

CHURCH MUSKOKA STYLE LIVING ROOMS PRESENTS

James 5 Discussion Questions: Rob Bell - Rich

Rob Bell said: "I keep seeing a bumper sticker that's popular where I live. It says, 'God Bless America'. Every time I see one, I think God has. God has blessed America."

Do you feel blessed? Why or why not?

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth... 1 Timothy 6:17 (NIV)

"Now I always assumed this verse was for somebody else, I mean, specifically somebody rich"

What do you generally associate with someone who's considered rich? Do you consider yourself rich?

"Maybe you have this sense, you look around and you have this sense that you don't have that much because you see people that have even more. But it's a dangerous thing when we start to think that 'our' world is 'the' world. We're bombarded with all of these images of the newest models and the latest styles and, after a while, our stuff, it starts to seem kind of average, outdated, not-good-enough."

Is what you have, your stuff, outdated and not-good-enough? Compared to what or who?

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." 1 Timothy 6:17 (NIV)

"That phrase, the God who richly provides us with everything – all that we have is a gift. Food – gift. Clothes – gift. Roof – gift. That breath that you just took – it's a gift."

Do you believe everything you own is in some way a gift from God? Everything?

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

1 Timothy 6:17-18

"So the first Christians picked up on this in a letter called Ephesians. One of them wrote that we're saved by the grace of God through faith in Christ in order to do 'mitzvoth,' in order to do good deeds. We're saved to do good works. And so we're commanded to do 'mitzvoth' and to be generous and willing to share.

Are you generous? With your money? Your time? Your stuff?

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

"Now, when some hear the phrase 'laying up treasures,' they start to think of money and wealth and mansions, but Jesus never even used the word 'mansion'. Nowhere in his teaching is it about, or is the point about getting more stuff. It's not the goal here on earth and it's not the goal someday in heaven. For Jesus, it's about being content."

Are you content? If not, what will it take?

Do you think it's possible to live out the kind of generosity Jesus talked about without being content?

"Let's be honest. It's easy to go to a church service, it's easy to read the Bible, it's easy to discuss who believes what and who's right and who's wrong. It's easy. But when Jesus talks about his followers, he talks about people who are generous, people who clothe the naked, take food to the hungry, take water to the thirsty, people who visit the prisoner, people who invite the stranger in, people who give their time, people who give their energy, people who give their money."

Do you consider yourself a follower of Jesus? Do you live the kind of life that Jesus described his followers would live?

"The best question isn't, 'What can I get?' To take the way of Jesus seriously, is to realize that the best question is, 'What can I give?' Because all of us can give something – here, now, today, and then tomorrow and then the next day. What can you do to be more generous? What is the next step for you? You have been blessed. What can you give? Who are you going to bless?"

What can you give? Who are you going to bless this week?