

## James 5:1-6

9 August 2020

ICE BREAKER: Describe one of the most expensive or prized possession you have.

### LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

(Read verse 1) The world is infatuated with **wealth**. Hollywood produces various shows of rags to riches stories that capture our imagination and applause. The sights and sounds of the lifestyles of the rich and famous grip our attention and stir within us, if we are honest, envy.

James warns the wealthy, who scorn God, of this—**the problem of destination**. For those who make acquiring wealth a dominant purpose and destination of their earthly lives, their destiny is **'misery'**.

1. What do you see are **pitfalls** of **making wealth** the **main purpose** and **destination** of your life?

(Read verses 2-3) James charges the wealthy persons, who do not submit to God, of this sin—'you have **hoarded wealth**'. **Wealth** is a **gift from God** (Deuteronomy 8:18). But when we fail to recognize wealth as a gift, nor are thankful to God for His generosity, nor recognize our role as stewards of our wealth, we are quickly confronted with the two common problems of wealth—**greed from within** and **envy from without**.

**Sinful man** is **broken** in his or her **view of wealth**. Unless restrained by the Holy Spirit within us, we will drown in the twin whirlpools of greed and envy.

2. What is a **position** or **possession** you **badly wanted**, but was **disappointed** when you got it?

(Read verses 3-5) The pursuit and accumulation of wealth by those who reject God can bring judgment not only in the next life, but also misery in this life. Material wealth can be corrosive to the spirit. The word **'corrosion'**, as applied to gold and silver the symbols of wealth, literally means **poison**.

James describes the life of worldly wealth as one of **'luxury and self-indulgence'**. **Luxury** means to **lead a soft life**. Together, the life focused on worldly wealth, outside of God, is a self-centered, soft life that poisons one's soul.

3. What **temptations** or **dangers** would you face if **you** became **wealthy**?

(Read verses 2-6) The picture James paints of **the wealthy, who reject God**, becomes **darker and darker** by the verse. What starts with one's focus on worldly wealth which is both temporary and poisonous, leads to greed and the hoarding of wealth, leads to the unjust and cruel withholding of wages due one's workers, leads to the use of power in the courts to condemn and then to authorize the murder of innocent people, even the most innocent—'those who were not opposing you'.

**Wealth**, undirected by the indwelling Holy Spirit, can cause a **free-fall in morality**.

4. How can **greed** and **materialism** be a **gateway sin** to a multitude of other, even more serious sins?

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### PRAYER GROUP TIME

*(Make a list of people whom those in your group plan to witness Christ to this week.)*

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