

Treasures in Heaven: A Biblical look at wealth and contentment



**BIBLE
SOCIETY**

Live light

This guide provides a verse to read each day, followed by a question which you can discuss with friends or family. **Read** the verse, separately or together, and then **talk** about what it means, using the question as a conversation starter. Then **pray** together, that you may understand what God is teaching you through His Word.

Scripture taken from The Holy Bible: New International Version (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1984)

Day	Passages on wealth and contentment	Verse reference	Questions
1	Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.	Genesis 1:29–31	In the Beginning God created the universe. He set himself up as the provider of good things in the physical realm. How does God provide for the humans and creatures? How can you thank God for your ‘daily bread’?
2	Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.	Genesis 2:8–9	How does God provide for the humans in the garden? What do we learn about the relationship between the humans and God? How does God provide for our physical and spiritual needs? What can you thank God for his provision?
3	The Lord makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work. He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.	Psalms 104:10–15	Psalms 104 celebrates God as provider. Why does the psalmist celebrate this? How is God’s provision seen here? How does he provide for humans? How does he provide for city dwellers? How can we thank God for his provision?

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Day	Passages on wealth and contentment	Verse reference	Questions
4	The LORD said to Moses, “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’” That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.’”	Exodus 16:11–16	In Moses’ story, Israel grumbles in the wilderness. What had they forgotten about God? How did God respond to his grumblers? What does that teach us about God and how to approach him?
5	But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?” Then Moses cried out to the LORD, “What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.” The LORD answered Moses, “Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.	Exodus 17:3–7	In Moses’ story, Israel also grumbles about a lack of water. What had they forgotten about God? How does God respond to his grumblers? What does this teach us about God? How should we respond to him?
6	Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless. As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them? The sleep of a labourer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep.	Ecclesiastes 5:10–12	The wisdom literature in the Bible has a lot to say about wealth and riches. What is the warning here about riches? Why can’t riches truly satisfy us? Why does wealth cause sleepless nights? What can truly satisfy the human heart?
7	Then I realised that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labour under the sun during the few days of life God has given him—for this is his lot. Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God. He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.	Ecclesiastes 5:18–20	What is the right attitude to have about earthly riches and possessions? What is the purpose of life? What is the true source of contentment? How can you thank God for the material things you enjoy?

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8	“Two things I ask of you, O 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 dishonour the name of my God.”	Proverbs 30:7–9	Agur records this prayer for us. How is it a useful prayer? What dangers does the prayer ask to avoid? Which are your temptations to flee? How can you pray this for yourself?
9	Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone.’”	Luke 4:1–4	At the start of his public ministry Jesus is tempted by the evil one? What is the area of temptation here? How does Jesus counter it? What do we learn from Jesus?
10	Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.” So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.	John 6:10–13	Jesus shows himself to be provider. What does this miracle teach us about Jesus? How should we respond to Jesus?
11	So they asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”	John 6:30–33	As the provider of our physical and spiritual needs, What does Jesus teach us here? What human needs can Jesus satisfy? How is bread a good word picture for Jesus? How can we feed on him?
12	You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honour your father and mother.’” “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.	Mark 10:19–22	Jesus engages in a conversation about who inherits heaven with a religious rich man. What was the rich man expecting? Why does the rich man walk away sad? What do we learn about riches from this man? How could this have been you?

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13	<p>Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”</p> <p>The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”</p>	Mark 10:23–27	How does the word picture of camels and needles challenge us? Why is being wealthy a hindrance? How can rich men be saved? What is faulty about the thinking of the disciples? How does this expose your temptations?
14	<p>Peter said to Jesus, “We have left everything to follow you!” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no-one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”</p>	Mark 10:28–31	Peter continues the conversation, How does Jesus comfort him? What should we expect in the physical and spiritual realm for following Jesus? What is Jesus trying to teach the disciples? How does this show itself in your life?
15	<p>I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.</p>	Philippians 4:10–13	Paul writes to encourage the Philippians. How has Paul learnt the secret of contentment? What can we learn from him? What causes you to be discontent? What is the source of his contentment?
16	<p>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.</p>	Matthew 6:19–21	What are the two kinds of treasures? How do earthly treasures fail us? How should we seek heavenly treasures? Where is your heart? What does your heart show you about what is important to you?

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17	But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.	Matthew 5:44-48	What does God's provision teach us about how he sees humans? What does God's provision teach us about how we should respond to others? What does this look like in action?
18	"No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"	Matthew 6:24-27	How can Money become a master? What kind of master is money? Why shouldn't we worry about food and clothing? What should we worry about? What do we learn from the birds?
19	"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"	Matthew 6:28-30	Why do people worry about clothes? What do the lilies teach us about God's provision? What is this teaching you?
20	So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.	Matthew 6:31-34	How are Christians different in thinking about food and clothing? What should Christians be seeking after? What does this look like? How does this help us keep perspective in everyday life?
21	Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.	1 Corinthians 16:1-4	Paul encourages the churches to be organised in their generosity to the collection for the Jerusalem church. What good tips are here about being generous? How does being deliberate help being generous? How are you organised in your generosity?

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22	And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.	2 Corinthians 8:1-5	Paul commends the example of the poorer Macedonian churches for their generosity? How does their example challenge the richer Corinthian churches? What is the principle of generosity here? Are you giving as you are able? Are you eager to participate in generosity?
23	But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.	2 Corinthians 8:7-9	How does Paul encourage the Corinthians to be generous to the collection for the Jerusalem church? What does excelling in the grace of giving look like? How does Jesus model this? What can we learn about generosity here?
24	Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever."	2 Corinthians 9:6-9	What is the right attitude for giving? How can you be a cheerful giver? What does God provide for us so we can be generous? How can you be more generous to God's work?
25	Now God who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.	2 Corinthians 9:10-11	Why does God make people rich? How are you generous with your wealth? What hinders your generosity? How does God help our generosity? What is the goal of generosity?

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26	This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!	2 Corinthians 9:12-15	How does generosity lead to God being praised? How does material generosity overflow into thanksgiving? How does thanksgiving to God show itself in the receivers of generosity? What do we learn from this passage?
27	But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no-one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.	Ephesians 5:3-7	For our purposes greed is the opposite to generosity. Among other inappropriate behaviours, how is greed rebuked here? Why is greed idolatry? How does this confront greed in your heart? How should you deal with your greed?
28	But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.	1 Timothy 6:6-10	Why do people seek contentment in material things? Where is true contentment found? Why is the love of money a danger? What do money lovers forget? How are you tempted to love money like this?
29	Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.	1 Timothy 6:17-19	What is the godly way of dealing with riches? Where is lasting hope to be put? How can we honour God with our riches? Where are true treasures found? How can you honour God with your riches?

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30	“Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.”	Revelation 21:9–11	The last Chapters of the Bible give us a glimpse of our future treasures. How does the picture language help us to anticipate the new heavens? How is the City of God like a treasure? How do you feel about this?
31	I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.	Revelation 21:22–27	Who is invited to enjoy the riches of the City of God? Why do the nations bring gifts here? What perspective on earthly riches does this teach us? How can you honour God with your wealth? How does this passage encourage us to respond to God?