**THE DECEPTION OF RICHES**

Sunday School Lesson 10

*Deceptions of the Devil*

Matthew 13:22

10/24/2021

**Introduction:** For our tenth lesson on the deceptions of the Devil, we are going to look at the deception of riches. Thus far, we have considered the deception of other gods, reaping, wisdom, hearing, pride, the last days, unrighteousness, the tongue, and alcohol. As with the other deceptions, the believer should understand just how dangerous the deception of riches is. Unlike last week’s lesson regarding alcohol, the problem with riches is that money is not the problem in and of itself. Money is not sinful. Furthermore, there is no command in the Word of God that forbids wealth for the believer. In fact, there are many wealthy saints found all throughout the Bible. Abraham was a very wealthy man. Job had great wealth before his trial of faith, and he had even greater wealth afterwards. Certainly, King David and King Solomon were not lacking when it came to material possessions. The Bible is filled with amazing principles that help guide us in every area of our lives. The book of Proverbs is particularly helpful in instructing us how to handle ourselves during our daily interactions in this world. When a believer follows Biblical teachings such as diligence, obedience to authority, and Godly stewardship, he will often prosper financially in his endeavors. Despite this, we have many warnings regarding wealth. Let’s consider how riches can deceive.

1. **THE DECEPTION OF RICHES MAKES WEALTH THE ULTIMATE GOAL IN THIS LIFE.**
2. **Notice that riches convince many that they should be their first concern, but this conflicts with the priorities found in the Bible (Matthew 13:22; 6:8-33; Luke 16:19-31; Mark 8:36; Hosea 12:7-8).** The call of money drives many away from the Lord and leads them to constant pursuit of wealth. Sadly, wealth has convinced so many that it is the number one priority in this world. This is not just speaking of the unbeliever. There are a host of believers that are likewise led by the pocketbook. If we are being honest, could we say that we are led more by the Spirit or by our bank account? The Lord expressly warned His disciples not to be like the unbelievers in the world in this area. He encouraged them that the Father understands our needs in this world. We must seek Him first and His kingdom. It is so incredibly easy to allow wealth to become the top priority. We are reminded of its necessity everywhere that we look. Sadly, many Christian parents perpetuate the deception of wealth by what they emphasize to their children. Do we spend more time encouraging children in our home to have a real walk with God or to make sure that they make decisions that will set them up well financially?
3. **Notice that riches give mankind a great sense of accomplishment and security (Proverbs 10:15; 11:28; 18:11; 28:11; Ecclesiastes 7:12; Psalm 49:6; 52:7; 1 Timothy 6:17).** The Bible speaks often of those who trust in their riches. Money is a defence. The rich man’s wealth is his strong city and a high wall. Wealth can produce high-mindedness. Why does this happen? It happens because the wealthy man and many others have been deceived into thinking that wealth is the goal. Thus, if you have obtained riches, you have accomplished something of great consequence. The wealthy in our society are regarded as people worth listening to. When a parent with grown children is asked about the status of their children, what is the first thing that is mentioned? Usually, the conversation starts with how well their child is doing in some career that pays well. Doesn’t that tell us everything about our perspective on wealth and success? Self-worth has been tied to financial accomplishment. Additionally, we find security and stability in wealth. We are likely all guilty of this on some level. Wealth should not be the product of security for the believer. We are to find rest and comfort in the Lord.
4. **THE DECEPTION OF RICHES MAKES ITSELF TO BE AN EASY MASTER.**
5. **Notice that riches promise the easy path with consolation and many friends, but wealth is a fleeting thing that must be constantly sought after (Luke 6:24; Proverbs 14:20; 19:4; 23:5; 28:22).** The Lord warned that there is woe unto those who are rich because they have received their consolation. It is true that money can be a great consoler of the problems of man. This is what makes wealth seem like an easy master to serve. After all, if you have it, then you can find comfort in it. You also will find many disciples of money that will be there with you. They will befriend you. They will be right there alongside you to encourage you in your service to wealth. Yet, wealth is fleeting. Riches certainly make themselves wings. They fly away as an eagle toward heaven. There is a constant pursuit that is needed. The lifestyle has to be maintained. How many people are there in our nation who have become slaves to their lifestyle? They must keep it up. They need the money to fill the void. They need the money for the consolation. Thus, they must keep working for that money. Wealth is definitely not an easy master to serve!
