

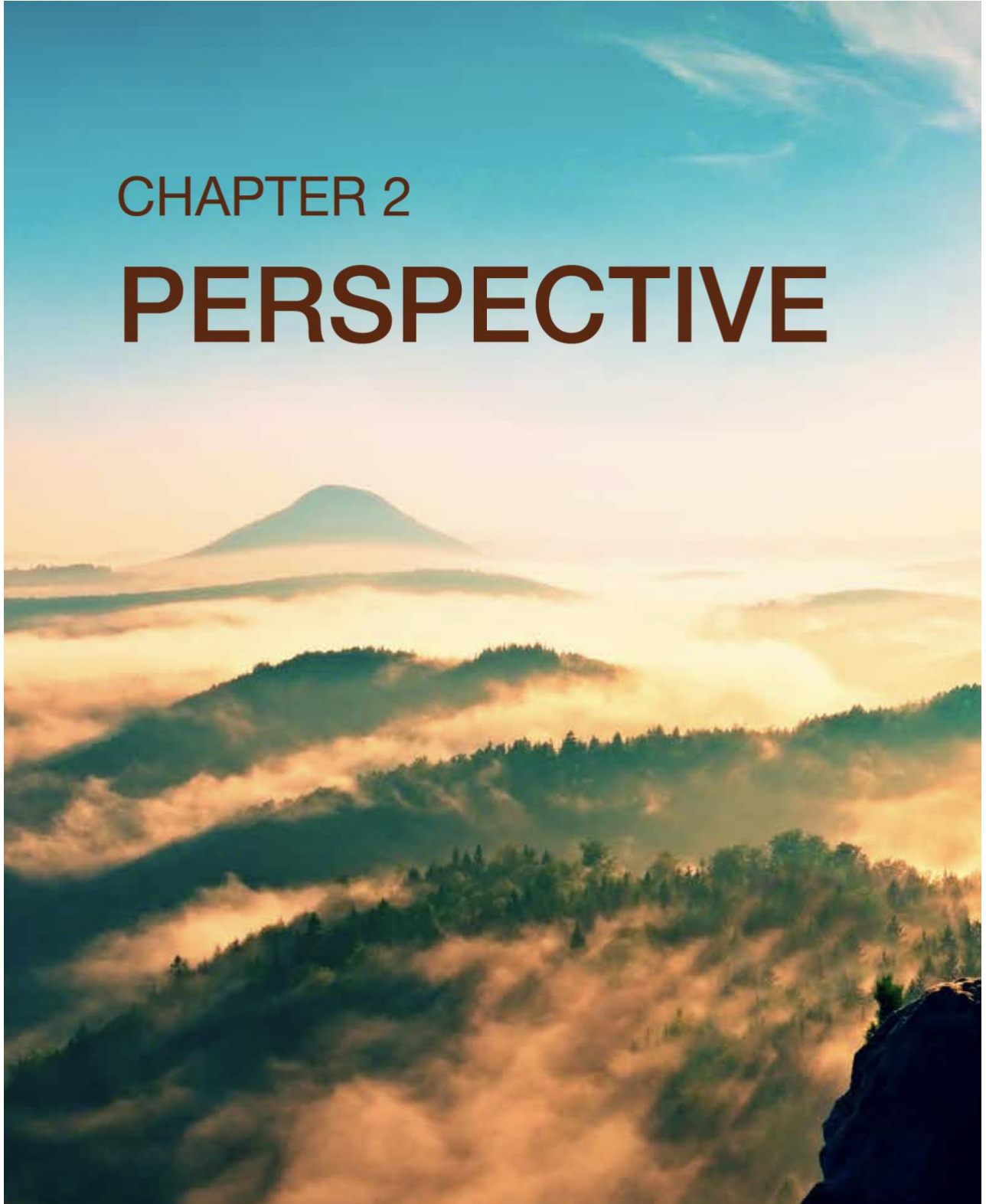


## Chapter 2 Sample- Perspective

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CHAPTER 2

# PERSPECTIVE



## BEFORE ATTENDING CLASS

**Memorize: Mark 8:36.** *"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"*

**Complete the Homework.**

## HOMework

### Day One – God's Perspective on Wealth

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the strongest "Yes") are you financially wealthy?  
Explain why you answered this question the way you did.

