an opportunity to be generous in good deeds and in our giving and if we can find a way through dollar cost living then maybe we can leverage that for the sake of other people and maybe someone in our community who maybe doesn't care about God, or the church will take notice and ask why? Why do you guys do that? AND we can tell them it is because God loved us so much that He gave His Son Jesus, God richly provided for our sin debt, that is why we give and serve. It is all because of Jesus. We do it because it honors our Heavenly Father!

So, let's end with this. I've got a statement we will put up here and I want us to write it down and then we will say it out loud a few times. Here's all this in a statement:

God has blessed me with more than I need, I am rich. But I will not trust in my riches, but in Him who richly provides. And since I have more, I should do more and give more.

I'll give you a moment to write that down... God has blessed me with more than I need... I am rich. But I will not trust in my riches... but in Him who richly provides. And since I have more... I should do more and give more. Let's repeat that two or three times out loud and then we will pray.