

# Squandering a Fortune

This past January, Emmie Martin on CNBC reported:

“Best known for his roles in movies such as *National Treasure* and *Leaving Las Vegas*, Nicolas Cage was once a top earner in Hollywood, worth \$150 million. But Cage didn’t hold on to his fortune for long. He squandered it away on a string of expensive and often eccentric purchases, eventually facing foreclosure on several properties and owing the IRS \$6.3 million in property taxes. Now worth around \$25 million, Cage is taking roles from left and right to help pay off his debts.”



What does she mean by “expensive purchases?” Try 15 residences (yes, all at once), two European castles, a deserted island in the Bahamas, a 9-foot-tall pyramid-shaped burial tomb, numerous sunken heads, a pet octopus, and to cap it all off, a \$276,000 dinosaur skull that turned out to be stolen and had to be returned to the Mongolian government.

Cage, known for his adept portrayal of eccentric figures, appears to have a touch of that in his own private life. Yet, there’s more to learn from his example than merely being more cautious with our money.

The Bible, in fact, tells us that those who fail to place the highest priority on honoring and worshiping God will tend toward impoverishment. The prophet Haggai chastened the Israelites returning from Babylonian captivity for lavishly furnishing their own homes rather than rebuilding God’s temple first.

Haggai told them:

*Now this is what the Lord Almighty says, “Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it” (Haggai 1:5-6 NIV).*

On the other hand, we are reminded in the New Testament:

*But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction (1 Timothy 6:6-9 NIV).*

That’s wisdom meant for you and me, not just for the likes of Nicolas Cage.