



## Genesis 13:1-2

(1) And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. (2) And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

## Genesis 26:12-14

(12) Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him. (13) And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: (14) For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.

*King James Version*

What if a person truly denies himself, works hard and wisely, and actually becomes wealthy? This question touches on our attitudes toward people who have accumulated wealth, whether in or out of the church, and it may severely test our judgment of them.

God blessed both Abram and Isaac. Obviously, He is not against wealth, as if it were some kind of evil burden imposed upon sinners. Wealth, however, brings trials just as surely as it brings blessings. We must not forget that Jesus warns that it is more difficult for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle (Matthew 19:24). Wealth presents temptations, and they are not always easily handled.

One major difficulty is that wealth tends to pave the way for a person to destroy himself spiritually through the destruction of his faith in God. This happens because the wealthy person has the tendency to place his trust in his wealth rather than in God (Matthew 19:20-22). A second major problem is

that wealth tends to promote pride because of a person's excessive self-admiration over being astute enough to accumulate it. Scripture reminds us, though, that God responds to the humble ([Isaiah 66:2](#)). Thus, the Bible's overall warning is that, in the unwary, wealth can subtly create division between its owner and God through misplaced trust.

[Hebrews 11:36-38](#) presents us with another view of the picture regarding God and wealth:

Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom [the world](#) was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

By comparing this record with God's enriching of Abraham and Isaac, we learn that God deals with those He calls according to His purpose, that is, according to what He desires to accomplish through or in them. The Jews of Christ's time generally believed that, if someone was prosperous, it was evidence that he was a good person and God was blessing him. However, that may or may not be true. The record of Scripture shows that many evil people become wealthy, and Solomon makes note of this in Ecclesiastes.

The other side of the coin is that some people believe that, if a person is virtually destitute, he must be hiding a [sin](#). We must learn to be careful in our judgment because neither blessing nor curse provides always-true evidence of the person's spiritual condition. To ensure our standing before God, we must diligently pursue His righteousness by carrying out our Christian responsibilities in the hope that God in His mercy might see fit to bless us with spiritual wealth.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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