

Does God Want You to Be a Millionaire?

One interesting observance during this month is “Be A Millionaire Day”. Let us take the observance as an opportunity to contemplate God’s perspective of material wealth. It is important to do so because one of the prospective and logical outcomes of professional excellence is the acquisition of material wealth. No honorable profession, vision or venture on the earth can be fulfilled without the support of material wealth. Would it surprise you to learn that statements such as “Money is the root of all evil,” and “Wealth (or power) corrupts,” represent unscriptural perspectives?

First, since everything belongs to God (Ps. 24:1), “everything” includes material wealth. When God chose a people to know and reveal Him, He did not merely give them a religion. but He also gave them a culture. Every ancient culture had a core that included a covenant. If you study the culture that God established—the Abrahamic, Israelite and Mosaic culture of the Old Testament—you will notice that it was built around a core covenant: if the provisions were obeyed, the covenant-keeping nation would be blessed, including material wealth, and would intrigue the other nations to gain the knowledge of the true God.

However, material wealth is never to be the final objective for the covenant man or woman, but rather a means to an end. The example of the well-reputed “golden streets” of New Jerusalem is helpful here. The literal (though heavenly) city (Rev. 21:9-26) is symbolic of the people of God (Heb. 12:22) and illustrates the structure of His kingdom. What is a street? It is a way, a means by which a person may go where they need to go to do what they need to do. Again, the streets of the New Jerusalem consist of gold. Gold is biblically symbolic of divine nature, but it is universally symbolic of

wealth. In God's economy, He intends that material wealth would be a "street" for kingdom people—a means for them to go where they need to go to do what they need to do. The street is *not* a destination.

Therefore, we need a proper context for material wealth. Marcus Benjamin refers to Rabbi Daniel Lapin's classic book, *Thou Shalt Prosper*. Lapin is quoted as having stated that the question of whether God wants people rich is not the real question. The assertion in effect is that "if you are preoccupied with serving others, and learn the value of such service, it will be difficult for you not to become rich." When we add value to the lives of others (plumbing, medical care, counseling, law practice and so forth), those others tend to reciprocate, and through that reciprocity, one may become honorably wealthy.

When God said to Abraham, "I will make of you a great nation," it was the first component of a sevenfold covenant. These promises were for Abraham, his family, and all who would be partakers of the covenant culture, and that culture would precipitate material wealth as well. However, notice God's priority. He said, "I will use you, Abraham (your physical body, your faith, your story, your marriage, your family), as the raw material for the building of a nation." Not only was that God's will for that great patriarch: it is God's proposition to all of us: "If you obey Me, I will use your life to build the lives of others."

The covenant culture that God initiated in Abraham is the basis of kingdom culture for *all* His people. As Benjamin states, we need not be bound by the presumption that these things apply to Westernization exclusively, for God used the "Dark Continent" of Africa and Asia to bring these principles to realization from the start. The early church understood that salvation brought the Gentiles into the Abrahamic economy, and that the same intent that God had for Abraham is what He has for all people.

Finally, we are all motivated by perspective. According to the accounts of those who have studied Vladimir Putin, the tragic situation in Ukraine is the result of Putin's perspective that all the Eastern European nations formerly a part of the USSR still belong to his empire. He thus sees nothing inappropriate about seizing sovereign territories, regardless of the financial, political or human cost. As horrible an illustration as it is, it communicates the power of perspective— through the influence of one deluded man—in the real world.

Now suppose kingdom professionals, motivated by faith and goodness, were determined to take over in their spheres of influence, not by coercion and force, but by loving, excellent servanthood. Song 2:4b (KJV) declares, "His banner over me was love." Love is the influence that the kingdom person wields. That perspective would change the world—and it shall.

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