100Fold Fun

A Joyfully Serious Essay on Affluence and Liberty



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Imagine this.

One of your friends, whom you respect and admire and love deeply, calls you out of the blue. You can tell he's very sober and serious.

Usually, when you guys connect, it's over cigars and brown water or good craft beers full of good laughs and entrepreneurial scheming or some other holy mischief somewhere on or near the water – the Atlantic or Pacific ocean, or perhaps on one of the glorious chains of lakes or rivers in Florida. Less frequently, it's in Cali or the Pacific Northwest, maybe in Gig or Roche Harbors.

He's one of those very few "Super Rich" planetary inhabitants. Those you might see as UNWI-ers: Uber Net Worth Individuals. A member of the American upper class, an American elite. He's a veritable entrepreneurial genius who seems to spin out start-ups and 30x, 60x, and 100x exits in his sleep. At 57, you guess he's worth upwards of $1B, maybe much more, with annual recurring revenue of at least $500M. He's got jets, and cars, and houses, and hotels in various places, multiple businesses, flies around the world with birds of a feather enjoying whatever he wants, whenever he wants. Self-made wealth, not inherited. Started with nothing. True rags to riches story.

And he knows it. He knows it's because God's blessed him with a gift of creating wealth. Of seeing into things in ways very few do.

Not only this, he's a true 21st century Renaissance man. Musician. Started his own music recording studio with a renowned American multiple-platinum record producer, songwriter, and musician a few years back. A remarkably refined taste for aesthetics in all dimensions.

Oh, he also breeds world-class show horses and is an equestrian expert with black belts in karate, judo, Brazilian jujitsu, and Krav Maga. He won gold in Olympic freestyle wrestling at the 1992 Summer Olympics held in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain.

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He's super fun. Super funny. Brilliant on any topic – art, history, politics, political economy, business, investment, philosophy, knee-breaking, security, risk management, asset protection, law – you name it.

Genius smart. Your go-to guy for critical thinking about anything that needs critical thought for critical decision-making. And the best part about that is that you don't have to pay him for his opinions, for two reasons: he neither needs the money nor would he charge you because y'all are best bros.

But this time, you can tell something's different. You feel it in your gut. Because you love him, because you want the best for him and don't want to lose the times you guys talk and hang out, your mind and heart begins racing. You care for this friend, this brother from another mother.

"Oh no," you think to yourself, "Does he have cancer? What kind is it? Did something happen to his wife? Is she divorcing him? Did she have an affair? Did something happen to one of his kids?"

You scan your memory but recall no hints of lurking risks or dark clouds on the horizon of his life.

"What's up bro?" Your chest tightens a bit, you take a deep breath, bracing yourself.

"Man, I just got diagnosed with *dyshekatontaplasiona*."

"With what?!"

"*Dyshekatontaplasiona*." He says it very slowly, heavily.

"What the heck is dysheka…how do you say it again?"

"*Dyshekatontaplasiona*."

"*Dys…heka..ton..ta…*?"

"…plasiona."

"*Dysheka..ton..ta…plasiona*?"

"You got it."

"What is that, bro?"

"I just learned about it from my doc. It's also called *dyshakatontitis*. Very serious diagnosis, man. It's wrecked my life."

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You feel a bit nauseous.

Very somberly and seriously, your friend continues. “Ron, you’re not gonna believe this. You know how over all these years, all our conversations, debates, and laughs over cigars and brown-water and crafts, how I’ve shared my serious-ass doubts about the Bible, right? How the can a collection of ancient writings written by ancient people thousands of years ago be relevant to the 21st century with all we now know? And some of that stuff in the Old Testament, like God commanding the slaughter of women and children in the promised land or cutting off a wife’s hand for grabbing her husband’s assailant by the balls when the assailant is beating her husband.”

You interrupt. “Yep, but wait. You said your doc gave you the diagnosis. I lost you.”

“Yeh. I’ll get there, just hang on. But no bull man, I was reading the Bible…”

“Seriously? How does that relate to your diagnosis? It must be really grim if it got you reading the Bible! Tell me you’re ok, man. Is Lynn ok? The kids?”

“Yes, smartass, yes. They’re fine. And yes the diagnosis is very grim indeed. But in a very strange way it’s made me joyfully serious about my life and about changing my life. Wrecked it, but in another sense saved it. Lynn and the kids are great. But I’m wrecked…let me tell you how I got there.”

Pregnant pause. Big breaths on both sides of the call.

“So, I was reading in the Gospel of Mark. Not sure why. I just picked up the Bible and started reading in Mark 1 yesterday. I got all the way through to Mark 4:7 and something happened. ‘Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop’ My mind was arrested. My breath got shorter. I got anxious and somehow my life flashed before my eyes. It was like a thunderbolt hit me. It seems like it lasted an hour, but I realized after I came out of it that probably I was frozen in thought for about a minute or two. So I kept reading through verses 8 and 9, but when I got to verse 9 it was like I wasn’t reading, it was like there was this voice in my head where it says, ‘He who has ears to hear, let him hear.’ Like the voice was saying, ‘Listen up! Pay attention here. Examine yourself.’ I stopped in my tracks for another minute and thought to myself, ‘Am I going nuts?’ And then it was like I heard, ‘Keep reading.’ So I kept reading all the way through verse 20.”

Somewhat incredulous, you speak into the pause. “Wow, man, that’s wild. I gotta be honest that this is blowing my mind considering your doubts about the Bible. What happened next?”

“Well, this is where the life-wrecking began. Verse 19 got me: ‘the *worries of the world*, and the *deceitfulness of riches*, and the *desires for other things* enter in and choke the word, and it becomes *unfruitful*.’ It was like gongs started going off in my head with ‘***worries of the world***’

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and '***deceitfulness of riches***' and '***desires for other things***' and '**choke the word'**, and '***becomes unfruitful***.' Gong…gong…gong…gong…gong!!!!! What the heck, I thought. I must be going nuts. But then that voice inside my head queried me, 'What's your life become? Is it fruitful? Why are you anxious about things? About security? About control? About all t*he stuff that keeps you so busy* and worried? About taxes and politics and being certain that you can respond to any crisis any time and be able to escape to any country with your multiple passports and golden visas? Are things choked in your life? Are you really free?' The self-interrogation went on for a while. And then verse 20 grabbed me: 'the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.' I asked myself, who are they? Does that describe me? What does 30, 60, 100 fold fruit bearing mean?? And then I got a text from Lynn reminding me that we were going out to breakfast, so I had to shake my mind loose and get back into my day. But I marked my spot in Mark 4 and planned to come back to my reading and thoughts."

"Bro, that's mind-blowing. What happened next? How did you get to the diagnosis?"

"Well, pretty much all of yesterday I couldn't get what happened out of my mind. So I sort of talked to God in my mind something like, 'Ok, God, what's going on here? Are you speaking to me? If so, please make it crystal clear that you are and that I'm not having some kind of psychotic moment.' So this morning I get up and can't think about anything else. So I pick up back reading in Mark 4 and rolled through to Mark 10, verse 17, where the story of the rich man starts. And it was like the voice in my head spoke up again. 'Listen!' So I read verses 17 through 31 and stopped. I went back and read it again. And again. And then again….All of a sudden, it hit me. All these years I've heard God's word about Jesus and the good news of his death, burial, and resurrection but never connected the dots between that and all the financial blessings in my life, all the wealth I have. And I realized I'm choked. I'm not fruitful the way Jesus puts it in Mark 4 and 10. I'm fruitful, but really only for myself and Lynn and my kids and maybe every so often for others who I think deserve to get some of my hard-earned money and wealth. But in a flash, I realized that even any giving I'd been doing up to that point has been like tipping God with much less than a tithe of my income and throwing out crumbs of self-serving-pat-myself-on-the-back generosity to the birds pecking around the fringes of my rich and rather luxurious life. I was wrecked. I was so sad and depressed. It's hard to explain. A great darkness settled over me. I felt enslaved, like I was chained to my stuff, my pleasures, myself. I didn't feel truly free or even alive. It was surreal, man."

"Sounds like it bro. Are you still there in that dark place?"

"Well, not really. Although everything's changed. But let me finish so I can tell you about the diagnosis and why I have hope. I said I called my doc. Actually, he's my soul doc. My genius good friend whom I respect immensely, Dr. Richard Pratt. I think of him as my personal pastor and pocket theologian. Whenever I have something I don't like or understand about the Bible, I call him and we scuba dive into philosophy, theology, metaphysics, and other stuff. Often, we have a good, hot debate. But this time it wasn't an intellectual getting off. It was much

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different, much deeper, real, essential. He listened to my story. He asked a bunch of soul diagnostic questions. Then he walked me through Mark 4 and 10."

"We talked for hours. He enunciated and then explained the Greek words underlying the 30fold, 60fold, and 100fold language in those verses. Having a pretty good idea of what I'm worth and make, he said, 'Well Bill, sounds like you've got *dyshekatontaplasiona*. It's also known as *dyshekatontitis*.'"

"He's so smart and speaks really fast, so I asked him to repeat it. He said it more slowly, and eventually I was able to say it. And then explained that it sounds like I've got a common form of a sudden dysphoric, dystopic, and disorienting perspective of life that comes to some wealthy people whose consciousness awakens to the presence of Jesus and suddenly realize that their 30fold, 60fold, or 100fold wealth and lives are unfruitful, displeasing to God. They suddenly realize that they're stuck, they're choked in unfruitfulness, not free to follow Jesus in the way of the cross, incapable of being his disciple, of denying themselves, taking up their crosses, and following Jesus in that hard but ultimately easy path, that liberating path of donation and dispossession of one's life for his sake and the sake of the gospel. Then Richard said this, very gently, but it hit like a bolt of lightning in my heart and mind: 'Bill, sounds like in your case that you have 100Fold dysphoria going on. It's also called affluenza. It can be very deadly. But sounds like the Lord is speaking to you. Perhaps he's been speaking to you a long time as you journeyed in your life from 0Fold to 30Fold through 60Fold to 100Fold wealth and affluence, but you're just now beginning to hear his word of liberation, of freedom, of redemption. Sounds like this might be God's version of Kill Bill 1 and 2 for you, to set you free in the path of discipleship. (I love those movies, by the way.) God was certainly speaking in the midst of your ascent into affluence from 30Fold through 60Fold, no doubt. But for whatever reason, you awakening and coming alive to the reality of your condition. Put another way, Bill, it sounds like your *dyshekatontaplasiona* may be in the process of being healed and transformed into *hekatontaplasiona*, into the joyfully liberating and healthy condition of 100Fold syndrome. Time will tell. Sounds like you've got some seriously joyful work to do and decisions to make.'

