

# Wealth Creation

## The need for more, or more than we need?

I recall some years ago someone inviting me to join a home marketing scheme. I declined the invitation, but I still remember the first line of the patter, which was also the underlying principle of the presentation; that was the statement that “everyone wants more money than they have”. That may indeed be the commonplace mantra of our society, but what does our faith have to say about that?



Pray for clarity to see whatever God wants to reveal to you during this study.

Rank the following in the order of whom you consider is most blessed:

- the person who has great wealth
- the person who has had, but lost, wealth
- the person who is not interested in increasing their wealth
- the person who has only ever known poverty
- the person who is gradually increasing their wealth
- the person who has entered voluntary poverty

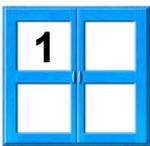


Do this exercise individually then briefly discuss in the group.



Define wealth:  
As a group come up with a definition of what wealth is.

Is wealth the same as prosperity?



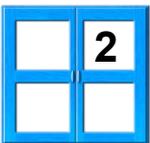
### Where does wealth come from?

Read the following passages and discuss what they suggest about the source of wealth:

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Deuteronomy 5: 28 – 33     | Words to Moses for Israel     |
| 1 Chronicles 29: 10 – 20   | A prayer of praise from David |
| 1 Chronicles 4: 9 – 10     | The prayer of Jabez           |
| Psalms 20 (especially v.4) | A psalm of David              |

Do the following passages suggest anything different about the source of wealth?

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Psalms 73         | Asaph's envy at the prosperity of the wicked |
| Ezekiel 28: 1 – 5 | The wealth of the King of Tyre               |
| James 4: 13 – 16  | On plans for making money                    |

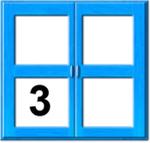


### Wealth Warnings

Look at these passages and briefly note the warnings they give about wealth:

- |                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| Psalms 39: 5 – 6     | _____ |
| Proverbs 28: 11      | _____ |
| Ecclesiastes 4: 8    | _____ |
| Ecclesiastes 5: 10   | _____ |
| Ecclesiastes 5: 12   | _____ |
| Jeremiah 6: 13       | _____ |
| Ezekiel 28: 5        | _____ |
| Matthew 16: 26       | _____ |
| Mark 4: 18 – 19      | _____ |
| 1 Timothy 6: 5       | _____ |
| 1 Timothy 6: 9 – 10  | _____ |
| 1 Timothy 6: 17 – 19 | _____ |
| 2 Timothy 3: 1 – 5   | _____ |
| James 1: 10 – 11     | _____ |

Discuss together:  
How can a person avoid these traps?  
In what ways might wealth be risky for one's spiritual health?



## Finding a Balance

Deuteronomy 8: 1 – 20 The promise of blessing and the call to obedience.

List the details of God's promises or blessings, and the details of God's requirements or disciplines, contained in this passage.

God's Promises / Blessings

God's Requirements / Disciplines

How are these promises or blessings and requirements or disciplines linked together?

Luke 8: 1 – 3

What does the inclusion of these wealthy women among Jesus' followers suggest?

Luke 19: 1 – 10

Jesus brought great changes into the life of Zacchaeus. In what way was his wealth redeemed as Zacchaeus came into salvation?

Proverbs 30: 8 – 9

What merit do you see in this request to God?

How can we rejoice in God's blessing and yet not just put a spiritual gloss over the same aspirations for wealth that unbelievers may have?



## Forsaking Wealth

Matthew 19: 16 – 30      The rich young man and the disciples.

What does this passage tell us about the alternative to aspiring to create wealth?

How are we to interpret the reward Jesus promises in v.27 – 30?

3 examples of people placing faith before wealth:

Hebrews 10: 34      Christians who accepted confiscation of property when persecuted.

Hebrews 11: 26      Refers to Moses stepping aside from his position as a royal prince.

Acts 19: 19      New believers burn valuable scrolls to do with their former sorcery  
(contrast this with v.23 – 27 about those with a material interest in idolatry)

In what ways may Christians today have to face the choice between honouring God and accumulating wealth?

While some Christians pray for material prosperity others have renounced wealth and entered voluntary poverty. How do we sit these two approaches alongside each other?



What has this study revealed about the nature of God?



What new thought or understanding has come to you during this study?



What issues, questions or practical implications for your local church, your church denomination, or the wider Christian church, are raised by this study?



*(This section may be used for personal reflection alone or may be shared within the group)*

Read: Matthew 6: 19 – 24      Treasures on earth and in heaven

What do you treasure most in your life?

Looking at your life, what would others say you treasure the most?

Jesus said that we cannot serve both God and money, but that we can only have one master. How much is that a tension in your own life?

What would have to change in your life for God to be the master?



