

Spiritual Practices for Thriving Life

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★Write down one new insight you received today...

★Thinking...

- What are the “riches of the glory of...Christ in” me in my life?
- In what ways am I refusing to fully redeem the lottery ticket of my sinful ways in exchange for the “riches of glory?”
- How am I investing those riches to please my master (Luke 12)?

★Applying...

- Identify one cost you have not yet paid to receive the “riches of glory.”
- Consider how you can pay that cost this week.
- Note and reflect on what additional “riches of glory” you received for paying that cost.

★Praying...

- Father, thank you for redeeming my sinful life for the prize of the “riches of glory...which is Christ in” me.
- I pray Lord that you would loosen my grip on old ways, maturing me in You as you shower me with all the riches of your glory.

Colossians 1:25-27 – I became its servant according to God’s commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

I) **Unimaginable Wealth...**

Imagine for a moment that you possessed the winning lottery ticket for an unimaginably large prize. Say, a billion dollars. How would you feel? What dreams would spring up unexpectedly? The commonplace, pay off or purchase a nice home, maybe homes for family members, a crazy car or two, even a few grand trips. What else? A billion dollars to most of us is unspendable. Just imagine, every worldly need satisfied for life... too bad worldly needs are only skin deep.

◆**Priceless treasures:** Such wealth satisfies certain needs like from where the next meal or thousand will come. Sadly, those anxieties are replaced by others like how to protect the money. *Money can’t buy happiness* is not entirely accurate, but the point is the same. Peace, love, hope, contentment, these cannot be purchased for any price. Nor immortality. God offers each of us a prize, one not requiring an exclusive ticket, “the riches of the glory of this mystery (Col 1:27).” This prize cannot be used like cash. It does grant us access to these other priceless treasures. If we think about it, these are the fruits of wellness. The prize is the *Divine Cure* to our incurable condition.

◆**Can't always get what you want:** A billion dollars goes well past our *needs*. It satisfies any possible material *want*. The fact that we *want* so much more than we *need* is itself a symptom of our unwell being. Like those of us who eat junk food to satisfy legitimate hunger, our inner being grows ever more malnourished. Those reading these notes thinking *I can outspend a billion dollars* understand the insatiable potential of worldly *want*, its inability to *cure* the unwellness of our inner being. God reveals His *Divine Cure*, "Christ in you, the hope of glory (1:27)." This mysterious union of His Spirit and ours *Heals* us, producing *Hope* that all we crave will be ours. It is this spiritual wealth, "all the riches of assured understanding...the knowledge of God's mystery...the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:2-3)." These are not human wisdom and knowledge – these are the intimate knowledge of God's heart and His will for our lives.

II) The Cost of Wealth...

Winning Powerball ticket in hand, is there any question whether to redeem it? For all the stories of lives upturned unexpectedly by unpredictable wealth, is there any chance we would deny the power of the ticket and discard it? Unlikely. We would take our chances that new life would be better however different. The tradeoff between new needs for personal security and spending power seems obviously worthwhile. Are we as eager to redeem our unwell being for the *Divine Cure*?

◆**A small price to pay:** A security team may be a good idea, at least at first. A new mobile phone number selectively shared only with close friends and family. A driver and anonymous vehicle. Expert financial advisors to guide wise decisions to protect the wealth. Avoid the untrustworthy, even old friends. All small costs for eternal financial assurance. Similarly, we are granted spiritual assurance, the "understanding and...knowledge of God's mystery (2:2)." The Bible wants us "to be encouraged and united in love (2:2)," so that we are warned and taught in all wisdom so that we may be presented "mature in Christ (1:28)." The small cost to pay for this "hope of glory (1:27)" is to heed the warnings and teachings (1:28), "continue to live [our] lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith...abounding in thanksgiving (2:6-7)." Seek Him, experience Him, persist in Him, be grateful. We replace the empty, insatiable desires of the world with "Christ in [us] (1:27)."

◆**The problem with good intentions:** How many ideas would other people have for how we should use and invest a billion dollars? Real estate, startups, collector's items, art, crypto... Just keep it safe in a bank – that's *CRAZY*...inflation could wipe that out in a year! The Bible warns us that there will be "plausible arguments (2:4)," others will use to deceive us into giving up "firmness of [our] faith in Christ (2:5)." Those who reject the *Divine Cure*, choosing an unwell life, will seek to draw us back into it with them. We again see the virtuous cycle of Thriving Christians united as the Thriving Church as the way to strengthen Thriving Christians.

III) Welcome to the Club...

The most influential wealth advisors are other wealthy people. Conferences bring together the billionaires of the world to strengthen each other. They realize a powerful truth – partnership tightens their grip on riches. They filter out deceptions, however plausible, in favor of sound investments and financial strategies. Surrounded by others "rooted...built up...and established (2:7)," they find it easier to avoid the noise. We Christians are also encouraged to be "united in love (2:2)," so that we have and retain "all the riches (2:2)."

◆**Being rich is hard work:** The wealthiest people appear to ever increase the effort they exert to build more. Buying up more companies, starting new ones, expanding investments, broadening portfolios. None of that is done well without hard work. The apostle, a Thriving Christian possessing "the riches of glory (1:27)," is "suffering...for the sake of...the church (1:24)." He serves it, writing "I toil and struggle (1:29)," "I am struggling for you (2:1)," "I am with you in spirit (2:5)." Through this he rejoices (1:24, 2:5) because he knows this is how he becomes "mature in Christ (1:28)," growing ever wealthier in the Spirit. The fuller we stand in Christ, the more we access "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:3)." The *Divine Cure* is more Jesus. More Jesus is received as we serve His body.

◆**The glory in thriving:** Glory is something extraordinary. Not rich, *extraordinarily rich*. Jesus said, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required (Luke 12:48)." "Christ in [us] (Col 1:27)," the *Divine Cure* whose riches surpass any lottery ticket, requires us to be "united in love (2:2)," and "abounding in thanksgiving (2:7)." Our "hope in glory (1:27)," is found as we "toil and struggle (1:29)," alongside "his saints (1:26)," to share the mystery of Christ in us. Choose to Thrive and unite with His people in the struggle today.