



**Why the Financial Crisis  
Could Be the Best Thing  
that Ever Happened to You**

**Don Johnson**



# **Blessed are the Poor?**

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**BLESSED ARE THE POOR?: WHY THE  
FINANCIAL CRISIS COULD BE THE BEST  
THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO YOU**  
By Don Johnson

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## **Times are Tough, Right?**

Our country is in a financial crisis. Almost everyone has been affected and for many, chasing the American dream has turned into a nightmare. People are losing their jobs, losing their savings and losing their homes. Comparisons are being made to the Great Depression. Everyone agrees that times are tough.

Everyone, that is, except for Jesus. According to him, this financial crisis might not be all that bad. In fact, it just may be the best thing that ever happened to you. As strange as that may sound, it is true, and as we discuss Jesus' teaching here briefly, I pray that it will provide you with great comfort and hope.

## **The Good Life According to Jesus**

I talk to a lot of people about Jesus, and I often here something to the effect of: "Well, Don, I don't like religion or Christianity, but I think Jesus was a great moral teacher – I like him, just not the rest of it." This always makes me wonder if these folks have ever actually read what Jesus said, because, frankly, if conventional wisdom is your guide, I think Jesus comes across as a bit crazy. I don't mean that in a bad way, it is just that Jesus' teaching is so radically different than what our culture generally considers to be true that it strikes me as weird that he has such a good reputation. My only conclusion is that people don't really know what is in the gospels. If they did, surely they would either change their beliefs about who is wise or be more

hesitant in their praise. Jesus' teaching on money is a good example.

In our society, "the good life" consists primarily of wealth. People's lives are generally considered successful according to how affluent they are. We value money and the stuff money buys above everything else. Yes, there are a few other indicators of success as well, such as fame and power, but let's be honest, the main thing is cash. However, according to Jesus, "the good life" is just the opposite of this. He teaches that those without money and stuff are actually better off than those who have it:

Looking at his disciples, he said:

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

"Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of

you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.” (Luke 6:20-26)

So Jesus teaches that those who are poor and hungry are blessed, while those that are rich and well fed are under a curse. That is to say, from God’s perspective, those that we would call “down and out” are in an objectively better position than those who “have life by the tail.” Those that have nothing materially should be looked at with envy by the well off, not the other way around. Like I said, not exactly conventional wisdom.

How can this be? How can Jesus teach that it is better to be poor than rich? To answer that question adequately, we need to look at how Jesus understood reality. We need to see how Jesus answered the big questions of life: Why are we here? What is the problem? What is the solution to that problem? Put another way, we need to understand the meaning of life according to Jesus. When we know that, we will more easily understand Jesus’ teaching about money, and my assertion that the financial crisis might just be the best thing that ever happened to you will make more sense.

## **The Meaning of Life According to Jesus**

### *The Purpose and the Problems*

How did Jesus understand the nature of the universe and our place in it? To answer that, we will go to the Bible, starting with the Old Testament. Jesus was a Jew and he taught that the Jewish

scriptures (what Christians now call the books of the Old Testament) were true, so we can confidently turn to them to find out Jesus' worldview.

Those Scriptures say that we were created to be with God. God made the world and everything in it, including people. Humanity's purpose was to live in close relationship with God and each other and to take care of the planet.

God explained to the first people how they were to do that and warned them not to try to deviate from his plan. For awhile our ancestors did this: they lived in peace and contentment, fulfilling their purpose by loving God, loving each other, and loving the home he had created for them. It was a beautiful, pain-free existence.

Unfortunately, they gave that up. They decided that, rather than obey God and live in submission to the nature of reality (live out the purpose for which God had created them) they would take charge of their own lives. They disobeyed God and veered from the plan. Rather than love God, others and the earth, they choose to love only themselves. In doing so, they attempted to live contrary to the nature of reality by ascribing ultimate value to God's greatest creation (themselves) rather than the creator. They put themselves in the place of God.

