

REALLY RICH



Let's suppose you had an Uncle George who just died and a brother named Bill. Uncle George had an estate of \$600,000.00. He willed it to you and your brother to be divided equally. But he made one mistake. He appointed Bill as executor of his will. So when Uncle George died, Bill got busy settling the estate. He settled it all right. Settled it all on himself. He hired a crafty lawyer who, for a fat fee, showed him how to funnel it all into his own pocket, except for the lawyer's fee and a puny \$500.00 for you.

"Come on, Bill," you say to your brother, "you know that half Uncle George's estate belongs to me." "That's your opinion", says Bill, "I know that George intended that I should have it all. He just didn't get around to changing his will. So I worked things out. And I did it within the law. Even if you take me to court, you'll never win. Be thankful for your \$500.00."

Now it just so happens that you and your brother belong to the same church. And you're saying to yourself, "If Bill is the big Christian everybody thinks he is, how can he do this?" You go to the preacher and explain what's going on. "How about meeting with the two of us and helping us to sort it out?" But your brother is a heavy giver and the preacher doesn't want to offend any goose in his flock that lays golden eggs.

You're upset. Who wouldn't be upset, to be cheated out of more than a quarter of a million? It's not right and it's not fair. The whole mess is keeping you awake at night. The preacher won't do anything for you.

So you decide to take the whole thing straight to the Lord.

"Lord, you know that Uncle George meant for me to have half of that money. But my greedy brother wrangled it all for himself". You pray, but you don't seem to be getting any peace. "Lord, fair is fair. You know my brother is cheating me. I could use that money more than he could. He already has plenty."

Still no peace.

Not only that, your crafty brother has just made a big gift to the organ fund at the church and

everybody's talking about what a wonderful Christian he is. "Wonderful Christian my foot! He's a hypocrite! Come on, Lord! Do something! This isn't right! \$300,000.00.

What I couldn't do with \$300,000.00! And Bill sits up there in the front pew like a saint!"

Still no peace..... No answer from the Lord.,

What's going on?

So you decide to play a little Bible Roulette. You know. You shut your eyes, flip the Bible open, put your finger on a page - and hope for guidance. Now I'm not so sure God ever ordained Bible Roulette as a form of guidance and most people who try it cheat a little. They keep flipping and pointing until they come up with something good and then they call it divine guidance.

But God does work in mysterious ways. And sometimes he corners us even when we try to manipulate him into the guidance we want. "So, here it goes." Down comes your finger. You open your eyes, and wouldn't you know? Your finger is glued to Luke 12:13

One of the multitude said to him, "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" And he said to them, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. (Luke 12:13-15)

"Who made me judge or divider over you?" Jesus refuses to let himself be used in this way. "Yes, your brother is a cheat. But something is happening to you in this business that is going to rob you of more than \$300,000.00"

There are two ways to be rich.

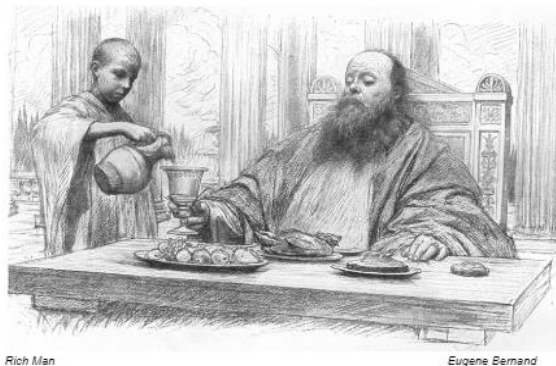
You can be rich toward man

or

you can be rich toward God.

When you're rich toward man, it means you have a lot of stuff, a lot of money, a lot of power.

But if you're only rich toward man, all that stuff that you have, and all that money, and all that power, still leaves you with an empty soul.



On the other hand, when you're rich toward God, it means that your soul is full, your spirit is alive, because your heart has found its focus.

Not in what you possess, but in who you know.

Who you know not being celebrities, the wealthy, the accomplished, the respected....

.... but the God of the Universe.

If you know God, you're rich.

If you don't know God, you may own half of the world and still have an empty soul.

When you're rich toward God, money and things can come or they can go. They are important, but they are not your life. Your life is God.

When you're rich toward God, and you have money; you know God put that money into your hands for reasons he will make clear.

