

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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Pride Inside

Christopher Rudolph, CPA

A few weeks ago, I was privileged enough to do some jet skiing in Upstate New York with some friends. Having only jet skied once before, my friend who owned the jet skis gave us directions about how to use the machines and warnings on what not to do. The warnings were for our protection, because there were areas of the lake we did not know were dangerous and ways that we could use a jet ski that could hurt us. Unfortunately for me, I was not given enough warning (or did not listen enough) about turning a jet ski going full speed. By not heeding the warning, I have a nice bruise on my back to help me to listen more next time. Warnings are for our good.

The Bible gives us warnings regarding our material wealth. Proverbs 18:11 states, "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit." (KJV) Proverbs 28:11 warns, "The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out." (KJV) God is warning men about what wealth can bring: pride. (In Proverbs 18:11, it explains that wealth is seen as protection and sufficiency, and it protects the man's conceit, or can be translated "idolatry.") In other words, wealth can protect a person's worship of himself. Wealth can give a person the idea that he is in charge and that he answers to only himself. The Proverbs 28:11 passage explains that a rich man is wise in his own eyes; he has no need to search elsewhere for wisdom because he feels like he has all he needs to know. The comfort of wealth can bring a person to the extreme of worshipping himself with no need of anything else. This is pride that can bring a person to ruin when wealth is taken away or when there is realization of the frailty of life and eternity of death.

The poor are also warned in the Bible. Proverbs 13:7 says, "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." (KJV) Proverbs 21:17 declares, "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich." (KJV) God is warning men of what the pursuit of wealth is:

pride. Proverbs 13:7 talks about the man who makes himself seem rich when he has nothing. What would cause a man to do this? Pride! The desire is to be exalted by others and to be recognized for something that God has not given him. We see this in our country through the statistics on credit card debt – people are trying to have what God has not given them. Pride even deceives a person into believing that he deserves this pampering of the rich. All this brings is emptiness. This is reinforced in Proverbs 21:17: If a person wants to be pleased by the luxuries of wealth, he will end up poor. With pride, there is never enough, and the constant feeding of it will bring you to the point of having nothing.

So what does this mean to you? Warning: Beware of the pride inside. If you are abundant in worldly wealth, realize that your wealth can bring you to the point of worshipping yourself. You may have earned all that you have, but remember that this blessing is from the Lord (Proverbs 10:22). Remember that it is all His, and that He can humble you if He pleases. If you are lesser in worldly wealth, realize that you will be tempted to believe that wealth can bring happiness. This happiness will be for a time, and then reality will strike. Remember that God has put you in the position that you are in, and that it is for your good (Romans 8:28). Don't focus your strength on making yourself wealthy, but rather in glorifying the Lord to earn true riches in heaven.

There is pride inside all of us that we need to deal with. I have realized pride in my own life through bruises (it's a monster!) as well as other signs. My desires to have what others have materially have consumed me at times. And this is when I must pick up my cross and die daily because I need to live for Him, not for this world.

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