
Words of Truth

Moving Up In The World Means What Exactly?

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What is the "American Dream"? Wikipedia says: "The American Dream is a national ethos of the United States in which freedom **includes the opportunity for prosperity and success**" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Dream). Prosperity and success are major ingredients in what is known as the "American Dream". In fact, "making something of yourself" most often refers to having a successful career. One's "net worth" is a statement of how many assets that person possesses. People are consumed by thoughts of getting more and "making it" better in this world.

How much are you worth? If you answer that question based on terms of this world you'll have to take into consideration how much money you have, what your property is worth, etc. Yet, in the sight of God, this question is not answered in the same manner. Even if you owned everything in this world you'd not be rich in the sight of our Father in Heaven (Matthew 16:24-27). In fact, if you owned everything in this world you still really do not own anything at all. You see, when the Lord returns everything in this world will be burned up (II Peter 3:9-14). Considering that fact, what are worldly possessions really worth?

Having Treasures On Earth Means What Exactly?

To answer the question of the true value of earthly treasures, let's see what Jesus says on the matter: *"And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God... But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Luke 12:13-21; 31-34).

It is not sinful to be wealthy (Ecclesiastes 5:19). It is not sinful to enjoy one's wealth either (Ecclesiastes 2:24 and I Timothy 6:17). The problem we're discussing arises when people make earthly

wealth their goal (Matthew 19:16-22 and Philippians 4:11-13) and their trust in life (Psalms 52:7 and Revelation 3:17-19). Earthly wealth is temporary (Psalms 39:6, Psalms 49:10, Proverbs 23:5, Proverbs 27:24, Ecclesiastes 2:18-19, Ecclesiastes 5:13-16, and I Timothy 6:6-8). Earthly wealth cannot do anything in the day of wrath (Psalms 49:6-8 and Proverbs 11:4).

People who fall into the trap of seeking quick prosperity are people who'll find the end thereof is not good (Proverbs 20:21). With these Scriptural warnings you'd think that Christians would steer clear of the idea that they need earthly wealth to be happy. However, many fall into the errors involved with seeking earthly wealth even though the warnings are clear. You can see those who seek earthly wealth as their goal move further away from the Lord along the road to prosperity. This is true because those who want to move up in this world through wealth have to move away from the Lord.

Moving Up In The World Means Moving Away From The Lord

The Lord instructs us to work so that we can provide for our needs (Proverbs 13:11, Ephesians 4:28, and II Thessalonians 3:10). The Lord instructs us to provide for our families (I Timothy 5:8). However, He also tells us not to work to be rich (Proverbs 23:4). When you study the Scriptures you find that earthly wealth can bring about temptations and traps; which can drown men in destruction and perdition (I Timothy 6:9). In fact, those who set their hearts on gaining wealth will err. Notice this inspired warning: *"A faithful man shall abound with blessings: **but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent**"* (Proverbs 28:20).

You cannot put wealth first in your life (or anything else) and still be a servant of the Lord. God demands of us that we keep Him first in our lives (Matthew 6:33, Matthew 22:36-38, and Colossians 3:1-4). If it is the world's definition of success that is your goal aren't you practicing a form of idolatry (Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5)? Simply put, the love of money will make you evil (I Timothy 6:10)?

Think about the statement, "moving up in the world". Seeing as how the world is evil (I John 5:19), what do you think you're "moving up" in? Aren't we instructed not to love the world or the things of the world (I John 2:15-17)? If you're seeking to move up in the world you surely have to realize that you're moving away from God (Matthew 6:24 and II Timothy 4:10).

Once you've moved up in the world and away from God, what have you gained? You've worked hard. You've bought the bigger house. You've purchased the car you've always wanted. Your family has the best clothes. Your children will graduate from college. Yet, you're still working because your appetite isn't satisfied. Truth is, the person who wants to move up in the world will always want more (Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 and Ecclesiastes 6:7).

Conclusion

When you decide you want your place in this world you are deciding you don't want a place in Heaven (Luke 16:13). We need to keep our eyes on the real treasure we already possess. That treasure is your soul (Psalms 33:18-22). Consider the words of Jesus as our conclusion: *"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed"* (John 6:27).