"So what was the lightning strike like, Bill?"

"It was amazing. My life was wrecked, then saved. In an instant, I saw exactly what I needed to do, what I must do, to be truly free. To gain the whole world, to have my life back. With Richard on the phone, I read Mark 10:17-31 out loud. I heard Jesus saying to me, 'Bill, one thing you lack…go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me. And trust me, I guarantee you that in this life and in the life to come, both of which lives I have made possible for you through my bodily death and burial and my bodily resurrection, you will see your houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms and businesses and wealth and riches and boats and cars and hotels and anything else you possess that possesses you multiply 100Fold in ways you cannot even begin to imagine. Your joy and liberty will be beyond comprehension.' And in a moment, I knew it was true and exactly what I had to do."

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“Amazing. Simply amazing, bro. Super excited for you. Have you talked to Lynn?”

“A little bit. But, how do I explain all this to Lynn and the children? I’m still processing and thinking and trying to get the beginning of a plan together. And that’s the second reason I called you. I know you do generosity advising with affluent believers and are passionate about it, Ron. And I know how serious you are about generosity both in your personal and professional life. I want and need your counsel. Will you help me think through how to talk with Lynn about it and then help her and me develop a full-tilt generosity plan of donation and dispossession for the poor along the lines of what I heard Jesus saying? Then we’ll need your help to choose and develop our next generation of stewards to take the generosity plan we develop into the future after we’re gone. But we want to get started at it with them now while we have time.”

“Bro, of course you know I will. It would be my privilege and joy. On one condition: we do most of our planning and implementing work together either at my place in New Smyrna Beach, or yours in Flagler Beach. Remember, New Smyrna has Jeffe Cigar Lounge on Flagler Avenue. Perfect place for this kind of work!”

“Sweet. Thanks for your friendship, Ron. Love ya man. Let’s grab our calendars and scope out the rest of the year for our meetings….Oh, and by the way. As you know, I love Richard. And I love how he has given his life for his ministry, Third Millennium Ministries: Biblical Education for the World For Free. And I realize I’ve been a really arrogant twit in my views about the Bible. Just simply stupidly arrogant. It had to have frustrated and hurt him many times over the years. But Richard has never judged me. He’s always given me time and listened to my speculative philosophical and theological baloney in my attempts to dismiss the Bible and justify my doubts. But here’s what I know God wants me to do. He wants me to figure out how to fund a permanent endowment for Third Mill. I think it will only take about $160 million in principal conservatively invested to throw off enough to fund the annual budget of about $7 million or so. Let’s put that objective at the top of the list. And let’s talk to Grant Birdwell on your team about how to dial that in and get it working.”

“Sounds good Bill. How about September 13th through the 15th? New Smyrna Beach will be perfect then….”

On the Way to a Hundredfold = 100Fold

1. *triakonta* — HNWI to VHNWI = 30Fold = $1M - $29.999M = Rich
2. *hexakonta* — VHNWI to UHNWI = 60Fold = $30M - $99.999M
3. *hekaton* (*hekatontaplasiona*) — UHNWI to UNWI/SRI = 100Fold = $100M+

Roughly corresponds to the sequence recorded about the patriarch Isaac, who, the Scripture says, “sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the LORD blessed him, and the man became rich [30Fold], and continued to grow richer [60Fold] until he became very wealthy [100Fold].”

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Look at the sequence: (1) he sowed and reaped 100Fold; (2) the Lord blessed him; (3) he became rich; (4) continued to grow richer; and (5) became very wealthy.

Every good Jew and sane Christian acknowledges that it is God who gives them the power and even the gifts to make wealth. Every highly successful and wealthy Christian I have the privilege of knowing and/or serving along their life's path of generosity cultivation knows and acknowledges this: that but for God's blessings, they would never have reached 30Fold, 60Fold, or 100Fold.

At the same time, both I and they realize that indeed they "made wealth" – they did the work, and it was God at work in them both to will and to work in the making of the wealth. Making wealth requires work. And it is good work, which makes possible the "good works" into which God intends for us to walk each day and the next, into the future that is in God's good hands.

The 100Fold Texts.

Genesis 26

12 Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold.
And the LORD blessed him, **13** and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy.

Mark 4

8 Other *seeds* fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold." **9** And He was saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

20 And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."

Mark 10

29 Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, **30** but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. **31** But many *who are* first will be last, and the last, first."

Luke 8

8 Other *seed* fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great." As He said these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, [b]let him hear."

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11 “Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God….**15** But the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with [d]perseverance.

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