It came from him.

It belongs to him.

You answer to him.

When you're rich toward God, and you have no money; you still know that God will provide for you as you seek his kingdom first.

When you're rich toward God, and your brother cheats you out of half the estate, you're still better off in your own shoes than in his.

And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' " (Luke 12:16-20)



The Rich Fool. Drawing by Swiss artist Eugene Burnand (1850-1921). Eugene Burnand.com

So, how do you get to be rich toward God?

By putting God first in your life.

And getting rid of everything that gets in the way of putting God first.

If money is getting in the way, get rid of it,

If some habit is getting in the way, change it.

If some secret lust or some weird ambition is getting in the way, repent of it, die to it.

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Luke 12:32-34)

Does that mean I’m supposed to sell my house, get rid of my cars, and empty out my bank account? It means that God wants to make me a spiritual millionaire, not after I die, but now. Lavish upon me the riches of heaven now and anything in my life that stands in the way of my enjoying God’s gift is not worth having.

Anything that lures my heart away from God’s riches, is a liability.



James Tissot

Get rid of it.

“The treasure in the heavens that doesn’t fail” is not some gold waiting for me in heaven when I die.

That treasure in the heavens is *mine now*.

No thief can take it.

No rust can destroy it.

No cunning brother can touch it.

It's the power and the wisdom and the joy of God's Spirit making me a million times richer than the wealthiest human, enabling me to give away far more than the most generous philanthropist ever dreamed of giving.

All I have to do, All you have to do...Is open our hearts and receive this heavenly treasure into the earthen vessels of our bodies.

Let God give us His Kingdom, His Spirit afresh today.

And then get rid of anything in our lives that competes with this treasure and we will be numbered among the richest people of this earth.

"Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."



Your Father wants to make you really, really rich...

Delights to give you

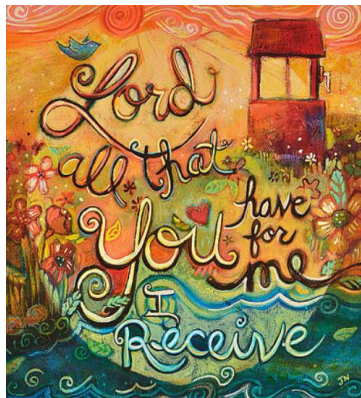
His power,

His glory,

His life,

His joy,

Everything He has - "all that is mine is yours".



Get rid of the clutter so you can have this.

Get rid of anything that steals your heart from God.

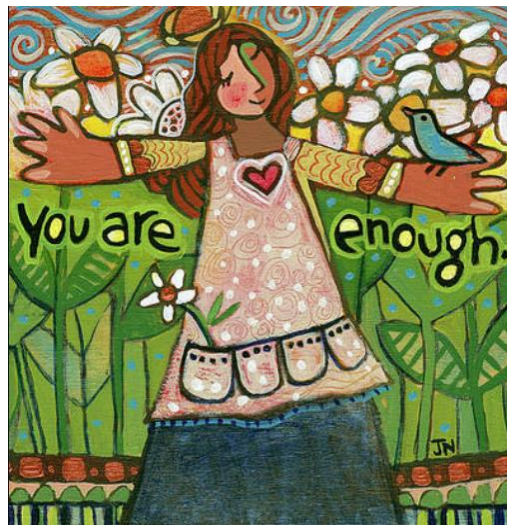
“Sell your possessions and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Luke 12:33-34)

We're not talking about “pie in the sky by and by” when you die.

We're talking about pie a la mode. Sitting in front of us right now.

Clear away the peanut shells so you can have the pie.

God will show us how this applies in each of our lives and He will help us make whatever changes we have to make so that our hearts are fixed on the true treasure instead of the peanut shells.



Prayer: Yes Lord, fix our hearts on the true treasure. Help us to know you, the God of the Universe... You who was, is, and will ever be... and who lovingly, mercifully cares for us and offers us such treasures. Help us to open our hearts to all you have for us. Help us to stop grasping for, and clinging to worldly riches and recognition. Help us not to be lured away from you by these things and yes, help us to get rid of them. Bring us to the point where we truly are rich, really rich with what you have for us now.... your presence, your power, your glory, your life and your joy. Amen.

Maranatha Mirror

Message: Richard E. Bieber 2001 (slightly edited by Maranatha Mirror)

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