

# Challenge

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PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.

I had the opportunity to go to a Children's Hospital to visit a niece of mine and got a huge wake-up call about the fragility of life. As I wandered through various wards I saw some of the saddest sights any parent would want to see. To see children suffering from tumours and other forms of cancer shook me mainly because these kids had not really had the opportunity to live life.

As I think back on that occasion it makes me very concerned about numbering my days that I may gain a heart of wisdom, as Moses stated in Psalm 90. As a Christian it brought home to me the brevity of life even if we manage to live to the three score and ten the Bible speaks about. What is paramount to me is making sure that my life counts for God. I think one of the most sobering chapters in the Bible is Numbers chapter 14 when God forgives the nation of Israel for their sin of refusing to enter the Promised Land, but His forgiveness did not free them from the consequences of their sin.

All those who were twenty years old and over were doomed to wander in the wilderness for another 38 years and would never enter into the Promised Land. In effect what this meant was that a whole generation would live and die without ever counting for God. Certainly from my perspective this is not the sort of legacy that I want to leave. What is critical to the sort of legacy that we leave is how we spend our money and indeed acquire it.

In Psalm 49 the danger of wealth both in terms of having it and or desiring it, can have a huge impact on our walk with God. The psalmist is so concerned about what he is saying that he strongly emphasises that everyone needs to hear this message, no matter what country you come from, or what people group you come from, or what position you hold in the community, or whether you are rich or poor. The psalmist is very concerned that we have a heart of wisdom in terms of our attitude towards wealth regardless of our lot in life.

When we are looking to manage what God has so generously given to us the over arching principle is **Matthew 6 v33** which says; "But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." So with that in mind there are a number of things that we need to be mindful of when it comes to wealth.

**Wealth cannot keep us from death verses 5-12.** Wealth can bring a false sense of security as to who is in control of life. Wealth can distract us from trusting in the true and living God, and I am sure that is why God allows so few of us to acquire wealth. Charles Spurgeon knew the dangers of wealth when said; "So often when gold comes into the house, the gospel goes out of the house." Spurgeon and the writer of this psalm were very aware of the reality that wealth can corrupt

**Wealth cannot purchase immortality.** I remember when Lang Hancock died it was reported in the media that he had a fully equipped hospital type facility in his home. However, regardless of how much money was invested in that facility, Lang was unable to purchase immortality. We need to see that eternity with God is not something that can be purchased at a supermarket. Salvation is not something that is achieved but received. Wealth cannot obtain us some special privilege to get us into heaven, but it can be invested wisely to bring about eternal dividends in mission.

**We need to see that our redemption is costly** because it cost the life of God's only Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus willingly gave His life a ransom for many and He did it free of charge, because of the joy that was set before Him. In other words He knew what it was going to achieve down through the years as people committed their lives to Him.

Redemption is the **only way** to deal with the bondage of sin and death, and again this not something that can be acquired by wealth. Also it important that we understand that redemption is not transferable. Every person who is a Christian has become so by a personal step of faith in the finished work of Calvary. Redemption is not something you catch, like a cold, but happens because of what you do.

**Wealth acquisition can be foolish** if that is the sole purpose of your life. The psalmist says in verse 10; "Likewise the fool and the senseless person perish and leave their wealth to others." The inner thought is that their houses will last forever. The idea here is that the person wants to leave a legacy of wealth for their family, and to continue the family name. They have failed to see that the best legacy to any family is a Godly one, because they are the ones that last. This is why it is so important that we are wise stewards of the wealth that God has given to us. With generous giving to missions and to the church we can have a legacy that is eternal in terms of converts.

(Please turn over)

Secondly we need to see that **wealth cannot determine our destiny verses 13-15.** Such thinking is foolish because if it were true then we would not need Jesus as our redeemer. He would have been superfluous to our need of salvation. Psalms 14 and 53 both start with the statement; "The fool has said in his heart that there is no God." Acquiring wealth as an end in itself is another way of saying there is no God. As a consequence these people have a reason to fear death. What is even sadder is that all that they have worked for and valued most in life will be consumed in their death. This is not the sort of legacy that you want to be known for.

Only God can determine our destiny and that is why a decision to follow Christ, not our declaration of our wealth, puts us on the road to heaven.

**Lastly we must see that wealth must not dictate our desires verses 16-20.** What is critical in all of this is keeping our eyes on eternity day by day until we go to be with Jesus. There are a number of things that we need to watch for in our daily walk with God.

- (i) Be wary of becoming covetous
- (ii) Keep a right perspective on wealth
- (iii) Be wary of how wealth can feed the self nature
- (iv) Realise that wealth is temporary and salvation is eternal
- (v) Invest your wealth for eternal purposes

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge



## Praise

1. Praise God for the safe return home of the Impact Africa team and for the wonderful experiences they had as they ministered in the various areas whilst in South Africa.
2. Praise God for the people who have recently responded to their need of God in their lives through the slip on page 11 of the Challenge paper, and also for those in the prisons etc in South Africa as the team witnessed and preached while over there.
3. Praise the Lord that we have sent our first delivery to Botswana and for the Freemans who are able to oversee the distribution in that country.
4. Praise the Lord for His protection of staff and facilities here in the Challenge factory.

## Prayer

1. Please pray for the Impact Africa team as they wind down after their recent ministry trip to South Africa. Pray that they will be able to share their testimonies of the Lord's hand upon them as they visited many people, churches, hospitals, prisons etc.
2. Pray that the distribution of papers in Botswana will be smooth and that the paper will be a good evangelistic tool. Pray too for the upcoming Kenya issue that it will be well organised and effective.
3. Pray for the many people who responded to their need of the Lord Jesus both here in Australia and in South Africa that they will grow spiritually as they are nurtured by local churches.
4. We are still having difficulties in our accounts department. Please pray that they will be ironed out soon.
5. Please pray for the families of the Challenge team as it is not always easy when one is working for the Lord. We are all as Christians in a battle and need to be on guard against the evil one.



Challenge Literature Fellowship

PO Box 978, Cloverdale 6985

Phone (08) 9453 3311 Fax (08) 9453 3006

Email: challenge@clf.org.au