6. **Notice that when riches are in command, they require obedience to the way of the wicked (1 Timothy 6:9-10; Luke 16:13; Proverbs 22:16; 28:22).** The love of money is the root of all evil. Consider the strong implication of this statement from the Word of God. All acts of evil (harm to others) start foundationally with a love of money. Riches make for an unpleasant master. They cause man to do unseemly things. Men have lied to serve the master of riches. Men have rebelled against God to serve the master of riches. Men have killed others to serve the master of riches. Is there anything that man is unwilling to do in the pursuit of wealth? The Lord tells us that man cannot serve two masters. We must choose whether to serve the Lord or serve mammon. The world would like to convince us that the Lord is a harder master to serve. Yet, the Lord tells us to take His yoke upon us. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. The yoke of riches is hard and heavy. Many believers have fallen because they have followed the wrong master. They have been deceived into thinking that they are following the easy way.
7. **THE DECEPTION OF RICHES MASKS THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUALLY DESTITUTE.**
8. **Notice that riches cause us not to see the spiritual things that we lack (Luke 18:24-25; Revelation 3:17).** The Lord describes this problem perfectly for us in Revelation 3:17. We know of the lukewarm condition of the church of Laodicea. Do we consider why they were lukewarm? The Lord tells us that it was because of their wealth. They said to themselves that they were rich. In their eyes, they were in need of nothing. Yet, the Lord law something totally different from this church. He told them that they were wretched. They were also miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Essentially, they were the exact opposite of what they thought that they were. All of their wealth caused them to be blind to their actual condition. This is why the Lord tells us that it is very difficult for a rich man to be saved. What need does a rich man have to be saved? From his perspective, he has absolutely everything that he needs. He does not need to be saved from anything. He is living his best life now. He is perceivably happy. Woe unto the believer that falls into this deception of wealth. It quits the convicting voice of the Holy Spirit.
9. **Notice that riches allow us to appease our conscience toward God through shallow giving (Luke 18:11-14; 21:1-4; Acts 8:20; Isaiah 1:11).** It is easy for a rich man to give unto the Lord. This does not mean that he will do so, but if he is a man of perceived piety, he will likely give something to either the Lord or to even the poor. The prideful pharisee stood and proclaimed his goodness before the Lord because he had given faithfully. The rich men came and cast in of their abundance. The Israelites gave of their abundance unto the Lord through sacrifices. Truthfully, these sacrifices were not actual sacrifices. They more closely resembled peace offerings. They were attempting to pay off the Lord with the hopes of appearing justified in His sight. How foolish to think that the blessings and gift of God could be purchased with money! There are so many poor souls who have been deceived by false preachers into thinking that they could pay their way to Heaven or into God’s good graces. This is a deception of riches. The Lord does not regard the rich more than the poor (Job 34:19).
10. **THE DECEPTION OF RICHES MAINTAINS A SHORT-SIGHTED VIEW.**
11. **Notice that riches cause us not to see the end of the matter (James 5:1-2; 1:10-11; Ezekiel 28:4-5; Proverbs 27:24; 13:7; 22:2; Luke 16:19-31).** We just looked at how riches cause a lack of vision to our spiritual problems. Now, we must note that riches cause a lack of vision to the end. What is the point of all of the wealth of man? When you die, the money does not come with you. Some spend all of their life working as a slave to riches, yet they die with nothing. Their riches cannot comfort them in that day. There are those who gain the riches to pass them on to their children. They want to provide that stability for the future of the family. What good is that wealth if that child does not love the Lord God? The child will one day perish just as the parent. Wealth is very short-sighted. The rich man kept storing up all of his wealth. What was he saving it for? What good did that wealth do for him when he opened up his eyes in Hell? Friends, do not be deceived by riches. They lend to a very short-sighted view.
12. **Notice that the believer should seek something far more valuable than riches (Hebrews 11:26; Proverbs 22:1; 11:4; Psalm 62:10).** Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. That ought to be the mindset of every believer. Serving and suffering for Christ is of much greater value than what the mighty dollar can provide. The Bible tells us that even having a good name is better than great riches. Have you ever purchased or sought after something you thought was valuable only to find out that it was worthless? We live in a day of inflation. Values change quickly. Ten thousand dollars in the bank account is worth less today than ten years ago. Serving Christ brings value that can never be diminished. When you live for Him, you are making an investment that will always yield dividends. Let us focus on what is truly important. If you find yourself in a position of wealth here on this earth, do not let it deceive you in its value. Do not trust in it. Keep your trust in the Lord!