

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 174

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will encourage you to not be prejudiced, but to treat everyone fairly as an individual. There is something dehumanizing about a label. Once we label our brother as "raca", for example, we can judge him as part of a group without even knowing his name (Matt. 5:22). This label empowers us to place this brother, without evidence, in a category where he may not belong. Jesus said: **"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgement" (Jn. 7:24)**. It is wise to follow this inspired advice and "judge righteous judgement".

History is replete with examples of prejudice. Today's letter will narrow our focus to only consider prejudice against the rich. Once someone is labeled as "rich" it is much en vogue to automatically assume they are evil and selfish. It is further "assumed" by many that their riches were ill gotten by oppressing the poor. Righteous judgement compels us to acknowledge that being rich does not automatically make you evil and being poor does not automatically make you good. Our righteous God judges everyone as individuals, and we should do the same.

Consider, for example, the case of Job. He was the greatest of all the men in the east and owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 she asses, and had a very great household (Job. 1:3). God, however, did not condemn him for being rich. In fact God considered him a "perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job. 1:8). When we look beyond a label and examine Job's life more carefully, we discover that he was a good man doing the very things God wanted him to do. (See Job 29:12 - 17)

- Job delivered the poor that cried and the fatherless.
- Job came to the aid of those who had no one to help him.
- Job ministered to the dying and caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
- Job was clothed with righteousness and justice was his robe and diadem.
- Job was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame.
- Job was a father to the poor and searched out strangers to help them.
- Job broke the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the prey out of their teeth.

Many scholars believe that Job is the oldest book in the Bible, yet notice how Job did the very things that God expects all of us to do. At the final Judgement the righteous will hear the King say: **"I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me"** (Matt. 25:35, 36). Jesus explained that when we have shown such kindness to the "least of these my brethren" He will consider that we have done it unto Him (Matt. 25:40).

While there are certain dangers associated with riches, Job was still a good man. Moreover, Job was not the only rich person to be honored by God. Please consider:

- Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward was apparently a woman of wealth. She followed Jesus with Mary Magdalene, Susanna, and many others and supported His ministry (Lk. 8:2, 3).

- Jesus ate the Passover in a large upper room (Mk. 14:15; Lk. 22:12). This is possibly the same upper room large enough to accommodate 120 disciples (Acts 1:13 - 15). It is also possibly the same house owned by Mary the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12, 13). Note that Mary apparently did not sell this property as others did (Acts 4:34). Note also that she was rich enough, not only to own such a large house, but also to have a servant girl.
- Joseph of Arimathaea was both a rich man and a disciple of Jesus (Matt. 27:57). He was apparently so well known that Pilate permitted him to take the body of Jesus and bury it in his own tomb. Being buried with the rich fulfilled an ancient prophecy made by Isaiah (Is. 53:9).
- Joseph sold a piece of property so valuable that when he gave the money to the Apostles they changed his name to Barnabas which means “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36, 37).
- These are just a few examples that prove you can be rich and godly at the same time!

PLEASE DON'T JUDGE BY APPEARANCES, BUT JUDGE RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce