

Wrong Priorities

“And he (Jesus) told them this parable: The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. **And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself** but is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:16-21, NIV, emphasis added)

So here’s an already rich man who becomes even more wealthy due to another good harvest. He might have worked hard for it, but ultimately it was God’s doing as no man can make plants grow, let alone ensure proper plant growing seasons. But never mind, he applies a scheme to ensure he can live on his wealth for a long time. Does that ring a bell?

Isn’t it interesting that electronic and printed media hammer us with commercials and advertisements, presenting luring offers to increase our wealth, to ensure sufficient provision for times in need and to stash money aside wisely so that we don’t have to work for an income anymore once we reach a certain age, which we call retirement? Why do we hardly question those programs and schemes? Why, as believers, do we follow and endorse these worldly ways so uncritically? Cause they sound logic and appealing? Many of us have already painfully experienced that those schemes can’t hold what they promise.

To my knowledge, apart from the incident with Joseph in Egypt relating to a specific season, there’s not a single instructing passage in the Bible that generally supports above ideas. Nowhere an instruction to increase wealth to become economically independent from God. Nowhere an instruction to store up for times in need to not bother the Lord (even the often quoted Proverbs 30:25 is more about making proper use of the seasons rather than storing up to become independent). And nowhere an instruction to ensure that by the day we retire (which is also man’s idea and not God’s) we have secured ample provision so that God doesn’t have to provide for us anymore for the rest of our lives.

We don’t find those instructions in the Bible, because they are quite simply not there. They are not there, because God never wanted us to become independent from Him. Remember, man’s inclination for independence caused The Fall! God’s desire is to take care of us and provide for us every single day of our life, until we die (Mt 6:25-33, Lk 12:22-33)! So those smart and wise sounding instructions on securing provision ourselves for ourselves might be valid for nonbelievers. However they are not biblical since it would make us concentrate on money in all our work and endeavors instead of the Kingdom. Yet Jesus clearly said that we can’t serve both God and money (Mt 6:24, Lk 12:35).

Sounds bananas? Well, the following verses stress the danger of setting wrong priorities:

“And He (Jesus) said to them, ‘Guard yourselves and keep free from all covetousness (the immoderate desire for wealth, the greedy longing to have more); for a man’s life does not consist in and is not derived from possessing overflowing abundance or that which is over and above his needs.’” (Luke 12:15, Amplified Bible)

“[...] since you are like lukewarm water [...] I will spit you out of my mouth! You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing!’ And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. So I advise you to buy gold from me—gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. [...] (Jesus in Revelation 3:16-18, NLT-SE)