

Greed—how does it hurt us? (28:22)

A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth and does not know that want will come upon him.

THE TEXT (NASB)

A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth and does not know that want will come upon him.

He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him. KJV - Proverbs 28:22

INTRODUCTION



First greed blinds us—even if we are intelligent and educated. Then, imperceptibly, it robs us.

It matters not *how* a person **hastens after wealth**. Anyone and everyone who hurries to get rich quick, loses in the end. This warning is directed toward any greed-driven get rich quick scheme.

What's wrong with how we view riches?



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COMMENTARY

The text does not condemn riches, but only the hurried pursuit of riches. The slow and steady accumulation of wealth is okay. The warning is not against business ambition, but against the reckless rush for **wealth**.

The Eye is Infected from Within



How can an **eye** be **evil**? Evil does not originate in the human eye but in the human heart, that is, evil is part of human nature (Mark 7:21-23). Note the sources of greed that Jesus identified stemming from within the human heart. There are many type of evil and the ones generating greed are shown in bold letters.

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, **thefts**, murders, adulteries, **deeds of coveting** and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, **envy**, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

Our eyes become evil when we look with envy at the possessions of others, or with disdain at the plight of others. Thus the evil eye doesn't really see others as people but is looking at things as being more important than people.

An evil eye is a self-centered eye. Someone once said that the heart does not crave what the eye does not see. Therefore *we need to be careful where we focus*. God is more interested in building wisdom and good character in people than in giving them transitory wealth. God tells us to obtain long term, permanent treasures (Matthew 6:19-20).

Blinded



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It is unclear why this person “does not know that” he will end up worse than when he started. Apparently, greed has a blinding effect that keeps a person ignorant of its diverse and undesirable consequences. He would not seek wealth quickly if he *knew* it would harm him. For example, in mid November 2014, as reported in Canada’s *Financial Post*, “China’s anti-graft watchdog discovered 37 kilograms (82 pounds) of gold, documents for 68 houses, and 120 million yuan (US\$19.6 million) in cash in the home of a Communist Party official who is being investigated for corruption, state media said. The amount that was discovered in the home of Ma Chaoqun, who was the former manager of the Beidaihe Water Supply Corporation, was so large that state news agency Xinhua called it “shocking.”” Greed is never satisfied. It is like a bottomless pit. The sheer amount of this secret cache (multi millions in cash, gold, and real-estate) demonstrates the ability of greed to totally distort rational judgement. It is impossible for the thief to enjoy his theft.

Easy Come; Easy Go

Wealth with ill intent is soon useless. Wealth gained quickly leaves quickly. Not all haste is wrong. We are told to seek God eagerly and not delay in obeying him. However, wealth itself is not worthy of a quick pursuit with reckless abandon.

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.



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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.

Greed's Antidote

Generosity is the antidote for greed. By not giving to others in their time of need we disqualify hurt ourselves. Matthew Henry summarized the sorry state of these folks in that *"while they are making haste to be rich they are really making haste to be poor."* You can accumulate, accumulate, accumulate and still feel empty. God made us to use things and love people. Materialism causes us to love things and use people.

OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus warned His disciples, "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," (Luke 12:15).

In the following parable, Jesus tells about the rich man with the bumper crop. He warns us all that wealth is not a treasure to be used for self-indulgence and a life of ease, but a trust or an engine to be used for the benefit of those in need.

Hoarding kills, (Luke 12:16-21).

APPLICATION



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- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Develop the habit of regular saving. Master your money so that it does not master you.
- Live within a budget. When excess comes, enjoy it with thanksgiving to God, but don't yield to self-indulgence or wastefulness.
- Recognize that greed takes on various forms, some of which may appear to be *shrewd business practices*. Check your life for such practices. Reject them since the sin of greed brings death.

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



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KEY WORDS

gambling, generosity, speculation, greed, haste, hoard, impatience, lottery, more assets (quantity), scarcity, stinginess, want, want, wealth, budget, bf saving

ILLUSTRATION

Who is Quick Buck Betty?



Quick Buck Betty wants to make money fast, and is always looking for “hot tips.” Researching and understanding investments takes too long; she just cares about the returns—especially the short-term returns.

It doesn't matter how the money is earned—in fact she'd rather not know at all! Betty is just eager to “make it” or, even better, have someone else make it for her. She has little time for Steady Eddy and Diligent Daniel—their methods take too long.

Betty views the stock and bond markets like the lottery and casino. She doesn't invest; she gambles. She likes to “play” the markets. Day trading is one of her passions.