This, of course, brought consequences. Trying to operate contrary to purpose and design always causes problems. Try driving your car with water in the fuel tank. It doesn't work so well. That is because motor vehicles are designed to operate a certain way and attempts to operate them contrary to their design are doomed to fail. This is what happened to humanity. They tried to live contrary to

their purpose and design and it was destined for disaster.

Now, of course, people are not machines, so the car analogy isn't perfect. Perhaps a better illustration of failing to operate according to the intended design in the case of humanity and God would be a man who values alcohol more than his wife and kids. Alcohol is not objectively more valuable than family, and any attempts to live as if it is will simply not work well. In fact, the natural consequences of this life will be pain and suffering. Because the nature of reality is such that husbands are intended to love their wife and kids more than alcohol (owing to the fact that his wife and kids are much more objectively valuable than alcohol), living as if alcohol is more valuable than family is a recipe for pain and torment. You might say the wages of ascribing too much worth (worshiping) to alcohol is suffering. Humans decided to live as if they were more important than God and others and their efforts saw the same fate.

Humanity's refusal to be faithful to God caused a break in our relationship with him. The result of this separation was, of course, pain and suffering. Broken relationships hurt. They hurt even more when the person we have broken faith with is the creator and sustainer of the universe. God is the source of life and all that is good. When God is taken away, what remains is death and evil. By separating themselves from God, mankind brought into the world all that is wrong with it. The Bible calls humanity's rebellion sin, and says that the wages of sin is death. Of course it is. If sin separates us from the source of life, it can do nothing else but

result in death. The two necessarily go together. We brought suffering and death upon ourselves and corrupted the whole planet with our selfishness.

The Bible paints a picture of the first people walking side by side with God. Then they rebelled, and such intimacy was no longer possible. The Bible describes this process in the story of Adam and Eve. It talks about how the first people were created and placed in a beautiful garden where they lived with God and took care of the planet and each other. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve went their own way and then had to live with the consequences of their action.

Adam and Eve ended up with three problems:

1. They were kicked out of the presence of God in the garden. They became separated from their true home and their ultimate purpose (living in intimate relationship with God).
2. They were under penalty of death. Before the fall Adam and Eve would have enjoyed eternal life. This was what they were created for. Their disobedience brought death into the world.
3. They were unable to fix the first two problems. The Bible explains that sin had the effect of making humans slaves, both to sin itself and to an evil being called Satan. Satan had tempted the humans to sin and their succumbing to him gave him power over them. He is called the ruler of this now-dark world because of that power. Adam and Eve could no longer live the perfect life they

were meant to, even if they had wanted to, because they were slaves to sin and Satan.

We have the same three problems. All people since that first rebellion have taken part in it as well and we all share in the consequences. We all sin by valuing the creation over the creator and we all find ourselves in trouble; the same trouble that Adam and Eve faced:

1. We are separated from our true purpose and our true home. We were meant to live with God, in intimate relationship with him but are separated from him.
2. We are under penalty of death. The Bible says that the wages of sin is death – it is an unalterable rule of the universe. As sinners, we all live under that curse.
3. We cannot fix our first two problems. We are slaves to sin and to Satan.

### *Knowing our Problems Makes Sense of Certain Aspects of Our Existence*

I think you will find that the three problems we face help to explain three aspects of our lives that sometimes are difficult to understand: longing, guilt and powerlessness.

Have you noticed that even when things are going well and the cash is flowing that you aren't satisfied? The fact is that nothing on earth completely satisfies us – not money, not relationships, not power, not anything. That is

because we were not made for anything on earth. We were made to be with God and we will never be satisfied apart from Him. Until we are living the life we are designed to live, we will not be fully content, and that will not happen until we are back with God. This earth has nothing we truly desire, so nothing on earth will satisfy. We are never content because of our first problem.

Also, have you noticed that you carry around a certain amount of guilt all the time, at least if you are self-aware enough to realize it and honest enough to admit it. We all believe that we have done some things that were morally wrong in our lives, and we all feel a bit guilty about it. That is because we are guilty. We have rebelled against God and are justly under his condemnation for it. We feel guilty because of our second problem.

