

“Warning to the Wealthy”

James – Doing Church Right #6

INTRODUCTION

In this study we consider the warning of James to the wealthy. Wealth in and of itself is not sinful, any more than money in itself is evil. It is the love of money that is evil and it is succumbing to the temptations of wealth that is sinful. But there are temptations associated with wealth that can lead us into sin if we do not keep our attitudes and actions aligned with God. And to that end we should heed James advice in chapter 5.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

Do you remember the first big purchase you made with your own money?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

I want it.

Q1. Read James 4:13-17; Proverbs 16:9, 21:30

In verses 13 – 16 James gives an example of the way we shouldn’t make plans and the way we should. What is the primary difference between the two? If we leave God out of our plans, it may seem like we are the one in control, but how do Proverbs 16:9 and 21:30 apply to that assumption? Sometimes our problem is failing to take action when God is prompting us. What does verse 17 say about not doing what we know is right? Is there something you are hesitant to do, but you feel might be God’s prompting?

I want it all.

Q2. Read James 5:1-6; Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:17-19

James paints a bleak picture for those who are focused on amassing material goods, contrasting their “earthly” perspective (verse 5) with an eternal one. In Matthew 6:19-21 how does Jesus explain the underlying cause of their problem? What is the solution given by Timothy to those who are rich? What is one thing you can do to be generous or “rich in good works”?

I want it now.

Q3. Read James 5:7-11; Job 1:20-21

Modern society seems to promote instant gratification. What are some things you used to wait for but now expect almost instantly?

James gives two specific examples of Godly patience. The farmer is patient in waiting for the fruit of the earth. What are we to be patiently awaiting (James 5:8)? Job is our example of being blessed for remaining steadfast in the face of suffering. Even though Job was ultimately blessed, he still struggled to persevere through his trials. (see Job 1:20-21) What things have you had to struggle through in order to endure and persevere? What has God taught you through it?

I want it no matter what.

Q4. Read James 5:12; Matthew 5:33-37

It is easy to find ourselves tempted by things we “must have.” If we focus on those things too much we may find ourselves compromising to obtain them. What compromise of character is addressed in James 5:12 and Matthew 5:33-37? The taking of oaths hints of someone trying to convince us of something that’s difficult to believe. Rather than resorting to such tactics to persuade people, what is the simple solution encouraged by both James and Jesus? Do you know anyone whose word you would never question? Can others say that about you?

Wrap-Up

James warns those who are rich, not because wealth is evil, but because we are subject to the temptations it presents. When focused on the things we want for ourselves we can forget to consult God in our planning, and lose our eternal perspective. If our goal is to amass earthly goods, we may neglect to lay up treasure in heaven. God desires us to be generous to others and patient as we depend on him, not ourselves, for our provision. The things of this world are not worth the compromise of Godly character and eternal rewards.

Memory Verse

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Matthew 6:21 ESV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs:

Challenge: Complete the three days of devotional questions at the end of your sermon notes (downloadable).

James 4:13-17 ESV - 13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"-- 14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. 17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

Proverbs 16:9 ESV - 9 The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

Proverbs 21:30 ESV - 30 No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel
can avail against the LORD.

Q2.

James 5:1-6 ESV - 1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. 4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

Matthew 6:19-21 ESV - 19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 ESV - 17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Q3

Read James 5:7-11 in your bible

Job 1:20-21 ESV - 20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

Q4

James 5:12 ESV - 12 But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

Matthew 5:33-37 ESV - 33 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

Prayers Con't: