



## How Wise People Build Wealth, Part 1

November 4, 2007

More people went bankrupt last year than graduated from college. Eighty percent of the cars on U.S. Highways are worth less than what people owe on them. In communities like ours, most people actually have very little equity in their homes. They owe, they owe, so it's off to work they go! It's time to let Christ reset our priorities.

**1 Timothy 6:3-10** Whoever teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness, is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words. From these come envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, and wrangling among those who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

## Reflections

I recently cleaned out my closet, a task that I'd been putting off much longer than I should have. When all was said and done, I had filled 7 large bags with all kinds of beautiful, pricey "career" clothes that I hadn't worn in years. It was embarrassingly painful to part with some of those items, but my conscience wouldn't let me hold on to clothing that I know someone else will make good use of.

The other night, my daughter and I were out clothes shopping for her. I knew I was in trouble when we wandered into my favorite store, and I saw all kinds of beautiful things for myself. I forced myself to turn away and focus on the task at hand. Despite the fact that my closet is 7 bags' worth emptier, I still have plenty of clothing! Why is it hard to just be content with what I have? Several reasons come to mind...

*God has delivered my soul, but not my flesh.* While I'm wearing this human flesh, I'll continue to

be tempted by earthly desires. I have to struggle daily against my human wants so that I can reach for the freedom that God offers. God has plans for me that can't come to fruition unless I leave some old habits and ways of living behind. I have to realign my priorities to match up with God's purposes for my life.

***I have to struggle daily  
against my human  
wants so that I can  
reach for the freedom  
that God offers.***

*It's easier to complain than to join in on what God's doing in and around me.* Satan loves to highlight the negatives and get me grumbling. Will I sabotage God's plans by buying into the devil's thoughts? God made a promise in Romans 8:28 -- **we know that in all things God**

**works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose**

– and I must learn to let that promise truly live in me. When I'm complaining, I'm not trusting that God has good plans for me.

*Pride gets in the way.* Self-sufficiency is a big part of American culture; it's easy to get caught up in depending on self more than on God. I can quickly fall into that trap, and give myself credit that really belongs to God. MY degree, MY job...me, me, me. It's not all about me!

Being content doesn't mean "settling," it means accepting where God has placed me for now. "Bloom where you're planted" is an old adage that comes to mind. I can bloom... flourish...in whatever circumstance! When I'm content, I can move forward in God's plans for my life, and receive all the blessings that He wants to give me.

- Colleen Palmateer

## Readings

*Don't have a Bible? Access the readings at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com).*

### Sunday, November 4

1 Timothy 6: 3-10

Are you satisfied with God's plans for you so far? Why or why not?

### Monday, November 5

Exodus 16:1-16

God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, and despite His steadfast provision, they constantly complained. The Lord wanted them to trust Him and also to do their part, by gathering the food they needed for each day. Is there anything in your life that parallels this situation? What might God be asking *you* to do?

### Tuesday, November 6

Philippians 4: 6-9

What does scripture tell us is the way to experience God's peace? Do you live in peace, or do you worry? Do you trust that God has already given you everything you need to accomplish His purposes for your life?

### Wednesday, November 7

Psalms 24: 1-6

1 Timothy 6: 17-19

Do you view yourself as an owner or as a steward of possessions? What's the difference?

### Thursday, November 8

Mark 10:17-27

It's not the money that makes it hard for wealthy people to get to heaven; it's their self-sufficient attitude. Are there pieces of your life that you don't yet trust God with, such as a relationship, finances, or a difficult circumstance? Pray today that God will do what you cannot do on your own – ask Him to help you trust Him with those things you've been holding back.

### Friday, November 9

1 Kings 17: 1-16

How did God use Elijah to respond to the widow's need? Note that the widow had so little, and she chose to trust instead of fear. In return, God endlessly multiplied what she started with! What do you have to offer to meet someone else's need? Can you trust God and make that offering?

### Saturday, November 10

Matthew 25: 14-29

Jesus teaches in this parable that when we can be trusted with something small, God will then bless us with more. Have you experienced God working in your life in this way? If not, consider how your thinking still needs to be brought into line with Christ's:

- Do I see God as the owner of my life and possessions?
- Do I have debt that prevents me from being used by God to meet the needs of others?
- Am I unwilling to surrender a part of my life to God?

*The life which gives multiplies itself; the life which absorbs destroys itself and others. All nature is built upon the plan of giving. The sun gives its light and heat, the bird its song, the lilac its odor, the orchard yields its fruit for the good of man, the field its grain for the same purpose. If a man is not a giver, he is out of harmony with his surroundings. If he makes a dead sea of himself, he becomes fatal to anything that seeks life from him.*

*-A.M. Burton, 20<sup>th</sup> century philanthropist*