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Lifestyles of the Spiritually Rich

By Teresa Hampton

There was a popular television show a few years ago in which viewers glanced at the lifestyles of the rich and famous. Where do they dine? What do they wear? What do they say? People's appetite for this kind of personal information seems unquenchable!

Have you ever considered that we are privileged, as Christians, to enjoy the lifestyle of the *spiritually* rich?

Paul told the Romans that when they obeyed the Lord they put to death the old man of sin, the old lifestyle of sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; whispering, backbiting, haters of God, violent, proud, boastful, inventing evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, and unmerciful. This life was a thing of the past (Romans 1:29-31). Yes, they buried that old man when they were baptized. Then they were raised out of the water to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4). Baptism is a birth—it brings forth a new creature, but not because of anything *we* have done. In baptism one calls out to God

for a clean conscience, through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism is God working!

Paul told the Ephesians that when they obeyed in penitent baptism, *He raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:7). Exceeding riches — *exceptional in amount, quality, or degree* (merriam-webster.com).

John wrote that the lifestyles of the *spiritually* rich are characterized by love for God, *Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments* (1 John 2:3), and by love for our brother, *He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him* (1John 2:7). The Christian life is further characterized by *walking by faith, not by sight* (2 Corinthians 5:7). It is defined by *clinging to what is good, being kindly affectionate to one another, in honor giving preference to one another, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer, distributing to the needs of the saints, showing hospitality, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep, being of the same mind toward one another, associating with the humble, having regard for good things in the sight of others, living peaceably with all men, overcoming evil with good, and bearing with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves*. (Romans 10:17; 12:9-21; 15:1). The emphasis is doing what is good for the other person. That

mindset will build up or edify the brother or sister. Paul hastened to add, even Jesus did not seek to please Himself.

Peter described the Christian lifestyle as one with faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (2 Peter 1:5-7).

When people see you and me (and they *are* watching) how would they describe our life? They see what we wear. Are we clothed with Christ? Are we clothed modestly? They observe what we eat. Are we hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Are we allotting quality time to ingest the meat of God's word? Do they hear us speak words of wisdom, love, and kindness? *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer* (Psalm 19:1). And finally, one thing uniquely described the lifestyles of first century Christians—they eagerly shared the good news of salvation in Christ! Would observers say that an important element of our lifestyle was telling lost souls about Jesus?

Today's Verse: *Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma* (Ephesians 5:1).