Finally, have you noticed that you can't fix those things? No matter what we try, contentment never comes. No matter what technique we attempt, the guilt never completely vanishes and we never live the morally perfect lives we know we should. That is because we are slaves to sin and Satan. It is impossible for us to fix our first two problems because we don't have the power to do so.

*Needed: Freedom, Forgiveness, Guidance*

We have these three problems, so we need a three-fold solution. Three things must happen to fix our dilemma:

1. We need to be set free from the powers that enslave us. Sin and Satan must be defeated; they must be made powerless over us.
2. Our sin must be paid for. As we have already talked about, the consequence of sin is pain, suffering and death. This is the nature of reality; it is unalterable. Therefore, any solution to our problem must deal with the consequences of sin.
3. We need to return to the place we were created to live in. We need to get back to living with God, in intimate relationship with him.

Put another way, we need freedom, forgiveness, and guidance. Thankfully, that is just what God offers us.

### *The Gospel According to Exodus*

To begin my explanation of how God does that, I am going to go back to another story in the Old Testament. The Bible gives us a great illustration of our situation in the story of the ancient Israelites in Egypt.

The account of the Israelites starts with God calling a man named Abraham into a very special relationship. God tells Abraham that he wants to make him into a great family and give him a beautiful land to live in. There Abraham's descendents would be able to enjoy fulfilling work and walk closely with God. Life would be good.

Many years later, the fulfillment of that promise seemed in jeopardy when, after a series of events

that I won't go into now but you can read about in the book of Genesis, the Israelites found themselves stuck in Egypt. In fact, they found themselves with the very same three problems that we have:

1. The Israelites were separated from their true home with God in the Promised Land.
2. They had rebelled against God and were under his judgment for doing so.
3. They were slaves to an evil tyrant with a strong army and did not have the power to free themselves.

The Israelites needed the same three things we do: freedom, forgiveness and guidance home.

Finally, they cried out to God for help and he gave it to them. In fact, he provided just what they needed to fix their problems: he defeated the power of the Pharaoh, he provided a way for their sins to be forgiven and he guided those that would accept his direction home to the Promised Land.

It is very important to understand that this was all done to teach us about what God has done and wants to do for us. The story of the exodus is a (historically true) allegory that explains to us our situation and how God wants to fix it. In the allegory, the Israelites are us, Egypt is Earth and the Pharaoh is Satan. By understanding how God rescued the Israelites, we can gain much insight into how he wants to rescue us.

## *God's Rescue Plan*

Here is brief look at how God worked to take care of the Israelites' problems and how he later worked (and is working) through Jesus to take care of ours. (For a full discussion of the Israelite's journey home and the lessons we can learn from it, please see my book *The Road to Heaven: a Traveler's Guide to Life's Narrow Way*.)

The first thing God did was send one man, Moses, to lead the people out of Egypt. Moses went and told the Pharaoh that the God of the Israelites wanted him to let the slaves go. Pharaoh refused, explaining to Moses that he did not believe that the Israelite god had any power or authority over Egypt's gods and mighty army. The ten plagues that followed were the god of Israel's answer to Pharaoh. In turning the Nile River to blood, destroying crops and cattle and even blocking out the sun, among other things, the LORD, God of Israel, demonstrated that he had power and authority over everything on earth, from earthly military forces to the spiritual power of the many other gods that the Egyptians worshiped. The LORD gave evidence that he alone was God over all. By the ninth plague, almost everyone in Egypt knew that the LORD, God of the Israelites had the power and authority to set the slaves free. Setting them free is just what God did with the tenth plague.

God explained to everyone in Egypt, including the Israelites, that the plagues were not just evidence of God's power, but also judgment upon the people of the land for turning away from the

LORD, the one true God, creator of the universe. They were all sinners and the consequence of sin is death. The final plague would bring the final judgment in the form of an angel of death traveling throughout the land. However, God explained that, rather than have everyone die, he would place the penalty for sin on one group - the firstborn of each family. On the appointed night, the firstborn of every family in Egypt would die for the sins of the land. However, that was not all. Even the firstborn had a way out. If a family sacrificed a lamb and placed the blood on the doorposts of their house, the angel of death would pass over that house and no one in that family would die. Everyone's sin would be paid for by the lamb – the people would be forgiven based on the sacrifice of that animal.

