

THE SURE WORD

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SUCCESS IN LIFE

Most people desire to be successful in life. Yet, how does one determine success? To some success means advancing up the career ladder. To others success means being able to afford the “luxuries” of life – an expensive automobile, a large home, shopping at the most expensive shops and stores, wearing the latest fashions, sporting expensive jewelry, etc. The great American dream is to become “independently wealthy.”

Though the bible does not condemn the possession of wealth or material things, it does warn against the misuse of them. Riches may choke out the desire for the things of God (Luke 8:14). Jesus said, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24). Paul warns that “they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil....” (1 Timothy 6:9-10). He then declared, “Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17).

In the parable of the “rich fool” is a warning against covetousness and trusting in the material rather than the spiritual. The man certainly prospered, but God called him a fool for he laid up treasures upon the earth when he should have been laying up treasures in heaven. In the words of inspiration, “Riches profit not in the day of wrath....” (Proverbs 1:4).

In our day, one does not have to look far to see whole religious systems built upon the false premise that God desires those who follow Him to be materially wealthy, to enjoy the luxuries of life and that all one needs do to enjoy this kind of “success” is to “plant a seed of faith” (which means, make a substantial contribution to their: ministry”). It is certainly true that Jesus promises the necessities of life to those who “seek first the kingdom” (Matthew 6:33), but the New Testament also says, “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1 Timothy 6:6-8). The emphasis in the life of one who would please god must be upon the spiritual, not the material. Our souls are at stake. “Beware of false prophets.... who through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you....” (2 Peter 2:1-3). This aptly describes the purveyors of the “gospel of health and wealth” of our day. True success in life comes when men and women submit themselves in obedience to divine truth and seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness in their lives.