

# Illusion of Affluence and Materialism

## Overview

The illusion is that material wealth is real, genuine, and lasting. This illusion causes huge problems in our personal and spiritual lives (1 Tim. 6:6-10). Real wealth is not comprised of material things (Rev. 3:17; Prov. 13:7). They will not last (James 5:1-3; Prov. 23:5), and they are not what matters (Luke 12:13-21; Heb. 13:5). God is the giver of material blessings, which are to be used by His people as His stewards to glorify Him (Prov. 3:9-10).

## Definitions

- Affluence – the state of having a great deal of money; wealth
- Materialism – tendency to consider material possessions and physical comfort as more important than spiritual values

## Wealth in Today's World

Most of us, especially in the United States, are wealthy people, and most of us enjoy the material things that God has blessed us with. There is however, a real danger in having many material blessings and seeing how the world around us views wealth and riches. We must guard our thoughts and attitudes regarding these earthly possessions at all times.

- Having earthy riches is not a sin.
  - Abraham – Gen. 13:2
  - Job – Job 1:3
  - Joseph – 2<sup>nd</sup> in command in Egypt was probably a very wealthy position!
  - David and the other kings of Israel/Judah
  - God didn't condemn people for having riches. God gave them the riches!
  - Do you think they ever enjoyed their earthly possessions?
  - Is it wrong to enjoy material things? Eccl. 3:12-13, 5:18-19
- The danger is how we view earthly wealth/riches
  - Society pushes us to desire wealth/riches
    - You must go to school to get a high paying job.
    - You must save for retirement.
    - Mom needs to work so we can afford things.
    - Working overtime instead of attending service or spending time with family
  - Rich young ruler – Mark 10:17-27
    - How do you think he viewed his wealth?
  - How much time do we spend thinking about money?
  - How excited do we get about getting new “stuff”?
  - Do we envy people that have more than we do?

## **Illusion vs Reality**

Satan, the ultimate deceiver, uses the world around us to create illusions of what wealth and earthly materials should mean to us. Let's take a look at a few of these illusions (how Satan and worldly people view wealth) and then look at the reality (how God wants us to view earthly possessions).

### **Illusion 1: Wealth = Real Happiness**

- "Money can buy happiness"
- Can afford any kind of entertainment, can fulfill any lust of the eye
- Is there any worldly thing that money can't get you?
- Look at the celebrities and how they are portrayed. They are living the "good life." Exotic vacations, extravagant toys.

### **Reality: Earthly Wealth is Vain**

- Wealth can entertain us, but it is only a shallow form of happiness. Eventually we get bored with entertainment, and it takes something more to make us happy.
- Eccl. 6:1-2

### **Illusion 2: Wealth = Satisfaction**

- If I just had \$1 million, I would never want anything again.
- I'll have everything I ever wanted and more.

### **Reality: Earthly Wealth Leaves You Wanting More**

- Money leads to the desire for more money.
- Greed
- Eccl. 4:8,5:10, 6:7

### **Illusion 3: Wealth = Easy Life/ No Needs**

- Kick back and relax; eat, drink, and be merry
- Independent, don't need anyone or anything

### **Reality: More Money, More Problems**

- In reality, having money generally means more worries.
  - Worry about losing it or people stealing it
  - People come from everywhere asking for help.
  - Worry about people taking advantage of you
- Wealth leads to more responsibility.
- Rev. 3:17, Prov. 13:7

#### **Illusion 4: Wealth = Lasting Security**

- Attitude of “I have money in the bank so I don’t have to worry”
- False sense of money can solve all problems

#### **Reality: Earthly Wealth is Only Temporary**

- Eccl. 2:18, 5:13-15
- Prov. 23:5
- 1 Tim. 6:7

### **Responsibility of the Wealthy**

God has promised that He will take care of all of our earthly needs if we obey Him, and He often blesses us way beyond these basic physical needs. These added blessings, however, come with added responsibility.

- Good stewards
  - Parable of Talents, Matt. 25
- Use our wealth to honor God
  - Prov. 3:9-10
- Help those in need
  - Acts 2:45
  - Prov. 11:24
- Give to the Church

### **Conclusion**

- Focus on God’s work; the rest will take care of itself.
  - Matt. 6:33
- Have the proper attitude toward riches.
  - Use our wealth/materials in doing God’s work.
  - Eph. 4:28
- Learn contentment.
  - Life will be more enjoyable when you have contentment.
  - 1 Tim. 6:6-10
  - Heb. 13:5