

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Riches and the Gospel.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises,
But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content

Riches and the Gospel.

Topics.

- Worldly riches in the Old Testament.
- Worldly riches in the New Testament.
- God's riches in the New Testament.
- Notes concerning New Testament giving.

The following study covers almost all the Scriptures in the Old and New Testament that use the words wealth and riches and speak of worldly riches and God's riches.

Old Testament.

Job

Job 21:13-15 ----- ¹³They (the rich) spend their days in *prosperity* and suddenly go down to Sheol. ¹⁴And they say to God, 'Depart from us! We do not even desire the knowledge of Thy ways. ¹⁵Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him, And what would we gain if we entreat him?'

It is true that prosperity can bring many joys, but without God the final end is the darkness of the grave and death in contrast to this those who lack money, but believes in Christ has the greatest riches of all which is God's forgiveness, love, grace and eternal life in everlasting glory.

Psalms

Psalms 49:6-9----- ⁶Even those who trust in their wealth and boast in the abundance of their riches? ⁷No man can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him—⁸For the redemption of his soul is costly and he should cease trying forever—⁹That he should live on eternally. That he should not undergo decay.

Those who trust and boast in their riches and abundance no-matter how wealthy cannot redeem a family member and save them to eternal life no matter how much they may love them. Added to this even if they owned the entire world it would not be enough to offer to God for a ransom of their own life so that they would live eternally.

Psalms 49:10-14----- ¹⁰For he sees that even wise men die. The stupid and the senseless alike perish, And leave their wealth to others. ¹¹Their inner thought is, that their houses are forever and their dwelling places to all generations; They have called their lands after their own names. ¹²But man in his pomp will not endure he is like the beasts that perish. ¹³This is the way of those who are foolish, and of those after them who approve their words. [Selah]. ¹⁴As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; And the upright shall rule over them in the morning; And their form shall be for Sheol to consume, So that they have no habitation.

The mindset of the prideful who trust in their abundant riches is that they are invincible, but it matters not whether a person is the dux of their school, full of wisdom and has an abundance of riches or president of a nation they die in the same manner as a fool and a lazy person who has nothing. Added to this whatever wealth they do have is left to others.

Psalms 49:6-14----- ¹⁵But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol; For He will receive me. [Selah]. ¹⁶do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house is increased;

¹⁷For when he dies he will carry nothing away his glory will not descend after him.
¹⁸Though while he lives he congratulates himself—And though men praise you when you do well for yourself—¹⁹He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They shall never see the light. ²⁰Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, is like the beasts that perish.

All who belong to the family of Christ should never covet the rich who give no thought to God or envy those who are successful or famous, but deny God since no-matter how successful, famous or rich they maybe they die in the same manner as a wild animal and their end is the darkness of the grave whereas the end of the humble who trust in God is eternal life in everlasting glory.

Proverbs

Proverbs 13:11----- ¹¹wealth obtained by fraud dwindles, But the one who gathers by labor increases it.

This verse shows that being rich is not wrong if the rich have earned their wealth by honest labour, but if the wealth has been gained by trickery, deception, dishonesty and double-dealing then of course whatever money they have is corrupt money.

Proverbs 15:16 ----- ¹⁶Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, than great treasure and turmoil with it.

The mind of a person who lacks, but lives to honour God will have greater peace than the mind of those who have much.

Proverbs 16:19 ----- ¹⁹It is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Whoever is humble and enjoys the company of others who are humble and lacking the things of this world will find true friendship in contrast to those who indulge in the luxuries of this world with those who are rich and are proud of heart.

Proverbs 28:6 ----- ⁶ Better is the poor who walks in his integrity, than he who is crooked though he be rich.

Whoever lacks wealth, but holds fast to their integrity will receive far greater respect than those who are rich, but have gained their wealthy by deceit, lies and trickery. Notice whenever worldly riches are spoken of it is always spoken of in a negative manner, but it should be noted that this does not mean that it is wrong for a Christian who labours honestly to be wealthy. The rich in the context of these verses refer to those who are full of pride, trust in their riches and deny God, or to those who have become rich through deceit, lies and trickery. There is no-doubt God throughout history has blessed certain faithful men and woman with great abundance. Whenever a Christian has excess and uses it to help the poor or to extend God's Kingdom they are storing up treasures in heaven.

New Testament.

Matthew

Matthew 13:22 ----- ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the *deceitfulness of riches* choke the word, and it proves unfruitful (Mark 4:19) (Luke 8:14).

Certain men and woman respond to the call of God, but the craving for worldly pleasures, luxury and indulgence money can bring stifles the word that was sown so that it does not take root and produce anything fruitful for God's Kingdom. Worldly riches are called deceitful because they promise bliss, but it is only temporary since no matter how much wealth a person has their end is still the grave. Added to this is the fact that there has not been a funeral yet where the Hurst is towing a trailer full of the deceased person's possessions, all they have strived and laboured for is left to others.

Mark 10:23-24 ----- ²³Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:24).

Jesus is not saying it is impossible for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God, but that it is very difficult. This is because the rich can fulfil their lives in this world with all the indulgences and luxuries money can buy. Added to this it is very hard for a wealthy person to lower their excessive standard of life and freely use the surplus of riches they have to help those who are less fortunate. Here is a very good reason that those who lack should not covet or envy the rich since it is far easier for a person who has very little to enter God's Kingdom than it is for someone with great wealth.

Luke 12:15 ----- ¹⁵He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.

There is great truth in this verse, the world judges a person's worth according to how big their house is, what car they drive, upon their success in business or their fame and physical beauty, but this is not how God or the Lord Jesus Christ judges a person's worth.

If those in God's Kingdom are going to judge a person's worth or even judge their own worth the measure they should judge against is not worldly riches and possessions, but against Christ; meaning God measures us all against love, grace, mercy and the forgiveness and compassion we show toward others, He judges us according to our personal integrity truthfulness and honesty it is in this same manner that we should base our worth and the worth of others upon and not materialistic worldly possessions, wealth and fame.

Luke 16:9 ----- ⁹I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

Unrighteous wealth broadly refers to worldly riches in contrast to God's riches (forgiveness of sins, salvation and eternal life). Jesus in this verse is basically saying, "Don't deliberately make yourselves enemies of those who have wealth, but rather treat them with respect and show them kindness since they have the power and means to help in a time of great need." For a full understanding of this verse see: Luke 16:9 in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Luke 16:11 ----- ¹¹If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth who will entrust to you the true riches?

Jesus in this verse is saying, "If a person is not faithful and honest in even the smallest things they will not be faithful or honest in the bigger things and if they are not faithful and honest in their dealings with the secular world they cannot be trusted with the true riches of God. The principal Jesus is teaching here is that those in Christ should be faithful and honest in everything whether it is the things of the world or the things of God. The true riches of God refer to everything concerning the Gospel of salvation and everything related to God's eternal Kingdom.

Luke 16:13-15 ----- ¹³No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." ¹⁴The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. ¹⁵And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but GOD knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Jesus words, "What is exalted among men" refers to money, it is money the world exalts, almost everything in this world is motivated by money, countries go to war for money, adults use child labour to make greater profits and companies oppress

their workers to increase their bank balance. Young girls are kidnapped and sold as sex slaves for money, drugs that destroy human life are sold for money and manipulative religious ministers use guilt and mood music to extract more money from their congregations and the list goes on. Even the prideful and hypocritical religious leaders of Jesus generation (the Pharisees) were lovers of money so of course they hated what Jesus was saying and their only defence was to attack him personally by ridiculing and mocking him. The Pharisees found ways to justify themselves before their followers, but though they may deceive themselves and those who follow them they cannot deceive God because God sees the motives and intent of the heart.

NOTE: it should be mentioned that money in itself is not evil, but the love of it is, because people who are driven by the love of money will live their lives solely for money, they never give a thought toward God or consider helping the poor and needy, but instead store up their abundant wealth for their own selfish desires. Not everyone who is rich is selfish with their money, nor are all with money driven by the love of it there are those who have money that are rich toward God and use their riches to help the poor and needy in many countries. The rich who use their money to help others and extend the Kingdom of God are storing up treasures in heaven.