So that is what happened. The tenth plague was poured out on Egypt and the Israelites marched out of captivity. Two of their problems had been taken care of: the powers that enslaved them had been defeated and their sins had been forgiven. Only one problem remained: they still were not home. Thankfully, God had a plan for that, too.

### *The Israelites and Us*

Before getting to that part of the story, though, let's pause and see the parallels between us and the Israelites thus far. God gave freedom and forgiveness to the Israelites and he wants to give it to us as well. His design for doing so is very similar.

Just as God sent one man to lead the Israelites, he sent one man to lead us: Jesus is our Moses.

Jesus said that he came “to set the captives free” and that is exactly what he did. Jesus proclaimed to all who would listen that following him was the only way to get freedom, forgiveness and back home to God. He gave evidence to support this claim by showing his power and authority over every aspect of our existence. He calmed the wind and waves, cured the sick, raised the dead, and cast out evil spirits, among other things. All of these miracles were a re-enactment of the plagues, intended to show that Jesus was who he said he was: the savior of the world.

Then, at the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus definitively took care of two of our problems. On the very day that the Jews were celebrating Passover, remembering how God brought them out of Egypt and placed the penalty for their sins on the lamb, Jesus was killed on the cross. According to the Apostle John, he allowed himself to be sacrificed in this way because he was “the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” Jesus was our Passover lamb. He was the firstborn son of God, who died so that we would not have to. Jesus’ death enables us to be forgiven. His death on the cross took care of the guilt problem.

Three days later Jesus rose again. The Bible says that, because Jesus had lived a perfect life (he had never given in to his own self will or the temptations of Satan to disobey God the Father), death and Satan had no hold on him. Jesus undid what the first humans had done. Instead of bringing death into the world through disobedience, Jesus brought life into the world through obedience. He defeated the forces that bind us and showed that he

has the power and authority to lead us home. He took care of our slavery problem by setting us free from the power of sin and Satan.

### *What Must We Do?*

So how do we appropriate this work? Well, it does not involve actually putting blood on our houses or walking out of a country you can find on a map. However, if we are to be free and forgiven, we must spiritually do the same things that the Israelites did physically. For the children of Abraham, obtaining freedom and forgiveness involved following Moses and putting the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. We do not have to kill a lamb and we have no physical country out of which to walk, but we must place the blood of Jesus on the “doorposts” of our lives by agreeing with him about our condition (admitting we are sinners and asking him to forgive us). Then, we follow him by repenting of our selfish rebellion and submitting our lives to his will rather than our own. We turn away from the way that led to death and towards the way that leads to everlasting life.

### *One Way*

I think a couple of brief points are in order at this point. First, notice that the path to the Promised Land has thus far been very narrow; there were not multiple options for escape from which to choose. The Israelites had to go: 1) behind Moses and 2) under the blood of the lamb. Those that didn't follow their leader or adhere to the Passover

directions did not make it out of Egypt. God did not let them find their own way, or choose a path that “worked best for them.” They had to do exactly what God told them to do. The same is true of our path. There are not many ways to Heaven, many roads to eternal bliss. According to Jesus, there is only one, and it goes right behind him and under his blood.

Second, notice that God’s rescue plan is a journey, not just a one time event. God did not magically place the Israelites immediately into the Promised Land upon their exit from Egypt. They were still separated from the home God had given Abraham. Salvation involves traveling on a road, not just entering through a gate. The story is not over yet. Two of the problems have been taken care of, but one remains. The Israelites are not home and we are not living in perfect union with God in the beautiful place we were meant to live. The Israelites still had a wilderness to cross and so do we.

