

“All These Things Will I Give Thee”

Gary McDade

Surely the Devil thought the temptation a valid one he offered the Lord on that exceeding high mountain when “he showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them” promising them to him if he would “fall down and worship me” (Mt. 4:8-9). Many in Bible times fell to the lure of riches altering and compromising the word of God. Titus was told by Paul, “For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Tit. 1:10-13). Jude did just that when he wrote, “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core” (Jude 11).

Make no mistake, such compromises of principles deeply hurt legitimate efforts to advance the cause of Christ today regardless of how far out or radical those involved may seem to be. While some may wish to think that this issue is something that only religious people hear about, think again. Today on the front page of the secular financial newspaper *The Wall Street Journal* an article detailing the enormous riches Dave and Joyce Meyer are amassing from their followers appeared (Monday, October 30, 2006, Vol. CCXLVIII No. 102, A1). The paper reported,

In the soaring sanctuary of the Phoenix First Assembly Church here, television evangelist Joyce Meyer recently assured 6,500 evangelical Christians that the money they were dropping into her collection buckets would feed the poor, educate the ignorant and minister to the willing.

“I’m not buying clothes or a car or a house with your money,” she thundered. “You don’t have to worry about us taking it and living a high lifestyle.”

But that is what the 63-year-old Ms. Meyer has been doing, insists Howard J. “Rusty” Leonard, who had dug up property-tax records and church financial reports. They show Ms. Meyer’s ministry has bought five houses, a private jet worth \$6.5 million and expensive artwork for her, her ministry and her family to use (A1).

According to the *WSJ*, the financial records show “Joyce Meyer Ministries had revenue of about \$109 million in 2005” (A11). Their sprawling headquarters in Jefferson County, Missouri is pictured on page A11 and described there also.

Ms. Meyer and her husband run the ministry from a 560-employee office park outside St. Louis. According to state property records, the ministry’s gated, 53-acre compound includes a TV and recording studio, a distribution center for books and tapes, a 5,000-squarefoot maintenance garage for the ministry’s cars and a small chapel that isn’t always open to the public.

In the Phoenix meeting mentioned at the outset reporter Robert Guy Matthews, the author of the article, summarized the message of the evening.

At the Phoenix rally, Ms. Meyer spun an infectious mix of down-home frankness and unabashed exuberance for wealth building, with frequent breaks for sales pitches and fund raising. With music swelling in the background, she told the audience, “I said, ‘God, if I am going to be your

woman, I want to be a kept woman.'

God takes care of me" (A11).

What is the hold she has on so many? "I know God is speaking to us through her,' Nina Long, 56, said at the Phoenix service. Ms. Long donates \$210 a month to the ministry, she says" (A11).

Many in Bible times fell to the lure of riches altering and compromising the word of God.

Decidedly, Joyce Meyer is "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" and apparently is very successful in "subverting whole houses." Perhaps articles like this will assist in fulfilling the biblical directive to "stop their mouths" and "rebuke them sharply." How can this be accomplished? If unable to gain audience with the Meyer's at their gated compound or catch them at the airport before she soars away in her \$6.5 million jet, at least retain a copy of this article and make it available to her adherents and supporters when it comes up for discussion at work. Hold their "feet to the fire" that she has lied publicly and unremorsefully at that! Her words: "I'm not buying clothes or a car or a house with your money,' she thundered. 'You don't have to worry about us taking it and living a high lifestyle.'" Until she began to shelter her income in 2005, the financial records show that she was drawing in annual salary \$700,000! (A11).

The Devil is having his way with millions and millions of people in our society, and it is time for the Lord's army to arise and engage the spiritual battle that is spread in array before us!

*Soldiers of Christ arise! And put your armor on!
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His beloved Son.*

*Strong in the Lord of Hosts and in His mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.*