Romans

Romans 2:4 ----- ⁴Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

God's riches are His kindness and forbearance (i.e., tolerance and mercy) and the patience that He graciously has toward us and the grace He daily lavishes upon us. This verse shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that it is not fearful and condemning sermons lead a person to Christ, but God's love, grace and kindness.

Romans 9:23 ----- ²³in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy which he has prepared beforehand for glory.

The riches of God's glory in this context refer to His great mercy that He lavishes on all in Christ.

Romans 10:12 ----- ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

God is no respecter of persons this means that He gives to Jews or Gentiles, male or female, rich or poor, noble or lowly who seek after him His great riches of love, mercy, kindness, forgiveness and eternal life in everlasting glory.

Romans 11:12-16 ---- ¹²Now if their (Israel's) trespass means riches for the world and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! ¹³Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry ¹⁴in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. ¹⁵For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? ¹⁶If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

- The dough and the root refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The lump and the branches refer to all those in Christ.

If Israel's rejection of Christ means salvation came to the Gentile nations then their acceptance of Christ will result in the resurrection of the dead and since Christ who was offered as the firstfruits from the dead was holy so too will those in Christ be made holy. The prophet Zechariah speaks of the majestic and glorious day when Israel accepts their Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ.

Zechariah in prophecy said: -

- When Israel's enemies surround Jerusalem to destroy the city, the LORD will protect the inhabitants and destroy the nations that have gathered against Israel. When this climatic event takes place God will pour out on the people of Israel a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy so that when they look on him whom they have pierced they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be great each family and their wives will mourn by themselves (Zech. 12:9-14).

This climatic awesome and world changing event will take place when the Lord returns in glory as, the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God.

Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The Depth, the Riches, the Wisdom and Knowledge of God.

Romans 11:33 ----- ³³Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

Though the Bible gives us a certain amount of insight into God's mind and character and His eternal plans, purposes and promises there must always be a certain amount of mystery since no-one can perfectly and fully understand with the mortal and finite mind that all humans have God's ways.

Ephesians

Ephesians 1:7 ----- ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

The riches of God, is His forgiveness of our sins and His grace.

Ephesians 1:18 ----- ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

The riches of God, is the hope those in Christ have and the eternal inheritance of everlasting life in eternal glory. When salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie. The apostle Paul wrote; "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2).

The Christian hopes to be resurrected from the grave to be raised up to eternal life and everlasting glory to be made perfectly free from sin; to be everlastingly happy, but it is faith that gives these things a mental reality in the mind and it is under this influence of faith that those in Christ allow these unseen and yet future events to control their mind as if they were a reality now.

Ephesians 2:7 ----- ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

The riches of God, is the grace He lavishes on all those in Christ and His great kindness.

Ephesians 3:8 ----- ⁸To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The unsearchable riches of Christ refer to the truth that he laid down his life from the world and his great love that he has for those who are devoted to him. Christ love is so great that while hanging in extreme agony on the bloodstained cross he prayed; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" as the soldiers cast lots to divide his garments" (Luke 23:34). Who can understand such abundant love and abundant forgiveness?

Ephesians 3:16 ----- ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

The riches of God in this verse is, the spiritual power with which He strengthens the inner spirit and mind of those who love and trust in him.

Philippians

Philippians 4:19 ----- ¹⁹my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

God's riches in glory do not refer to worldly riches, but to God's great mercy, love, grace, kindness, forgiveness and compassion He has toward those who love His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. The words, "My God will supply every need" does not mean God will give us everything we want in this world, but that in Christ God will supply everything we need to be saved to eternal life. It means whatever a sinner needs to be saved to eternal life is in Jesus.

In Christ is, forgiveness of sins, God's grace and mercy and all the eternal promises of God. Whoever belongs to the Christ is a brother or sister of the Lord and an adopted child of God and therefore a partaker of all the eternal promises God made to Abraham. This is why Paul is able to say with total confidence, "God will supply our every need" meaning our every need to be saved to eternal life and everlasting glory because everything we need to be saved is in Christ.