### *The Road Home*

That leads us to a discussion of our final problem: we are still separated from God. God took care of the Israelites third problem by giving them the guidance and power they needed to cross the wilderness and enter the Promised Land. It was not an easy journey. They had to cross difficult terrain and face many enemies. God enabled them to do it by actually coming down and living with them in the desert. As sojourners, they traveled with tents. God told Moses that he would come and live in his own tent so the Israelites would know that God was

with them. He defeated their enemies for them, showed them where to go and provided them with everything they needed for the trip. In this way, God brought the people back where they belonged.

God does the same for us. Jesus may no longer be on earth to physically walk with us through the journey of life, but God sent us a helper, the Holy Spirit, to be with us. To those that have decided to follow Jesus, life is a difficult journey through hard terrain with many enemies along the way. We cannot do it on our own. However, God will be with us in the form of the Holy Spirit. He will give us the strength we need, the direction we need and the provision we need. He will solve our final problem and bring us safely home to him.

What will that home be like? Well, the Bible calls it “The New Heaven and New Earth” and indicates that it will be all that is good about our fallen world (and more!) and none that is bad. There will be no more pain, no more suffering, and no more longing. We will get to live the life we were created to live, loving God, loving others, and doing meaningful work.

This is the meaning of life according to Jesus. This is how he understood our purpose, our problem and the solution to that problem. With these facts in mind, then, it is much easier to see how he could say that it is the poor and hungry that are blessed rather than the rich and well fed.

## **Why Jesus Taught that the Poor are Blessed**

Why did Jesus say that having no money is better than having lots? Because money causes us to become blind to our need for God.

We have always needed God. We are dependent creatures, we are not independent creators. Only God is independent. That was true even before we rebelled against him. But how much more so now do we need God? If we don't have him, we are lost for eternity! Unless we have help, we are doomed. If we don't think that we need help and think we can make it by ourselves, we are also doomed. The Israelites would never have made it out of Egypt if they had not asked God for help and relied on him. Those that were self-reliant never made it.

Unfortunately, many of us take a self-reliant approach to life, especially when things are going well. When we have a bit of money, for instance, we tend to give ourselves the credit and think that we can handle the rest of life as well. Money takes the place of God. We put our trust in it and ourselves rather than God.

But money cannot fix our problems. It is not eternal and it cannot relieve our longing, guilt and separation. Trusting in it for salvation is useless. As long as it is the object of our faith, we are lost.

We tend not to see this truth, though, as long as we have it. Only when wealth is shown to be the shaky foundation that it is – only when we lose it – do we think about turning to something more stable, God. When we have reached the end of ourselves and our stuff and become empty of all self-reliance

and self-righteousness it is much more likely that we will reach out to God.

Humble people live in relationship with God, prideful people don't. That is an unalterable rule of the universe. Therefore it is easy to see why God would say that those who don't have money and the pride that often goes with it are in a better spot than those who do.

### *Some Examples from Scripture*

Let's look quickly at a couple of examples of this principle from the Bible. As we go through these stories, ask yourself, "At which point in their lives would we consider each of these men more blessed? When they were rich and had everything or when they were broke and at the end of their rope?"

Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler of one of the great empires in history: Babylon. Not surprisingly, he was incredibly wealthy. Unfortunately for Nebuchadnezzar, he let the money go to his head:

As the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"

The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven

times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.”

Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. (Daniel 4:29-34)

At the beginning of this episode, Nebuchadnezzar has lost touch with reality. As he surveys the great wealth of Babylon, he thinks that he has made for himself a pretty good life and that he is well in control of things. God then shows him that this is not the case by taking everything away from him. The king ends up living like a wild animal. According to conventional worldly wisdom, that is a long way down. However, from God’s perspective, it was the best thing that could have happened to Nebuchadnezzar. After becoming humble out in the pasture, Nebuchadnezzar realizes the truth of his situation and gives glory to God, where it belongs. At which point in the story was Nebuchadnezzar blessed? When was he in an objectively better position? When he was out in the

fields, at the end of himself. That truth lines up exactly with what Jesus taught.

We find another example of this principle in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son:

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate” (Luke 15:11-24).

This parable illustrates many points, but I for our purposes I want to emphasize two.

First, the son was meant to be in relationship with his father, but money separated them. That is what money does to our relationship with God.

