

POVERTY,
RICHES
and
WEALTH
W O R K B O O K

MOVING FROM A LIFE OF LACK

into

TRUE KINGDOM ABUNDANCE

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Chosen

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Minneapolis, Minnesota

© 2018 by Kris Vallotton

Published by Chosen Books
11400 Hampshire Avenue South
Bloomington, Minnesota 55438
www.chosenbooks.com

Chosen Books is a division of
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Printed in the United States of America

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ISBN 978-0-8007-9904-5

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Cover design by LOOK Design Studio

Author represented by The FEDD Agency

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Set Sail on the Sea of Possibility

I wrote the book *Poverty, Riches and Wealth: Moving from a Life of Lack into True Kingdom Abundance*, and I put together this curriculum to go along with it, as a way of helping believers who are anchored to the shore of small thinking in terms of wealth to hoist anchor and set sail on the sea of possibility. I was anchored to that poverty-stricken shore myself for a very long time, and I will tell you more about that and the effects it had on my life, my family and my business ventures. I was wholly convinced that poverty was the pinnacle of spiritual enlightenment, whereas wealth and riches were treacherous waters to avoid at all costs. And avoid them I did, sometimes going to great lengths to do so.

The problem is, avoiding wealth entirely costs you true Kingdom abundance, which is too high a price to pay for the “comfort” and familiarity of living in a poverty mindset. God looks at wealth in an entirely different way than most of us do, and as we will see throughout this study, there is a world of difference between Kingdom wealth and earthly riches. Kingdom wealth encompasses so much more than money—although it may (or may not) include that. When we understand God’s definitions of wealth and contrast them with the usual definitions of being rich or poor, it opens up a world of possibilities before us. But it means redefining *prosperity* on His terms, not on our own terms or in terms of the much-maligned “prosperity gospel.”

Prosperity is a risky topic among Christians, as I am sure you already know if you have ever tried talking about it. And the poverty mindset is well entrenched not only among the actual poor, but also among many believers who enshrine poverty as a spiritual prize. Then there are the ever-present critics who will be sure to question your motives for joining a study with *riches* and *wealth*

in the title. (*Poverty* is a much more acceptable term in Christian circles, but it is only one monetary term out of three in my book title.) Yet true Kingdom wealth always requires risk. And it always benefits others, not just ourselves.

In fact, you are not in this for you. The greatest effect of your walking in true Kingdom wealth will be the positive influence it has on others. We will talk a lot about how the best thing for the world around us is when we embrace our God-given identity as His noble sons and daughters and fulfill His divine purposes for us. That includes walking in the abundance He has for us—and for us to share.

“If the highest aim of a captain were to preserve his ship,” said Thomas Aquinas, “he would keep it in port forever.” But preserving our comfort, convenience and, yes, cowardice, living on the shore of small thinking, is not our aim. Our aim is for God’s greatness, glory and splendor to be revealed through us in every way.

I am glad you are taking the risk of joining me on this journey to make an impact on the world for good, by the God who knows no impossibilities. So let’s set sail on the sea of possibilities. The voyage will be exciting, adventurous and maybe even treacherous at times, but it will bring the richness of heaven to earth as we live in all the abundance He has provided for us, so we can carry out all He has called us to do. *May it be on earth as it is in heaven!*

Moving into Abundance

How to Use This Curriculum

This workbook is divided into six sessions that will take you deeper into the topics I explore in my book *Poverty, Riches and Wealth: Moving from a Life of Lack into True Kingdom Abundance*. Each session will take five days to work through in preparation for your group meetings, and each day lists different readings for you from Scripture and from my book. Each day also provides questions to answer that will help you think through what you are learning as you discover more about the role of true Kingdom wealth (as opposed to worldly riches) in our lives and the practical steps you can take to move from a life of lack into true Kingdom abundance.

Move through the daily readings at a thoughtful pace, praying that the Holy Spirit will be your teacher and will “guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). Approach the questions with an open heart and an open ear, listening for the Holy Spirit’s input and direction as you process the information and insights I provide about poverty, riches and wealth, and the mindsets that accompany them.

At the end of each session, there is also a “Life Application” that helps you take what you learned in that session and apply it to your life in a specific, concrete way. Knowledge is valuable, and increasing our knowledge about spiritual things is important. As a co-founder and overseer of Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry (BSSM), I am a strong supporter of serious scholarship. But while educating ourselves about spiritual things is crucial, it can only take us so far, unless we take what we know and *apply* it. To *know* something and to *do* something about it are two entirely different things. Application is an important part of any study. I urge you to

take concrete steps to apply what you are learning in this study by following through with each session's "Life Application." (If you are part of a *Poverty, Riches and Wealth* study group, make sure to implement these applications before your group meetings so that you can discuss the results together.)

Note that the readings, questions and applications in this workbook are not meant to add to your daily busywork, which we all have enough of already. I designed this workbook so that you can use it with ease. Between session meetings, you can skip one study day and come back the next if needed, or you can do two days at a time. Whatever your schedule, you should be able to get through each session's five daily workbook pages easily in a week. Each day's readings and questions should take no more than thirty minutes of your time, and I think you will find that the results are well worth it.

