

# Godliness as a Way of Gain

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Jesus said following Him would result in an abundant life (Jn 10:10). “Bishop” Eddie Long took Him literally. Eddie Long pastors the 25,000 member New Birth Missionary Baptist Church. The following information is shocking even to senses dulled by the Jim Bakkers and Benny Hinn of our day. First, consider the perks received by Mr. Long, then listen to his own comments justifying his extravagant lifestyle. As documented in the AJC on 8/28/05, Eddie Long’s compensation includes:

- ✚ A \$1.4 million, six-bedroom, nine-bath home on 20 acres.
- ✚ Use of a \$350,000 Bentley automobile.
- ✚ Total compensation of over \$3 million between 1997 and 2000.

But more revealing are the comments made by Mr. Long in his defense. Compare them with the attitudes of the apostle Paul.

## *Eddie Long (quotes)*

- “We’re not just a church, we’re an international corporation.”
- “We’re not just a bumbling bunch of preachers who can’t talk and all we’re doing is baptizing babies.”
- “I deal with the White House. I deal with Tony Blair. I deal with presidents around the world.”
- “I pastor a multimillion-dollar congregation.”
- “You’ve got to put me on a different scale than the little black preacher sitting over there that’s supposed to be just getting by because the people are suffering.”
- “I would love to ... walk you through the Bible to show that Jesus wasn’t poor.”

## *The Apostle Paul*

- “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? ... So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase” (1 Cor 3:5, 7).
- “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God” (2 Cor 3:5).
- “For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends” (2 Cor 10:12, 18).
- “If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity” (2 Cor 11:30).
- As to the assertion that Jesus wasn’t poor: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9).

Unscrupulous and predatory preachers usually hide their arrogance under a cover of false humility, but not Eddie Long. His boldness is shocking. But I think Eddie Long understands something about his flock. He knows he can get away with flaunting his extravagance *because no one will do anything about it*. He is banking on his charisma and fame to make him invincible. (However, it may take more than charm to satisfy the IRS.)

But the purpose of this article is not to wring hands over Eddie Long’s success. We’re content to leave his fate in the hands of God. But innocent and unsuspecting sheep need to be warned, and the Eddie Longs of the world need to be exposed as false representatives of Jesus Christ (2 Tim 2:17; 2 Cor 11:13-15).