Colossians

Colossians 1:27 ----- ²⁷To them (the Jews) God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The word mystery in this context refers to the fact that the people of Israel believed that all the promises God had made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David regarding the coming Messiah the Christ and all that the Old Testament prophets had spoken about the promised seed to come who would bless and rule the nations were restricted solely to the nation of Israel. The Jews clearly believed that God's promises and the coming Messiah the Christ were for their nation and their nation only. The mystery of Christ that was hidden in the Old Testament was not only that all the promises God made to Israel would also apply to the Gentiles, (because all God's promises are in Christ), but also that the Messiah the Christ would embrace the Gentile nations as well as the Jews.

The mystery of Christ that was hidden in the Old Testament was that: -

- Both Jews and Gentiles would be saved by faith in Jesus Christ.
- The plans, purposes and promises of God would be revealed in Jesus and would all be obtained through faith in Christ.
- Everything that is needed for salvation for Jews and Gentiles would be in Christ.
- The character nature and power of God and God's love, grace and mercy would be revealed in Christ to both Jews and Gentiles alike.

The riches and the glory of this mystery is that; Christ the hope of glory is now by faith in believers from all nations, languages and countries and not just the Jews. Following are the three most common teachings regarding the majestic and awe-inspiring words "Christ in you."

1. The word, (*in*) from Strong's Concordance means, in, by, with, among, at, on, through and together with which means that the words, "*Christ in you*" can mean together with. Therefore the following statement of Paul, "To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory (v27), could read "To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is *Christ among you or together with you* the hope of glory. Based on these facts some teach that the verse should actually read, "Christ amongst you" meaning that Christ by his Spirit is amongst the church and those who gather in his name. Though this is certainly a true statement since the Lord himself said, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (Matt. 18:20) it does not mean that the verse is wrong in saying, "Christ in you" since Christ by his Spirit and by love and through faith dwells in every brother and sister who is devoted to him.
2. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends," (John 15:13). When a person's eyes are opened to their fallen and sinful condition before God and perceive what it cost the Lord Jesus Christ to save them their heart is filled with love for him, it is in this sense that Christ dwells in the human heart. The following is a true story and a good example of a person being in the heart of another. An eight-year old disabled girl, whose best friend was her mother was doing her first live stage show. The mother loved her daughter but could not be at the opening show as she was in hospital with terminal cancer.

A television reporter asked the young girl if she would be sad and miss her mother at the opening of the show. The small girl with tears in her eyes said, "Yes I will miss her, but she will be in my heart where she belongs." Love for a person creates the reality or presence of that person in the human heart. This presence is in direct proportion to the love (i.e., the greater the love the greater the presence). Every Christian, by looking at the bloodstained cross knows that God and Jesus love them.

3. Christ is the head of a new race and those outside this new race enter into it by faith in belonging to Christ. Adam was the head of the old race that believers were in prior to being in Christ's new race therefore the words, "Christ in you" in this context means: -

- Fully belonging to Christ.
- Being together and in union with Christ.
- Agreeing with and sharing in the divine nature of Christ.
- Having the same mind as Christ (i.e., desiring to honour his heavenly Father).

With this idea in mind the words, "The riches and the glory of this mystery" not only refer to the truth that we are all (Jews and Gentiles) saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in him we have the glorious hope of eternal life in everlasting glory, but also includes the majestic glory that in this present age Christ dwells within the heart of all who are devoted to him by his Spirit and by love.

Colossians 2:2 ----- ²that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the *riches* of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery.

The riches of the mystery in Christ in this context refers to the truth that God in his eternal mind planned and purposed before the foundation of the world began that salvation would not be limited to God's chosen people the Jews only, but would also embrace people from all nations (i.e. the Gentiles) through faith in God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ. The mystery that is now revealed is that the Gentiles would become eternal partakers with Israel in all the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David.

