

YOUR SALARY IS NOT YOUR SECURITY.

1) The rich poor have much to **boast** about. – 1:9

Q: Who is the ‘lowly brother’?

A: A believer lacking social standing or financial influence.

Q: What does the ‘lowly brother’ have to boast about?

- Opportunity to learn the **humility** of Christ.
- Opportunity to learn **compassion** for others who are poor.
- Reminder that this is not our **home**.
- Reminder that our **worth** is in Christ.

Q: What is the standard of ‘rich’ and ‘poor’?

A: By biblical standards most all of us are rich. ‘Poor’ in the Bible referred to those who lived a hand-to-mouth existence.

Poverty in the world today: “Almost half the world — over three billion people — live on less than \$2.50 a day. At least 80% of humanity lives on less than \$10 a day. According to UNICEF, 22,000 children die each day due to poverty. And they “die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death.”¹

Two classes of poor:

- Poor by **circumstance**: (Majority of James’s hearers)
 - 3rd world Christians who experience **predatory** taxation.
 - 1st world Christians born into poverty.
 - Christians who experience religious or racial **discrimination**.
 - Historical consideration: New Testament context is in a corrupt & oppressive regime.
- Poor by **choice**: Those who make poor financial choices or refuse to work.
 - Laziness – Prov. 6:9-11; 20:13; 2 Thess. 3:10; Eph. 4:28
 - Adultery – Prov. 6:26
 - Self-indulgence – Prov. 28:19; 23:21
 - Short-sightedness – Prov. 13:18; Prov. 28:19

Q: How should Christians respond to poverty?

A: Christians should show mercy & generosity with their own finances while advocating personal responsibility.

- Christian history yields the first wide-scale care for the poor.
- Give their **own** money to the circumstantially poor.
- Teach diligence and responsibility to the poor by choice.
- Reject “class-**warfare**” based on covetousness.
- Reject an “**Entitlement**” mentality.
- Teach the “Proverbs Principle” (You don’t **spend** what you don’t have).

2) Financial success does bring not **stability**: Riches fade and so does the rich person who trusts in them – 1:10

Matt. 24:35 *Heaven and earth will pass away, **but my words will not pass away.***

2 Cor. 5:17-18 ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. **The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.** ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

Q: Who are the ‘rich’?

A: Those whose god is money and influence instead of God who gives both.

3) Riches fade but godly **character** does not – 1:11

Conclusion: *So ALSO will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.*

- also* – in all the wealth and power the comparison is to a flower of grass.
- will* – definitely going to happen. No ‘may’ or ‘possibly.’
- fade away* – slowly but surely fade from the pages of anything that has ever mattered.
- IN THE MIDST of his pursuits* – a hollow life cut short. Indescribable sadness.

Point: Don’t waste your life! Invest your talents and treasure in the kingdom of God!

Isaiah 40:7-8 ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 ²³Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, ²⁴but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

Luke 1:52 *he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;*

¹ <http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats>