



What religions teach about rich and poor people

KS4 RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Why religions care about money

Most of the world's major religions—**Christianity**, **Islam**, **Judaism**, **Buddhism**, and **Sikhism**—all have something important to say about rich and poor people. They don't just talk about prayer or belief; they also teach followers how to treat others and what to do with money. This matters because it shapes how billions of people think about fairness and helping others.

Christianity's message

Jesus, the founder of Christianity, taught that **wealth** can be dangerous. He said it's harder for a rich person to enter heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle—meaning it's nearly impossible. Jesus told wealthy followers to give their money to poor people. He also praised a poor widow who gave away her last coins as a gift to the temple, saying she gave more than the rich because she sacrificed everything.

Think of it like this: if you have 10 sweets and give away 1, that's less generous than if you have 2 sweets and give away 1, because the second person gave up more.

Islam's approach

Islam teaches that all wealth belongs to **God**, not to people. Rich Muslims must give **Zakat**—about 2.5% of their savings—to poor people every year. This is one of the **Five Pillars**, the most important rules in Islam. It's not optional; it's a duty. Islam also forbids **usury** (charging unfair interest on loans), which protects poor people from being trapped in debt.

Buddhism and fairness

Buddhism teaches that greed and clinging to possessions cause suffering. Buddhists believe that being generous and sharing brings happiness, while hoarding wealth

brings unhappiness. Many Buddhists practice **dana**—giving freely to others, especially monks and poor people.

Judaism and Sikhism

Judaism teaches **Tzedakah**, which means giving to the poor as a duty, not a choice. **Sikhism** teaches **Dasvandh**—donating one-tenth of earnings to help others. **Guru Nanak**, Sikhism's founder, believed that all humans are equal and that wealth should be shared in the community.

Think of it like a sports team: if one player keeps all the goals and doesn't pass to teammates, the team fails. When everyone shares, everyone wins.

The common message

Although these religions come from different parts of the world and different times in history, they agree on key ideas: being extremely greedy is wrong, helping poor people is essential, and wealth shouldn't make someone think they're better than others. Many say that how we treat poor and struggling people shows what we really believe in.