Keep in mind that you will get out of this study what you put into it. Stay faithful in doing the daily lessons, and stick with me from beginning to end. If you do that, the results will dramatically alter your financial mindset as you begin to align with the mind of Christ when it comes to money matters. Jesus was no pauper, and at every turn He showed us the difference between *riches* and *wealth*. He knew His Father's definitions of true Kingdom wealth, and He lived in its abundance daily while on this earth—as should we. Throughout this study, we will look at the very practical steps we can take to do that, moving from a life of lack into that life of true Kingdom abundance.

While you can use the *Poverty, Riches and Wealth* book and workbook at home to study these things on your own, you will also see that there are "Video Takeaways" at the end of each workbook session. These takeaways are included because I have recorded a series of six video segments that go along with these materials. In the video segments, which are geared for use in a small group setting, I have added even more depth and clarification to each session's principles. I have also recorded a seventh Questions & Answers video segment as a bonus that can be viewed at a small group's final study session (or at an optional wrap-up meeting). You can purchase and view the videos yourself, which will greatly enhance what you gain from this study. They were designed, however, to promote fellowship with other believers as you walk through this study together and pray for and encourage each other. It is ideal for you to become part of a group that will use the book, workbook

and video segments as tools to inform and educate everyone in the group and to foster discussion about how each of you can apply what you are learning most effectively. I urge you to join a *Poverty, Riches and Wealth* study group if one is available at your church or somewhere nearby. If you cannot find such a group, you can become a group leader and host one. A *Poverty, Riches and Wealth Curriculum Kit* for group leaders is available to help you do just that.

SESSION ONE

Prince or Pauper?

Much like my condition in Rome with my Batman shirt and ragged jeans, if you make the mistake of judging Jesus' net worth by His humble earthly condition, you will misjudge His prosperity and undermine His mission. The apostle Paul put it like this: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Wait! What did Paul say? Jesus was rich, *but then* He became poor *so (the reason He became poor)* we might become rich. That is incredible! . . .

I want to point out again that Jesus became poor for a reason. His celestial mission was to make us wealthy. It is the great exchange—beauty for ashes, joy for mourning, hope for the hopeless, healing for sickness, prosperity for poverty. You get the idea: Jesus called it *abundant life*.

Poverty, Riches and Wealth, chapter 1

DAY



No Longer Silent

We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, but we are keeping silent.

2 Kings 7:9

You are reading *Poverty, Riches and Wealth* and holding this accompanying workbook in your hands because I could no longer keep silent about the good news that we are princes, not paupers, in the Kingdom of God. If you are like a lot of believers, the first questions you want to ask about that statement are probably, “What does that mean for me in terms of wealth? Are you saying I’m supposed to be rich? Shouldn’t Christians live in poverty?”

Answering those questions could take a whole book, which is exactly the reason I wrote *Poverty, Riches and Wealth*. Different Christians—all the way from people who put poverty on a pedestal to people who embrace what is known as the prosperity gospel—answer those questions in different ways. To cut through the confusion and contentions that result, what if, in the days ahead, we let Jesus answer those questions for us through His life, example and words? What if we let God define true Kingdom wealth for us, rather than hanging on to our preconceived notions and mistaken mindsets about poverty, riches and wealth and how they relate to our Christian lifestyle?

Letting God be our guide in these areas is a great idea, but I will be the first to admit that it took me a while—decades, in fact—to do that. In the grip of a poverty mindset, I was convinced that as a believer I ought to be poor, and that anyone who was rich was in

the grip of evil Mammon. I also did not know how to differentiate between Kingdom wealth and worldly riches.

When wave after wave of revelation began breaking apart my tiny boat of small thinking about wealth, it seemed like the perfect storm. But looking back, that storm was a blessing that washed my wife, Kathy, and me out into the sea of possibility. It unlocked our legacy so that we could release prosperity—the Kingdom kind—on our children’s children. As you read *Poverty, Riches and Wealth* (PRW in the pages ahead) and work through this curriculum, my hope is that the same will happen for you. May what you read and study in the days ahead literally wash you out into the same sea of possibility and alter the course of your history.

- Today’s Scripture reading: 1 Timothy 6:6–19
- Today’s reading from PRW: the introduction, titled “Attitudes of Nobility”

Questions to Consider

1. Did you grow up with an “us and them” mentality about the poor and the rich, as I did? Were you among the “haves” or the “have-nots”? How did that affect your attitude toward people who were different from you?

2. Why do you think so many Christians feel as if they must have secret dialogues whispered in dark corners whenever they talk about riches and wealth in the Church? What can we do to change that perception?

3. My fears in becoming financially blessed were that I might be thought of as someone who was abusing the faith message, measuring spirituality by the stuff I owned and mismanaging money donated for ministry. What kind of fears do you have about becoming better off financially?

4. What do you think it means to have a wealth mentality rooted in heavenly wisdom? How do God's definitions of wealth that I list in the introduction help establish that mentality for you?
