

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

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

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



Watch out!

Get-**Rich-Quick** strategies will cause you much trouble. Riches and **blessings** are not the same thing. There's a big difference. What you really want is blessings, not just riches.

This warning also applies to investment strategies.



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COMMENTARY

Blessings include good health, loving relationships with family members and others, forgiveness from sins, no fear of the after-life, valuable skills, being respected by others, wisdom, a good reputation, healthy children, a great marriage, and more. Having riches does not guarantee any of these. Therefore don't be in a hurry to get rich lest you cause yourself other problems that are much worse than poverty.

Haste Makes Waste (Usually)



There is a punishment for pursuing riches and failing to be **faithful** to other objectives. It's like the maxim, "Haste makes waste." Not all haste is evil. We should make haste to repent from what we know is wrong. When it comes to obeying God, we should not put off obedience until tomorrow (Hebrews 4:7). The text does not say that a person **who makes haste to be rich** will not get rich; he may indeed get rich, but will also be **punished**. Haste plus greed spells disaster through punishment. Therefore seek blessings and not riches, prosperity rather than wealth. When it comes to riches, God rewards diligence.

Translation: *makes haste*

The Hebrew word for makes haste, **יָרַח** (yûḥ, pronounced "oots"), is used nine times in the Bible. Three of those nine appear in Proverbs when rushing is always associated with undesirable consequences. The term is first used in Genesis 19:15 when the angels urged Lot and his family to "make haste" out of Sodom. Although rushing is always a risky venture it is not evil per se; however, when the rushing is in the pursuit of riches punishment follows.

Perhaps the most tragic biblical example of this was recorded a few hundred years after the text was first penned. In the story of Gehazi we find a man who, although in the employ of a well-respected and powerful leader, was not content with his financial state. He rushed to get wealth and got it, but lost his health in the process. We know that 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



The text gives us a strong warning against the wrong goals—being greed-motivated rather than need-motivated. While it is always risky to be in a rush, rushing merely for riches while ignoring more noble treasures certainly brings punishment. We see this illustrated in the life and death of Achan (Joshua 7:10-26) and Ananias (Acts 5:1-10). Both examples demonstrate that God has zero tolerance for the ignoble aim of just having more money. Being driven by covetousness and greed is asking for punishment. Instead God wants us to be content with the basics of life (1 Timothy 6:6-10). God puts spiritual values and good character far ahead of materialism. The text does not warn against a rushing to get basic needs such as food. We could all relate to a starving man rushing to get food. No. It boils down to this: *Rushing for riches (i.e. excess, luxury, frills) brings harmful unanticipated consequences.*

Investment Styles



From an investment perspective this speaks in favour of a steady investment plan such as a pre-authorized credit from one's bank account into the financial markets. It also speaks in favour of value investing rather than growth or momentum investing. The father of value investing was [Benjamin Graham](#). Graham pioneered the analyzing of businesses and estimating intrinsic value in order to identify mispriced securities. Famous



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investors such as Warren Buffett credit Graham for the intellectual framework, which guided Buffett to become one of the greatest investors of the 20th century. Warren Buffett describes Graham's book, *The Intelligent Investor*, as "the best book about investing ever written."

On the other hand growth (sometimes called momentum) style investing concentrates on companies that exhibit signs of above average revenues and income, even if their shares are expensive. The 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—a hasty dash for more. The get rich quick schemes, including the purchase of lottery tickets, are examples of being hasty to get rich. Windfall profit is not wrong, but the lustful, greedy, quick pursuit of wealth is what God will punish.

Quick wealth comes with its own dangers as well, as many lottery winners can attest to the "curse" of winning a lot of money. The thrill of a big win encourages them to spend it just as quickly on many luxuries, often leaving them with less than they started out with and, in many cases, continue paying for any of it. A break-down in a marriage, tumultuous family relationships, 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 likely ignoring personal warnings from his conscience about other aspects to a good life such as health and family to which he should be giving attention.

He is likely over-insured with all kinds of insurances (e.g. 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.). Perhaps he is sub-consciously expecting trouble in the areas of life ignored during his all-out pursuit of wealth. 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 other things first. Specifically God wants our best efforts focused on justice, kindness, and humility (Micah 6:8). We should view riches as a possible by-product, not a primary pursuit. The text contrasts noble pursuits (seeking blessings) with an all-out dash to get one specific blessing (more money). Having more money is not evil, but if other more important aspects of life are abandoned in the reckless pursuit of riches, then such attempts to "get rich quick" will be punished. 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 controlling all the wealth in the world (Matthew 4:9), so that He could fully obey 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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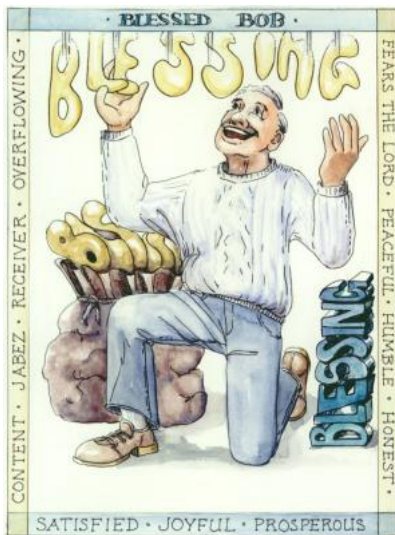
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KEY WORDS

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

