



[Deuteronomy 32:15](#)

(15) "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked;
You grew fat, you grew thick,
You are obese!
Then he forsook God *who* made him,
And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.
New King James Version

Jeshurun is a code name for Israel. It literally means "the upright one." The word may have been written with a certain measure of sarcasm. Or, it may have been written as a warning to this "upright one"—Jeshurun or Israel—about when he was most likely to fall to the enemy.

This is an interesting warning from [God](#) of the power of affluence to turn a person away. It is such a subtle form of persecution that we bask in it. It does not have to be a form of persecution or trial; it depends on our mindset. However, we must realize the power that it has. God is prophesying that the affluent's lack of character to handle the wealth is really what destroys them.

According to John Wesley—the founder of Methodism—wealth has destroyed the godliness of more people than any other thing. One might think, "I am not wealthy," but Wesley defined a wealthy person as anyone who had food, clothing, a place to sleep, and just a little bit left over each day. According to this definition, nearly every one of us qualifies as being wealthy. The problem with wealth is that it demands that we manage it and that we take care of what it provides. If we are not careful, it can be a consuming distraction. This is what John Wesley means.

It does not have to be that way. This is obvious from the fact that the Bible reports to us that Abraham was very wealthy. He was not just rich—he was *very* rich. David, too, was very rich. These were two great men in the eyes of God. The problem is that hardly anybody can use wealth in the right way, that is, manage it without it becoming a

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consuming occupation in itself. Yet, of and by itself, wealth is a neutral.

Most of us do not have the mindset of wealth's neutrality, which is a defense, because we have been reared in a culture that is wealthy, and it keeps prodding us to become wealthier and wealthier. It promotes the idea that we are nobody unless we possess wealth. This tends to work against us, making wealth difficult for us to control.

The Bible and the church are not against wealth, but we have to be aware of what the Bible says about it—that it can be one of the greatest deterrents to spirituality that we could possibly be given. Maybe God is blessing us when he does not prosper us so much. . . .

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

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