It was this knowledge and wisdom that Paul was anxious that all those in Christ would understand and that they would be fully convinced that they cannot be saved by good works and self-effort or by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and keeping religious laws, customs and traditions because even though some of these maybe good in themselves and may reap eternal rewards not one of them has any power to save a person to eternal life. All who are in Christ should fully understand these abundantly rich humbling and awe-inspiring truths so that they would have the full assurance and confidence that they are saved to eternal life solely by their faith in Christ and by God's grace and not by works of the law.

The riches of God's mystery in Christ that are now revealed are: -

- Jesus is the seed promised in (Gen. 3:15) that would bruise the serpents head.
- Jesus is the prophet and deliver Moses said was to come like him.
- Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham and of David.
- Jesus is the promised Messiah and Christ of Israel.
- Jesus is the only way to God the Father and eternal life.
- In Jesus are all the promises God made to Abraham, David and Israel.
- Jesus is the ultimate King of kings and Lord of lords who will return to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

Without a full understanding of faith in Christ and God's abundant and boundless grace that He lavishes on everyone who is devoted to His Son the Lord Jesus Christ our spiritual relationship with the Lord to some degree will be hindered from attaining full mental peace free from condemnation and also hindered from attaining to spiritual and heavenly places in our spiritual relationship with Christ this is why it is so important that every faithful brother and sister of the Lord should fully understand the abundant richness of the love Christ has toward them.

The riches of the mystery in Christ refer to the following two things: -

1. Jesus is the Son of God and that he was sent by God to lay his life down for all mankind so that whether Jew or Gentile all would be saved in the same manner.
2. God counts every brother and sister in the Lord righteous because of their faith in Christ and not because of self-effort or because we strictly adhere to ceremonial rites and keep religious laws, customs and traditions etc.

Those who belong to the family of Christ should be fully convinced that Jesus is the Son of God and that he was sent by God to lay his life down for all mankind so that whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, rich or poor, noble or lowly all would be saved in the same manner and fully assured that their righteousness that leads to eternal salvation is solely dependent on their faith and God's grace in contrast to being dependent on self-effort and striving to attain to righteousness by keeping religious laws, customs and traditions etc.

Timothy

1 Timothy 6:17-19 ---- ¹⁷As 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. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Paul is warning brothers and sisters in Christ who happen to be rich: -

- To be on guard against becoming prideful and considering themselves superior to others (especially to those who lack).
- To be careful they do not fall into the trap and deceitfulness of trusting in their wealth especially since they could lose them overnight and riches have no power to give eternal life.
- To set all their trust on God (this is because God gives inner contentment, joy and peace independent of riches or the lack of them).
- To do-good (i.e., run their business honestly and with integrity).
- To share their abundance with the less fortunate and those who lack.

There is nothing sinful in a Christian being rich if the wealth has come by honest labour and the excessive profits are used to extend God's Kingdom or to help those who are less fortunate and struggling with honest hardship.

In fact if a brother or sister has been blessed with great wealth and they do share their abundance Paul says they are storing up eternal treasures in heaven.

Hebrews

Hebrews 11:26 ----- ²⁶Moses considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

Moses was raised in the house of the Pharaoh of Egypt and could have been called his son had he done so he would have received enormous power authority, riches and an abundance of wealth, fame and exaltation from the people of Egypt, but rather than choose the glory of Egypt Moses, even knowing he would suffer great loss chose by faith Christ (the promised Messiah of Israel and prophet to come) (Heb. 11:24-27). Here is great faith Moses had the known world of his time at his feet yet he rejected it all rather than deny God's people and God Himself. This is true faith at its best this world held nothing that could hold Moses from following God no-matter what the loss or what the cost. Moses choice manifests in spectacular glory the love of God he had dwelling in his heart.

Christian ministers and teachers can all learn a lesson from this; imposing religious rules and laws upon brothers and sisters in Christ is not God's way of changing a person's heart rather the Lord draws them closer into God's love and God's grace.

The Gospel proclaims: -

- When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:4-7).
- God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8).

Salvation to eternal life is through God's love and grace in Christ. This is the spiritual and eternal riches of God's glory in heaven. It is not laws and rules imposed on people that changes the heart but love. No-one lays down their life because a rule says they should, but many will willingly lay it down for love.

