

“How Do the Health-and-Wealth Believers Rationalize Their Beliefs?”

I read your [Stairway to Heaven article](#) on materialism and still can't understand why people (and especially these new mega churches) are still so into it. People have actually told me that God wants us to have wealth, and I keep receiving “religious” email chain letters about being “blessed” monetarily. I would prefer blessings of a more loving type . . . !!

My question is always, what kind of “wealth” does that necessarily mean? It is all so contradictory to Jesus’ teachings as well as to His overthrowing of the merchants’ tables in the Temple. How do they rationalize this way of thinking?

Thank you for your thoughtful response to my essay on materialism.

I also have difficulty understanding the “health and wealth” gospel that some profess in the name of Christ. I find no justification for it in Scripture. In fact, I find just the opposite in passages like 1 Peter 4:12-16:

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.

But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.

However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.”

Paul, in Romans 5, points out that suffering is an integral part of developing the character we need to serve Christ effectively. As to where this “health and wealth” gospel comes from, I suppose it begins with the very popular view that “God wants me to be happy” rather than the biblical admonition to be holy as God is holy. Fortunately, many churches (both large and small) work hard to overcome this form of hedonism.

For Him,

Don Closson

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