Second, at which point in the son's life was he blessed? When he had all the money and was partying? Or when he was feeding the pigs and wanting to share their meal. The world would tell us it is when he was living high on his inheritance. Jesus tells us that it was when he was down and out in the pig pen. The reason, of course, is that that is when he was humble. Being humble led him to return to his father.

That is what our father wants from us. Money tends to separate us from him, and if we have to lose it all in order to get us back home, that is fine by him.

## *Money is Dangerous*

Money results in pride which distances us from God. This is why the Bible is so clear in its warnings about the danger of money. Jesus explained that “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money” (Matthew 6:24).

When a rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked him what was necessary for the man to obtain eternal life, Jesus told him to give away his wealth (Matthew 19:16-30). He explained the interaction to his astonished disciples by saying that “it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:23).

Jesus told another parable about four types of soils which represent four types of people. Three of the soils fail to produce good crops, while one is successful, that being the person who responds properly to Jesus message and makes it to Heaven to be with him. The other three fail for a variety of reasons, one of which is that “the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful” (Mark 4:19).

## *Do We have to be Paupers?*

It is important to note, of course, that possessing money doesn't necessarily mean one will turn away

from God. Many righteous people have a lot of money, and many biblical heroes were very wealthy. The point is that money can easily lead one away from God, and chasing after it is often a recipe for disaster. That is what the apostle Paul makes clear in this passage:

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs (1 Timothy 6:19).

### *Money is Useless at Taking Care of the Big Things*

The bottom line is that you need major help and money can't provide it. Money is useless at taking the place of God. Not only can it not save you, it can't even do the things that it is generally advertised to do: provide security for the future, provide joy, etc. Money utterly fails at those things, as anyone who has had it can tell you. It is notoriously unstable (as the current financial crisis attests) and it has never made anyone truly happy and content. That is why Jesus says, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19-20). Why invest in something that will not last? It makes no sense. As Paul wrote in his letter

to Timothy: “We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it” (1 Timothy 6:7). Paul later instructs Timothy to “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).

God gives us that same advice in the Old Testament book of Isaiah, using language that emphasizes our need for him and the futility of trusting in money. It comes in the form of a beautiful invitation:

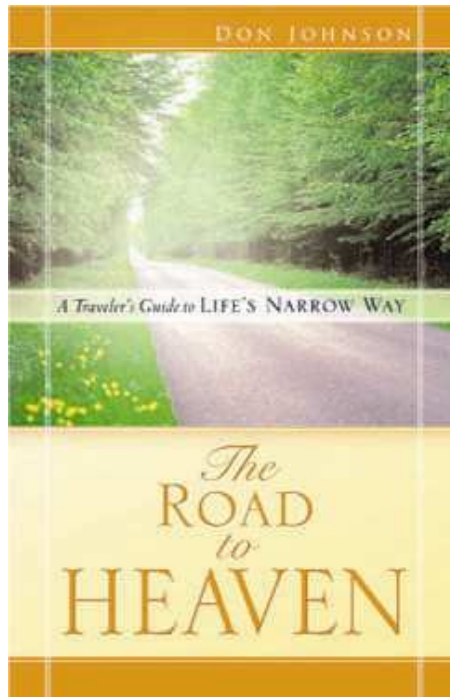
Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?

Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. (Isaiah 55:1-3a)

God longs for us to stop wasting our time on pitiful things that will never satisfy us. He begs us to turn to him and find the life that we were created to live. We usually are hesitant to do that when we have a lot of money, so sometimes it takes losing that money for us to gain the right perspective.

That is why, according to Jesus, this financial crisis could be the best thing that ever happened to you. It will be if it causes you to turn to him. He is the one that can save. He is the one that provides true security and actual joy and fulfillment. He is the way to eternal life. Won't you turn and follow him today?



This booklet is adapted from **THE ROAD TO HEAVEN: A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO LIFE'S NARROW WAY** by Don Johnson, available at **[donjohnsonministries.org](http://donjohnsonministries.org)**, **[amazon.com](http://amazon.com)** and many other online retailers.

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