James

James 5:1-5 ----- ¹Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. ²Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your 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. ⁴Behold, the wages of the labourers 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. ⁵You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. (Revelation 18:15, 17).

A day is coming in which those full of pride and who trust in their riches will be filled with great grief, sorrow and misery because their abundance of wealth will collapse in a moment and they will stand in fear because all they have set their life and their heart upon will be laid waste.

NOTICE.

The rich in this context have never paid their workers a proper wage, but rather oppressed them so they could make greater profits and increase their bank accounts simply so that they could indulge themselves in excess, luxury and self-indulgence. Consider for a moment: today's world-wide trading system is such that multinational and global companies look for nations in which they can pay those who labour in making their products a pittance of a wage so that they can make even greater profits than they normally could. Our entire world system of capitalism is based on greed and oppressing workers to make an excess of profit. This is the reason the Scriptures states, "They threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste" (Rev. 18:19).

Conclusion: Riches and the Gospel.

The apostle Peter wrote; "The tested genuineness of our faith is more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire" (1 Peter 1:6-7). From God's perspective tested faith is more precious than gold this is because if it endures the test it leads to eternal life and everlasting glory. Consider for a moment: if our world's top scientist and medical practitioners could invent a pill that would give people eternal life the billionaires of this world would write out a cheque no-matter what the cost to buy them for all their family and friends, and almost all the world would sell everything they had to purchase one.

This is the high value Peter and the apostles placed on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. To Peter and the faithful brothers and sisters who supported him there was nothing in this world more valuable for any man or woman to possess than the gift of eternal life.

How sad it is that in some modern churches today this high value of eternal life has been lost and replaced by a Gospel that focuses on a blessed, prosperous and successful life now in this mortal and corrupt world and messages that appeal to self, ego and pride. Especially when one considers what it cost Fathers heart to redeem us and the high price his Son paid to purchase this gift of eternal life for all who would humbly accept by faith the message of the cross and the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTES: Concerning New Testament Giving.

Giving in the New Testament is not a command, but an act of love and evidences genuine faith. Following are four reasons for giving in the New Testament: -

1. To give of ourselves to God and the Lord Jesus Christ (meaning we give the throne of our mind and of our heart to God and to Christ and allow God's word and Christ's love to influence us to a lifestyle that honours God and shows love and compassion toward others.
2. To give ourselves to our brothers and sisters in Christ (especially those who are faithfully serving the Lord).
3. To give aid and help to others when it is in our means or our ability to do so.
4. To give from a heart of compassion over and above our means to help those suffering great persecution for their faith in Christ or those suffering overwhelming hardship in life (2 Cor.8:2).

NOTE: should a brother or sister be in a position that they are simply unable to give they should not put themselves under condemnation since Paul states; "If the heart that is ready to give and willing to give out of what we have (no matter how small) it is acceptable according to what a person has and not according to what they do not have.

Paul's teaching is that those giving should not be putting themselves under a burden so that others can be eased (unless they of their own free will choose to do so). Giving in the New Testament is about fairness it is about those who have excess sharing what they have with those who lack and then when those who lack prosper they in turn share with others who lack so that no-one is excessively rich and no-one is excessively poor.

In God's Kingdom there is no such thing as a person who for no good reason (i.e., medical difficulties, depression or in deep despair etc.), who deliberately choses to be lazy and refuses to work when they are fully able to do so (if there is the Bible says, let them starve) (3 Thess 3:10).

One of the reasons for this is that no brother or sister in Christ and no church group has an endless supply of money so what we do have should go to those who are not only in great need, but also deserving of it because when they are able to work and they prosper they will return the kindness and generosity to others so that it

keeps multiplying to many. Everyone is expected to be willing to do what they can to help themselves and their own family and when able do whatever they can to benefit their brothers and sisters in the Lord so that those who gather much do not have excess and whoever gathers little is not left destitute (2 Cor. 8:1-15).

For further information concerning giving, see the title: -

- Tithing New Testament.
 - In Tithing (ON WEBSITE MENU).
-

End