**The Love of Money**

**Introduction:**

Jesus was the Master Storyteller. On one occasion while a multitude of thousands was gathered, a man in the crowd told Jesus to tell his brother to divide the inheritance with him. Note Christ’s reply in Luke 12:14-21. “15 And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’ Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: ‘The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. . . . 18 So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater,’ . . . 19 ‘And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’ 20-21 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” NKJV Greed, or covetousness, is the desire for wrong things. It is the desire to gain worldly possessions for your own sake; not to help others. Note I Timothy 6:9-10. “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” NKJV

There was nothing wrong with the possession of wealth. It was the wrong use of it that Jesus condemned. Wealth and possessions can lead one away from God and into ruin. See Proverbs 15:27 “He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.” and James 5:1-6. “5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.” NKJV

**Body:**

1. **Those Led Astray by It**

* Achan Read Joshua 6:15-18. “18 And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.” (Joshua 7:1) “But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel.” NKJV The Lord was angry. When Israel attacked Ai, they were routed by the men of Ai. (Joshua 7:4) “So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai.” NKJV God tells Joshua the end of Achan: (Joshua 7:10-12) “So the Lord said to Joshua: ‘Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff.’ Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you.” (Joshua 7:15, 19-26) “15 Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel. 19 Now Joshua said to Achan, . . . ‘tell me now what you have done;’ 20 And Achan answered Joshua and said, ‘Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel,’ 22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. 25b So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.” NKJV
* Gehazi Read II Kings 5:20, 24-27. “20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, ‘Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but as the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something from him.’ 24 When he came to the citadel, he took them from their hand, and stored them away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed. Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, ‘Where did you go, Gehazi?’ And he said, ‘Your servant did not go anywhere.’ Then he said to him, ‘Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?’ ‘Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever.’ And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow.” NKJV Greed caused him to lie.
* Judas Read John 12:4-6. “But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, ‘Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?’ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.” NKJV

Judas betrayed Christ and lost his soul. (Matthew 26:14-16) “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.” NKJV

* Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10) “1-3 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?’ 5a Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. 7 Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 9a Then Peter said to her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?’ 10a Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last.” NKJV They lied to the Holy Spirit about the price.

1. **What Greed Can Do**

* It robs God of what He is due. (Matthew 3:7-9) “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’ Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” NKJV
* It chokes the Word of God in men’s hearts. (Matthew 13:22) “Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.” (Mark 4:19) “and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word and it becomes unfruitful.” NKJV
* It neglects those who are needy. (I John 3:17) “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” NKJV
* It causes men to stray from the faith and pierce themselves with many sorrows. (Luke 16:19-23) “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments, in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” NKJV

(I Timothy 6:10) “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” NKJV

* It will cause one to lose his soul. (I Corinthians 6:9-10) “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.” NKJV

1. **How to Overcome It**

* Pray to not enter into temptation. (Luke 11:4) “And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.” NKJV
* Give generously to the Lord’s church. (II Corinthians 8:1-3, 7) “Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: That in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, 7 But as you abound in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us – see that you abound in this grace also.” (II Corinthians 9:6-13) “But this I say: ‘He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.’ As it is written: ‘He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.’ Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of you righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, while, through the proof this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men.” NKJV
* Be content with what you have. (I Timothy 6:7) “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”

(Hebrews 13:5) “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ ” (Philippians 4:1) “Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.” NKJV

**Conclusion:**

The Bible never condemns being rich or even getting richer. Gaining this world’s riches is not an end in itself, but a way to help and serve others. This enables one to be rich toward God!

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