

## **TRANSITIONING FROM POVERTY TO WEALTH**

Mark 10:43-45 ... "...whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Jesus told his disciples in Mark 10:23 that it is "hard for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God." We must look at this verse in the context of the instruction Jesus was giving to his disciples, which includes today's passage from verses 43-45. First of all, you must appreciate the teaching of Christ that all things in your possession are from God and belong to God. You are entrusted with certain blessings so that you will bless others. This is the principle of stewardship. So, if God has entrusted wealth into your care so that you can help others, it is not your riches, but Gods'. If you are obedient to Christ and listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in how you help others with the resources God has provided to you, you will avoid becoming a victim of verse 23.

The Christian life is not about climbing a ladder to greater success, prestige and wealth. It is about humbling ourselves and serving others, often at substantial personal expense and sacrifice. We do not win souls and earn the confidence of unbelievers by acting superior to them, or flaunting the resources God places in our care. Jesus says "whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant." This is the consequence of trying to be superior over a brother or sister in Christ. When you try to push your way to the top, you will eventually find yourself at the bottom. And, even though you climbed the ladder yourself, you may crash to the bottom and suffer great pain.

The last part of the verse is a reminder that even Christ, who is God and the creator of everything, came to earth as a servant and suffered greatly to save us from our sins. During his life on earth he lived in poverty. Jesus owned no property or bank accounts. God himself, the owner of everything, lived in poverty and served us with his very life.

Some Christians, including pastors, assume a superior attitude and value their possessions once God begins to bless them. They forget where they came from, and elevate themselves above their Christian brothers and sisters. They feel they have earned a special pew in the church and fight for it. They believe they deserve to serve on the deacon board because they have money. They out-dress others in the church as a symbol of their success and wealth. They make their tithes and offerings public knowledge so others will praise them.

If God chooses to bless you with wealth, you must be careful to transition from poverty to your new status without disturbing your relationship with God, your ministry to others, and your integrity. God will never bless you with wealth that he expects you to spend on yourself or hoard. God's blessings are meant to be shared with others. If you, instead, choose to flaunt your wealth and use it to display scorn for those who have little, you may find yourself reduced to being a "slave of all."

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