

## James #6: Faith When You Have a Lot of Stuff

*Real faith means we are accountable to God for what we do with anything we possess beyond our most basic needs.*

- James saves his harshest words for people who abuse wealth.
- We may not feel wealthy, but wealth is simply any surplus we have beyond what we need to survive. Thus we're all pretty rich.
- The Bible is not anti-wealth, but is realistic in seeing that how people relate to wealth can be tainted by sin.
- God watches what we do with our money.
  - God hears the cries of people exploited over money.
  - We will be accountable to him for how we get and use money.

Be ethical with your money. (James 5:4)

- The biggest claim against the rich in James is not using money justly.
- **James 5:4** Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.
- If you owe people money, pay them.
  - **Romans 13:7** Give to everyone what you owe them.
- Don't cheat others financially: workers, customers, tenants, etc.

Be generous with your money. (James 2:15)

- **James 2:15** Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?
- The Bible always calls people with material resources to generosity.
- **1 Timothy 6:17** Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. **18** Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share." (NIV)
- Our hope cannot be in money or things, because money is fleeting.
  - If your hope is in money, it's hard to give it away.
- God richly provides whatever we have.
  - We can give it away because we trust God to provide.

Manage your money like it belongs to God. (James 5:5)

- **James 5:5** You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.
- Average American has luxuries unknown around the world.
- When we live for luxury, we forget that it all belongs to God, not us.
  - We only manage it for him.
- **Deuteronomy 10:14** To the Lord belongs the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it.

Change your attitude about your money. (Matthew 6:19-21)

- Underlying the actions of being ethical and generous lies our attitude.
  - The best way to change an attitude is to invest in a choice.
  - First we have to be pursuing God's will where it is clear.
- **Matthew 6:19** Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. **20** But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NIV)
- We can have so much more than this world's money can offer.
  - But we must invest our material treasure in eternal things.