

Socialism, for all its popularity in some circles, is not a biblical model for society. In opposition to socialism, the Bible promotes the idea of private property and issues commands to respect it: commands such as **“You shall not steal” (Deuteronomy 5:19)** are meaningless without private property. Unlike what we see in failed experiments in socialism, the Bible honors work and teaches that individuals are responsible to support themselves: **“The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10)**. The redistribution of wealth foundational to socialism destroys accountability and the biblical work ethic. Jesus’ parable in **Matthew 25:14–30** clearly teaches our responsibility to serve God with our (private) resources.

Proverbs 30:7–9 is a prayer that models the right attitude about wealth: **“Two things I ask of you, Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.”**

James 1:9-10: “Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the rich in his humiliation”

- **Grammatical Usage:** **“exaltation”** or in the Greek, “hypsei” meaning, “high position; true riches”; **“humiliation”** or “tapeinōsei” meaning, “low position; spiritual poverty”.
- **Literal Interpretation:** The brother who is poor may be glad because God has called him to the true riches. The rich may be glad that God has shown him his spiritual poverty.

Contextual/Comparison: God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. Let's begin by stipulating that both wealth and poverty can be a problem:

I. THE TRIALS OF POVERTY AND WEALTH (cf. **Prov 30:7-9**)

A. IN "POVERTY", WE MAY BE TEMPTED TO CURSE GOD...

1. Like Job's wife wanted her husband to do, when they had lost everything
- **Job 2:9**
2. And as many do today when things don't go well

B. IN "WEALTH", WE MAY BE TEMPTED TO FORGET GOD...

1. As God warned Israel that it might happen to them - **Deut 8:10-14, 17**
2. And as it did in fact happen to them - **Hosea 13:5-6**

II. THE REASONS FOR JOY IN POVERTY OR WEALTH (**James 1:9-11**)

A. IF WE ARE "POOR", THEN WE CAN REJOICE THAT WE HAVE BEEN "EXALTED"!

1. God has chosen the "poor" to be rich in faith - **Is 66:1-2; James 2:5**
 - a. It is the poor who first had the gospel preached to them - **Lk 4:18**
 - b. It is the poor slave who becomes Christ's "freedman" - **1 Col 7:21-22**
2. So even if poor, we can still be "spiritually rich" and on equal par with all Christians - cf. **Revelation 2:8-9**

B. IF WE ARE "RICH", THEN WE CAN REJOICE THAT WE HAVE BEEN "HUMBLED"!

1. The rich are "humbled" by their:
 - a. Becoming Christ's "slave" – **1 Corinthians 7:21-22**
 - b. Being placed on an equal par with all Christians...in which riches mean nothing - cf. **Revelation 3:11-19**
2. Why it is good that the rich be so "humbled"...
 - a. Riches are temporary - **Jm 1:10-11; Prov 23:1-5; 1 Timothy 6:17**
 - b. Riches are unable to redeem our souls - **Psalms 49:6-9, 13-20**
 - c. The love of money is a "quagmire" and a source of "self-inflicted injuries" – **1 Timothy 6:9-10**
3. In other words, it is good that in coming to Jesus Christ we find these things out...
 - a. Or we might have made the same mistake many make today
 - b. Thinking that money provides true security (remember the rich fool? - **Luke 12:13-21**)

Review

1. Even in the trials of poverty or wealth, there can be a cause for rejoicing!
2. For Jesus is "The Great Equalizer"
 - a. Exalting the poor who are rich in faith
 - b. Humbling the wealthy by basing their salvation not on wealth: but the blood of Jesus and the obedience of a humble and contrite spirit
 - c. Keeping these thoughts in mind will help us learn to be content in whatever financial conditions we may find ourselves, as Paul wrote in **Philippians 4:11-13**.

➤ **Conclusion:** The important question is not "How rich are you?" but "**How rich IN FAITH are you?**"