

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith  
Audio Script – October 22, 2009

Have you noticed that many of the world's wealthiest people are those who profess no belief or commitment to God and Biblical values? In fact, some of the most evil people are the most successful people! In today's Templates of Truth, we discover two serious dangers to envying their luxurious lifestyle.

Asaph was a Levite worship leader during King David's reign. Twelve of the Psalms are credited to his authorship, including Psalm 73. In this Psalm, Asaph shares the struggle he experienced and the insights he gained by observing the extravagant lifestyles of the ungodly. He said, *I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked* (Psalm 73:3). In verses 4-12, Asaph describes what he sees in the lifestyles of the rich. They appear to always enjoy success and never lose. They are always happy. Regardless of how wickedly they live, their wealth continues to increase, and they never seem to suffer trouble or get sick. They enjoy these great advantages in life in spite of the fact that they are full of arrogant pride, violence and evil. They speak wickedly against God and His ways, yet continue to prosper in their luxury, extravagance and happiness.

When Asaph looked at his life in comparison he saw something very different: *I have kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence; (yet) I have been stricken all day long, and chastened every morning* (Psalm 73:13-14). Asaph did exactly what you and I are guilty of doing. We make a committed effort to live obediently to God and His ways, yet we often suffer trials & tribulations, opportunity passes us by, success and wealth misses us, and we are treated harshly and unfairly while the people around us who party, drink, cuss, run around, cheat, lie and steal are the ones who are rich, happy and have it made in life! We conclude what Asaph concluded: *Surely in vain I have kept myself pure* (Psalm 73:13). When you allow yourself to reach that point in your perspective, it only results in bitterness toward God. When bitterness and resentment cloud your life, you become irrational and erroneous in your thinking. Asaph admitted: *When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within, then I was senseless and ignorant* (Psalm 73:21-22). Then is when you can come to two very dangerous resolves.

First, that we serve and honor God for what we can get out of it. If I am going to sacrifice my goals, ambitions and desires in life for that which is God's will and way, then surely I ought to get something out of it in return. If anyone deserves money, success and happiness, it should be those of us who at least try to honor God with our lives and not those who have no time for God. Second, that wealth and prosperity are more desirable than God. These are two very significant offenses to God, because one says God isn't good enough and the other says God doesn't do a good enough job. Asaph almost made that mistake: *My feet came close to stumbling; my steps had almost slipped* (Psalm 73:2).

What stopped him? What became his wake-up call? *When I pondered to understand this, it was troublesome in my sight UNTIL I came into the sanctuary of God; THEN I perceived their end* (Psalm 73:16-17). It wasn't until Asaph got his eyes off the wicked rich, off himself and focused on God that he came to understand the truth. When you and I determine to get alone with God in

His Word for answers and insight in life, it is then and only then that our attitudes and perspectives undergo major adjustments and correction. Among the things that Asaph discovered was that the wicked rich had their day coming: *Surely Thou dost set them in slippery places; Thou dost cast them down to destruction. How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!* (Psalm 73:18-19). More importantly, Asaph realized that nothing in heaven or on earth could ever compare to what he had in his relationship with God: *Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth* (Psalm 73:25). To Asaph, the choice between walking with evil in wealth or walking with God in poverty was a no brainer!

The next time you find yourself jealous and envious of the success and wealth of those you know who live wicked, evil lives; and, you feel bitter and resentful because you suffer so much less even though you remain faithful to God; remember that what you have in God and what awaits you in eternity is far more valuable in comparison. Confess your sin of envy and the bitterness you have felt as a result, and accept with thanksgiving that which God has given you in life. No matter how it compares, it is precious and more valuable than all the gold and silver in the world.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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