

**James 1:10** ... and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. (NASB)

1. This verse emphasizes the details of life. The rich man is used to illustrate this. Because of his wealth, he is able to accumulate numerous things that add to his temporal happiness.
2. Many theologians who approach verses 9 and 10 assume the person in verse 9 is a believer because he is poor.
3. On the other hand, they conclude that the man in verse 10 is an unbeliever. There is an erroneous and judgmental attitude by many in Christianity that asserts that rich people are by definition unbelievers.
4. It is not a subject on which we should dwell, but numerous believers in the Scripture were wealthy as this excerpt demonstrates:

The possession of wealth is not regarded as sinful, but, on the contrary, was looked upon as a sign of the blessing of God (Ecclesiastes 5:19; 6:2). The doctrine of “blessed are the poor, and cursed are the rich” finds no countenance in the Scriptures, for Luke 6:20, 24 refers to concrete conditions. But while it is not sinful to be rich it is very dangerous, and certainly perilous to one’s salvation (Matthew 19:23 [The rich young man in vv. 16–26.]). It is because of the danger of losing the soul through the possession of wealth that so many exhortations are found in the Scriptures aimed especially at those who have an abundance of this world’s goods (1 Timothy 6:17; James 1:10–11; 5:1). That it is not impossible for men of wealth to be saved, however, is apparent from the narratives, in the Gospels, of such rich men as Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathaea (John 19:38–39; Matthew 27:57–60), and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10). It may fairly be inferred from the Gospel records that James and John,<sup>1</sup> who were disciples of our Lord, were men of considerable means (Mark 1:19–20; John 19:27).<sup>2</sup>

5. The Tanakh identifies several wealthy biblical heroes including Abraham, Job, Joseph, David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah.
6. In the New Testament, several men are indicated as possessors of wealth: Joseph of Arimathaea, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, Zebedee, and his sons, James and John.

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<sup>1</sup> “Sons of Zebedee,” Luke 5:10 and John 21:2.

<sup>2</sup> William Evans, “Wealth,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 4:3076.

7. None of these men was perfect yet each placed their faith in Messiah. Their distractions were common to fallen man, but their strength was found in their development of grace orientation.
8. Each by grace was saved through faith in Messiah, not by means of wealth, power, or works. They each had their episodes of human viewpoint, but they also achieved greatness when they were oriented to grace.
9. It doesn't matter whether a believer is poor or rich. The issue is the development of grace orientation which requires concentration on and consistency in application of grace to the details of life.

## The Doctrine of Grace Orientation

### Introduction:

1. Grace is all that God is free to do for mankind without compromising His divine essence.
2. Grace is free, unmerited favor and unfailing love from God alone, not from works or because of any human attractiveness.
3. God's love is directed to believers in two ways:
  - (1) He has unconditional love for the unbeliever in the status of spiritual death. Jesus Christ had unconditional love for all mankind when He went to the cross and received the imputation of all personal sins. This unconditional love was expressed by the Father when He imputed the sins of all mankind to Christ and judged them in Him.
  - (2) He has personal love for believers due to the imputation of divine righteousness to them at the moment of salvation.
4. All things from God, beginning with salvation, are received from God as a free gift totally apart from human merit or human works:

**John 1:12** But to all who have received Him [ **non-meritorious grace** ]—those who believe [ πιστεύω (*pisteúō*): transitive whose object is Christ ] in His name—He has given the right to become God's children [ **members of God's royal family** ]

**John 1:13** –children not born by human parents [ heredity through procreation ] or by human desire [ human works are not involved ] or a husband's decision [ the determination to procreate ], but by God [ efficacious grace ]. (NET)

5. Once in the family of God, all human works are considered the pollution of grace, graphically expressed by Isaiah in:

**Isaiah 64:6** We are all like one who is unclean, all our so-called righteous acts [ human good and evil ] are like a menstrual rag in Your sight. We all wither like a leaf; our sins carry us away like the wind. (NET)

6. The virtue required of the believer is infinitely greater than morality. The inner life of virtue is not something we do ourselves. God provides this in grace.
7. Morality is a human conception of what is considered right and proper, but its virtue is dependent upon the culture in which morality is defined.
8. What one culture considers virtuous another regards as iniquitous. Solomon addressed this dichotomy in some of his Proverbs which we have interpreted as wheel-tracks of righteousness versus wheel-tracks of wickedness.
9. Human good and evil are in opposition to grace. Any human work, regardless of how widely accepted it may be by society or the church, is not grace oriented and is an insult to the integrity of God.
10. Further, anything the unbeliever can do is not the Christian way of life.
11. A culture built on establishment standards maintains order in the society. If that culture also possesses a significant number of citizens who submit to the principles of biblical virtue and integrity, it also functions as a Client Nation to God.
12. God's policy related to the love of God is grace. It is sustained and protected by His righteousness and justice and also includes His omniscience, virtue, mercy, and unmerited favor.
13. The Church Age is the dispensation of the grace of God: