Healthy, Wealthy, And Wise

One of Benjamin Franklin's most notable quotes is, "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise." His statement sums up what most people seek out of life - health, wealth, and wisdom - but not necessarily in that order. Today, our society would likely place wealth as the first priority as such is how most define one's stature in life. How much stuff you have, and the grandeur of that stuff is the true measure of how you have done in life, i.e., your success. Obviously, the more you have, the more successful you are, according to some people. Arguably, health and wisdom have been replaced by who you know or associate with, as such easily ties back into the grandeur of life. Again, this is most of society's mindset.

Although there is nothing wrong with having wealth, or even knowing wealthy or influential people, as Christian's we must be diligent to keep our spiritual priorities straight while on this earth.

Jesus declares, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will b e loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). Christians can easily be caught up in the whirlwind of climbing the monetary and social ladder if we are not careful. Recall Jesus' warning to His disciples, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26) The declaration Jesus makes regarding the value of the soul is played out in The Parable of the Rich Fool.

Evidently, the Rich Fool lacked for nothing in physical life. In fact, things were going so well in life and he was gaining so much in life that what he had could not

contain what he was gaining. Thus, more stuff needed to be acquired so that his monetary stature in life could continue to grow. The thing lacking in the Rich Fool's life was spiritual acquisition and the preparation of his soul. Therefore, he is called a fool by Jesus because he missed out on his most valuable asset, his soul (Luke 12:13-21).

Perhaps the most vivid example of physical attainment becoming more important that spiritual attainment is seen in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The rich man lived "sumptuously every day," while Lazarus was nothing more than a "beggar" who lay at the rich man's gate as the "dogs came and licked his sores." Both men die. However, Lazarus is carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom, while the rich man is just buried - opening his eyes up in "torments in Hades." The rich man only then realizes his folly as the place he finds himself to be cannot be escaped or changed (Luke 16:19-31).

Spiritual health, wealth, and wisdom can only be found by submitting to God. How, you may ask? Believe (John 3:16) and confess that Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 10:9). Repent and turn away from your sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16, 26:20). Have your sins washed away in baptism (Acts 2:38, 22:16). And then, live as an obedient Christian (Revelation 2:10). We are assured of an eternal reward if we are successful in our spiritual pursuits and daily living (Matt 6: 19-21).