

Should you try to get rich quickly? (28:20)

THE TEXT (NASB)

A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished.

A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent. KJV - Proverbs 28:20

INTRODUCTION



Lottery? Watch out!

Get-Rich-Quick strategies cause lots of trouble. Riches and blessings are very, very different things. What we really want and need are blessings, not just riches.

This warning applies particularly to investment strategies.



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COMMENTARY

Blessings include good health, happy children, a trusting marriage, loving relations with our families and friends, productive skills, respect in our communities, clear forgiveness of our sins, and confidence in the face of death. Riches do not guarantee any of these. So we shouldn't be in a hurry to get rich. That involves risking problems much worse than restricted cash-flow.

Haste Makes Waste (Usually)



There is a punishment for pursuing riches while being fickle to our other duties. It's like the old maxim, "Haste makes waste." Not all hurry is evil—we should hurry to repent from our sins. In our obedience to God, delay is almost disobedience (Hebrews 4:7). So this text does not say that a person who makes haste to be rich will not succeed. He may indeed get rich, but that will eventually be punished. Haste means greed, and greed means squandering the more important blessings in our lives—punishment. So, we must seek blessings, not riches, prosperity, not wealth. When it comes to riches, God rewards obedience to all our duties.

Translation: *makes haste*

The Hebrew word for makes haste, **יָרַח** (?û?, pronounced "oots"), is used nine times in the Bible. Three of those nine appear in Proverbs, where rushing is always associated with undesirable results. The term is used first in Genesis 19:15, when the angels urge Lot and his family to "make haste" out of Sodom. So, rushing is not always risky, but rushing after riches does bring a punishing cost.

A biblical example of the cost of greedy haste is recorded a few hundred years after the Proverbs were penned. The story of Gehazi is about a man discontented with his financial state, despite being employed by a respected and powerful leader. He rushed after wealth and got it, but lost his health in the process. Health trumps wealth. Read the whole, sad story in 2 Kings 5:1-27.

Classic Comments

Gill comments on this passage:



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He that is over anxious, and immoderately desirous of being rich, and pursues every method of obtaining his desires, with all his might and main; that labours night and day for it; though he takes no criminal nor unlawful methods, properly so called, nor does he do anything injurious to others, yet he is not innocent; that too much anxiety in him is criminal; nor is he free from covetousness (Proverbs 23:4). Indeed when a man hastily, or in a short time, becomes rich, though he cannot be directly charged with fraud and injustice, yet he is not innocent in the minds of men, or free from their suspicious and jealousies of him (1 Timothy 6:9).

Misguided Ambition



This proverb gives us a clear warning against the wrong goals—being greed-motivated rather than need-motivated. While it is always risky to rush, rushing merely for riches and ignoring more profound blessings surely brings punishment. This is illustrated in the life and death of Achan (Joshua 7:10-26) and Ananias (Acts 5:1-10). Both demonstrate that God has zero tolerance for the ignoble goal of just more money. Instead God wants us to be content with the basics of life (1 Timothy 6:6-10). God puts spiritual goods and noble character far ahead of materialism. The text does not warn against rushing for basic needs like food. We can all relate to a starving man, rushing for bread. But the fact is, rushing for riches—bobbles, frills, and spectacles—brings unanticipated misadventures.

Investment Styles



In the financial world, this all speaks in favour of a steady investment plan, like a pre-authorized monthly contribution into our investments from our bank. It speaks in favour of value investing, rather than growth or momentum investing. [Benjamin Graham](#), the father of value investing, pioneered the analysis of businesses in terms of their intrinsic value, in order to identify mispriced securities. Legendary investor Warren Buffett credits Graham for the intellectual framework that made him one of the greatest investors of the 20th century. Buffett



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describes Graham's book, *The Intelligent Investor*, as "the best book about investing ever written."

In contrast, growth (sometimes called momentum investing) concentrates on companies that exhibit above average revenues and income, even if their shares are expensive. This text implies that value investing, especially with stocks that pay regular dividends, will produce better results than growth investing. Even though growth investing does not imply hasty, irrational decision-making, it can easily lead to it.

The great artist, inventor and scientist, Leonardo da Vinci, had a few words to say on this topic: He who wishes to be rich in a day will be hanged in a year. ¹

Gambling

Slow and steady wins the race; this is Steady Eddy. God rewards diligence, but He does not reward greed, the hasty dash for more. Get-rich-quick schemes, like purchasing lottery tickets, are classic examples of hasty greed. Windfall profits are not wrong, but the lustful, greedy, quick pursuit of windfalls is what God will punish.

Quick wealth comes with its own specific dangers. Many lottery winners can attest to the "curse" of winning a big jackpot. The thrill of the big win encourages them to spend it just as quickly on luxuries. They're often left with less than they started, owing payments on outstanding debt. A break-down in a marriage, tumultuous family quarrels, and unwanted media attention are just a few ways a big win can be harmful.

Here is an excerpt from the National Post: "Big win 'lottery curse' begets another riches-to-rags tale," by Joseph Brean (August 10, 2016).

Money also changes people's outlook on those close to them, according to H. Roy Kaplan, a sociologist at the University of South Florida, who has surveyed hundreds of winners. He found that people who are already introverted tend to become more anxious and suspicious after they win.

He found Americans tended to move house immediately to areas of established privilege, whereas Canadians tended to renovate. Nearly 80 per cent of winners from both countries quit their jobs, often to their regret, and many who kept working were alienated from co-workers, as if they no longer needed or deserved to be working....



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Edward Ugel, author of *Money for Nothing: One Man's Journey Through The Dark Side of Lottery Millions*, has said that, of the thousands of winners he interviewed, a few were happy, "but you would be blown away to see how many winners wish they'd never won."

[You can read the full article here.](#)

Look up the Key Word "Lottery" to read more about this topic.

Busy Losers



Someone making haste to be rich does not look lazy. He may even be admired by the business community as highly industrious. But he is almost certainly ignoring warnings from his conscience about the better things in his life, like his health and family.

He is likely over-insured with all kinds of policies—life insurance, disability insurance, critical illness insurance, long-term care insurance, accidental life insurance, business loss insurance, travel insurance, additional health insurance, extended warranty insurance, umbrella policy insurance, etc., etc. He may expect sub-consciously trouble in the areas of his life, ignored in his all-out rat-race. Learn more by finding the answer to: [How hard should you work to get rich?](#)

Wrong Priorities

Why is hurrying to get rich wrong? It's not that riches and wealth are generically evil, but God wants us to put first things first. Specifically, He wants our best efforts to focus on justice, kindness, and humility (Micah 6:8). We should view riches as a rewarding by-product, not a primary pursuit. The text contrasts righteous pursuits—seeking blessings—with an all-out dash for one specific blessing, more money. Having more money is not evil, but if other, more important duties are ignored, such get-rich-quick efforts will bring suffering. Question: Who is rich? Answer: Whoever is happy with what they have.



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus was never in a hurry.

He certainly was not in a hurry to get rich—rich in the earthly sense, that is. All He had were the clothes He wore. His greatest treasures were His relationships with God, His Father, and with His disciples.

He turned down the benefits of possessing all the wealth in the world (Matthew 4:9), so that He could fully obey His Father-God.

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Save something, consistently and slowly perhaps on a weekly basis.
- Identify at least three dangers associated with riches.
- Contrast haste and greed with prayer, patience, and persistence.
- Identify pursuits more significant than riches. Make them your goal.

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take first? Ask Him.



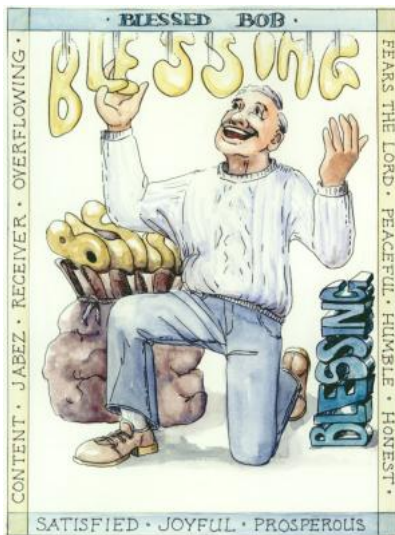
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KEY WORDS

abundance, blessing, consistency, contentment, business, faith, focus, gambling, greed, haste, insurance, lottery, loyalty, more assets (quantity), punishment, rich

ILLUSTRATION

[Who is Blessed Bob?](#)



Blessed Bob is very fortunate. He recognizes that good things come from God! God is shunned by many, but not by Bob. Bob loves God. He wants to receive all the good things that God has for him. He's not too proud to ask God for help. In fact, Bob prays often. Some think that he prays without ceasing. But he is not without fault. Blessed Bob makes many mistakes, and when he does, he admits his errors. He corrects them and presses on.

Bob gets so many blessings he feels overwhelmed. His cup overflows. But he doesn't hoard his blessings. Like Generous Genevieve, Blessed Bob likes to give to others. He is truly prosperous, even though there are many who are financially richer than he is.

We see examples of Blessed Bob in the Bible in the lives of Job and Joseph. Job went through some very good times (Job 29:2-25) and some very bad times (Job 2:7-8). Joseph had similar financial cycles (Genesis 39:2,21). Both men kept their focus on God, not on their financial condition (Job 1:21, Genesis 50:19-21).

More recently we have examples of those who have lived with the same life focus. R. G. LeTourneau was the inventor of the largest earth moving machines in the 1930's and 1940's. He credited God for his tremendous success. He gave away much of his wealth while he was



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still living saying that, "When I shovel money out to God's interests, God shovels money back to me, but God's shovel is bigger than mine." He was called the mover of men and mountains because of his great work and influence. On his gravestone, R. G. LeTourneau left all visitors with these words, SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU MATTHEW 6:33.

Blessed Bob is full of joy. He is satisfied with life!



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FOOTNOTES

1. <http://www.quotesigma.com/65-top-quotes-by-leonardo-da-vinci/> Accessed 8 August 2018