Spend some time as a group praying over what you have discussed, asking God to bring into focus how you may respond to his Word in an ongoing way.



**More Bible passages and discussion questions for further study:**

Jeremiah 29: 4 – 14      God's promise to his people in exile

What does this passage say about prosperity and about living as a believer in the wider world?

Is it possible for a society that does not recognise or honour God to maintain prosperity?

Psalms 49 (esp. v12 – 20)

What does this passage suggest about how aspirations and attitudes towards material wealth can be different for believers and non-believers?

How difficult is it to live out a different set of priorities to those around you?

Revelation 3: 14 – 22      The letter to the church in Laodicea  
What are the risks when the church itself becomes wealthy?



### Notes on some of the passages referred to in this study:

Deuteronomy 5: 28 – 33 These words were given to Moses after receiving the 10 Commandments and after the people had (in v.27) promised to obey what the Lord says.

1 Chronicles 29: 10 – 20 These words of praise to God are spoken by David at the time of giving by the leaders and people towards the building of the temple. David, however, would not see the temple built; that was to happen under the leadership of David's son, Solomon.

1 Chronicles 4: 9 – 10 This reference to Jabez is found within a passage which is a genealogical list of the clans of Judah. The surrounding chapters include the genealogies of the other tribes. There are no other references to Jabez in the Bible.

Ezekiel 28: 1 – 5 This is part of a prophecy against the King of Tyre, included in a sequence of Ezekiel's prophecies against neighbouring nations. At times Tyre, a city on the Mediterranean coast, had friendly relations with Israel, especially during the reign of Solomon, but later Tyre and Israel were enemies. Tyre was known to be a prosperous trading city.

Ecclesiastes. There are a few references from Ecclesiastes in this study. Ecclesiastes writes philosophically on his observations of people and society around him. One of his frequent refrains is the 'meaninglessness' of what he sees people doing.

Jeremiah 6: 13 This verse comes within a section of Jeremiah in which God's complaints and judgement against Israel are expressed.

Mark 4: 18 – 19 These verses come within Jesus' explanation of the Parable of the Sower, which Jesus told to allude to how different people may respond to hearing the Word of God.

1 Timothy 6: 10 Often misquoted as saying that 'money is the root of all evil', this verse actually states that 'the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil'.

Deuteronomy 8: 1 – 20 This chapter provides a very helpful summary of how the Lord has led the people of Israel to this point of being about to enter the Promised Land. This passage is helpful in revealing the links between God's expectations of his people and the ways that he blesses them. This passage is a useful window into understanding a Biblical approach to economics; an approach that connects our relationship with material things and our relationship with God.

Luke 19: 1 – 10 Tax collectors were universally disliked because they both collected taxes on behalf of the occupying Roman administration and also frequently abused that position by extracting further payments for themselves. Zacchaeus was such a tax collector. Jesus perplexed people by befriending tax collectors; thereby revealing that he saw all people as capable of being redeemed.

Proverbs 30: 8 – 9 This chapter of Proverbs contains the writings of Agur. Agur's prayer contrasts interestingly with the Prayer of Jabez (1 Chronicles 4: 9 – 10). Not surprisingly those who favour the "prosperity gospel" tend to quote the prayer of Jabez rather than the prayer of Agur!

Matthew 19: 16 – 30 This passage is one in which Jesus reveals how God expects more from us than just following the letter of the law; that God wants a heart response that puts our lives in harmony with God's will and God's heart. The rich young man was looking for a standard to reach, but Jesus was encouraging a complete offering of oneself to God. Jesus goes on to suggest that those who follow him purely in the hope of reward may be disappointed, that "the first will be last, and the last will be first".

Hebrews 11: 26 This reference to Moses comes within a chapter which provides a helpful summary of the history of the way God's people have lived by faith.

Acts 19: 19 Paul's mission in Ephesus was characterised by both strong opposition and much interest. It was a place in which there were powerful spiritual forces at work. We see here how that spiritual battle even spilt over into the local economy of Ephesus.

Matthew 6: 19 – 24 This passage is part of what is known as 'The Sermon on the Mount' which contains much of the moral teaching of Jesus.

Jeremiah 29: 4 – 14 These words of promise are given by God through Jeremiah to the people of Judah after their exile to captivity in Babylon. Verse 11 is often quoted by people as a blessing; it is helpful to see its context here, which is the Lord's expectation of trust, faithfulness and integrity during a time of hardship before the promised blessing will follow.

Revelation 3: 14 – 22 This is one of the letters to the 7 churches that are found in the first few chapters of Revelation. These are messages given through John to specific churches of that era, but they are also variously interpreted as relating to periods of the history of the church or having more general application. Laodicea was a trading centre of significance and wealth. The Church in Laodicea became prominent in the wider Christian Church, but the city was later completely destroyed during an invasion.