**Read Revelation 3:17-18.** <sup>17</sup>"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. <sup>18</sup>I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see" (NIV).

**Read Revelation 2:9.** *"I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich)."*

2. How does God's view differ from the way most people evaluate riches, and how does this influence your thinking?



One man lived in an opulent palace; the other lived in a dingy cell. One had almost unlimited wealth; the other had almost nothing. One was the center of attention; the other was virtually ignored. Almost 2,000 years later, people around the world recognize which of these two men made the eternally important contribution – they name their children after the prisoner and their salads after the emperor!

God's perspective on true riches radically differs from that of most people. Let's unpack what the Lord said to the church in Laodicea in Revelation 3:15-19.

- *"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot . . . so because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth"* (Revelation 3:15-16). First, God assessed their commitment to Him and described it as lukewarm. Tepid! The consequences were frightening. The Lord was poised to spit – literally, vomit – them out of His mouth!
- *"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. 'But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked"* (Revelation 3:17, NIV). The Laodiceans thought themselves wealthy, proudly self-sufficient, and without any real need to depend upon Christ. God saw them in an entirely different light – wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.
- *"I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent"* (Revelation 3:18-19, NIV). The Lord's advice to the Laodiceans was clear. Because your commitment to Christ is lukewarm and your wealth has blinded you to your constant need for Christ, I will discipline you unless you genuinely change.

In contrast to the Laodiceans, God said to the suffering church at Smyrna, *"I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich)"* (Revelation 2:9). They were serious about following Christ and depending upon Him regardless of hardships, heartbreaks, and financial challenges.

Considering these things, let's ask ourselves two vital questions:

- On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most), how committed are you to following Christ and using your time, influence, and money in ways that please Him?
- On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most), how much are you trusting Christ rather than your financial resources to meet your needs?

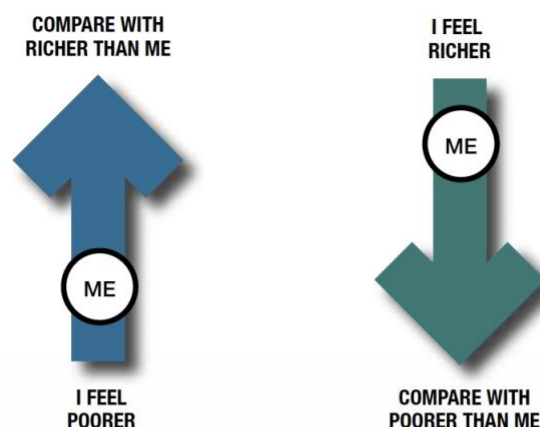
If you conclude you need to change, we encourage you to make this a focus of prayer for the remainder of this study.

## Am I rich?

Before we examine the dangers associated with being entrusted with much, it's important to answer the questions: *Am I rich? Am I at risk of these dangers?*

In our research, we discovered that many wealthy people do not *feel* rich because of the tendency to compare themselves with their peers. We all conduct both “upward” and “downward” comparisons. We tend to make upward comparisons with individuals who appear to have more than we do, and downward comparisons with those who have less.

Most of us spend more time conducting “upward” comparisons. Because of this, nearly all of us view our finances through a distorted lens, as depicted in the graphic. The specific location of “Me” on the graphic will vary according to one’s actual income and net worth, but in almost all cases we *think* we are less well off than we *actually are*.<sup>1</sup>



To help you more accurately assess whether you are rich, answer these questions:

- On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the highest), how does your income and your net worth compare to the other seven billion people alive today?
- On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the highest) how does your lifestyle – housing, transportation, food, clothing, recreation, entertainment, medical treatment and travel – compare with most people that have lived during the past 4,000 years?

In light of my answers, am I rich?

Scripture identifies several dangers associated with wealth and possessions. These are intended to protect you from harm on your spiritual journey. Review these thoughtfully and ask the Lord to make you aware of any dangers applicable to you.