

Rich and Reclusive

John G. Wendel was one of the largest real estate holders in New York in the early 20th century. Known as the Recluse of Fifth Avenue, he and his sisters were some of the most miserly people of all time.

Although they had received a huge inheritance from their parents, they spent very little of it, and did all they could to keep their wealth for themselves. John was able to influence five of his six sisters never to marry, and they lived in the same house in New York City for 50 years.

When the last sister died in 1931, her estate was valued at more than \$100 million. Her only dress was one that she had made herself, and she had worn it for 25 years.

The Wendels had such a compulsion to hold on to their possessions that they lived like paupers. Even worse, they were like the kind of person Jesus referred to “who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:21).

Most of us will never come even close to being as rich as the Wendels. But if we are faithful stewards of the finances the Lord has entrusted to us, if we give unselfishly to His cause, and if we help people in need, we can be “rich in good works” and store up treasure in heaven (1 Timothy 6:18-19).

And every time I visit a center of Life Care or Century Park, I see people who are contributing to a heavenly bank account.

--Beecher Hunter