Be Rich 2026: A Conversation with Janine Maxwell

Andy Stanley · 1 Timothy 6:17-18

AT A GLANCE

At the launch of Be Rich 2026, Andy Stanley sits with Heart for Africa co-founder Janine Maxwell, whose life was redirected from wealth-building to rescuing abandoned children in Eswatini. He then turns to 1 Timothy 6 to explain the campaign's name: Paul commands the rich to be rich in good deeds. Devotion to God becomes visible in doing for others, and generosity goes furthest when it is sustained and shared.

- A need you cannot unsee becomes a calling; Janine could not return to boardroom budgets once she had seen children wrapped in cardboard.
- Band-aid service gives way to lasting change when people commit to the long game: homes, schools, vocational training, and a path to adulthood.
- Paul told Timothy to command, not merely encourage, the rich to be rich in good deeds; most of us qualify as rich.

> *"Every child, every adult, everybody matters to God, whether God matters to them or not."*

EXPOSITION

Scripture engaged

> 1 Timothy 6:17-18 — [17]Give this command to those who are rich with the things of this world. Tell them not to be proud. Tell them to hope in God, not their money. Money cannot be trusted, but God takes care of us richly. He gives us everything to enjoy. [18]Tell those who are rich to do good—to be rich in good works. And tell them they should be happy to give and ready to share. (ERV)

The argument

A Misordered Life Is Reordered by What It Cannot Unsee — Janine's September 11 reckoning, and the faces in Zambia and Kenya, turned a pursuit of wealth into a calling

Janine Maxwell is candid about where she began: "My goal in life was to be rich. I'm not going to lie." A believer who loved Jesus, she held priorities Andy Stanley reads back from her book: "the company, family, and Jesus in that order." September 11, which she spent in New York, unseated that order and sent her into a dark depression over life's meaning and what she would have left her children. In Zambia, what she took for a garbage-collection problem moved: children wrapped in plastic and cardboard. In Kenya she was led to a river where babies had been dumped in plastic bags. "It changed my life forever." Back home, a boardroom debate over sugar-cereal sales became unbearable. "I knew that I knew that I knew that I had to do something."

> **Insight —** *Calling often begins with an image that will not leave, and the first faithful step is refusing to look away.*

Lasting Rescue Trades Band-Aids for a Long Game — A home rather than an orphanage, carried through school, vocational training, and the bridge into adulthood

Janine and Ian hosted some 7,000 people on 11-day service trips, yet "we weren't moving the dial." In her book she writes, "Ian and I didn't like putting on band-aids. We wanted to make a lasting, sustainable impact." So she closed her business: "When God tells you to do something and once you've totally surrendered, you don't want to turn back. You've got to put all your chips in." They bought 2,500 acres of bush with no electricity, water, or roads. Andy Stanley stresses that this is not an orphanage but a long game: children arrive under two, call the Maxwells mom and dad, and are carried through school, vocational training, and a bridge into adulthood. Janine wants them to be "the best welder that you can have," and honest.

> **Insight —** *Lasting compassion costs more than episodic help, because it asks for a surrendered livelihood and a commitment measured in decades.*

Where a Child Begins Is Out of Our Hands; Where She Ends Up Is Not — "Love them back to life" as the shape of rescue, even when funding runs short

Andy Stanley urges the room not to hear these stories as hopeless: "You can't control where these children begin. But what you've committed to is where they'll end up." Janine's phrase for it is "love them back to life." Grace, once thought blind and unlikely ever to walk, now sings on the worship team. Triplets whose young mother wrote to Heart for Africa for help are loved back to life. Yet the commitment was strained this year: with 110 children lacking sponsors, they stopped accepting babies, which Janine calls "soul crushing." Then a social worker brought one more child. "We prayed about it. It was very clear that the Lord will provide. We believe that." A boy who had just lost his mother gained a sister.

> **Insight —** *Hope is not a forecast about circumstances but a commitment to a person's future, kept even when resources run thin.*

Paul Commands the Rich to Be Rich in Generosity — A command rather than a suggestion, and one addressed to most of us

Andy Stanley explains the campaign's name from Paul's instruction to Timothy, which he renders: "Command those who are rich in this present world to do good," to be rich in good deeds, generous and willing to share. He presses the verb: "Command them. Not encourage them. Not just try to motivate and inspire." Then the wordplay: "Don't just get rich, but be rich. Learn how to be rich." The address lands closer than we think, since most of us are rich in this present world, not only against distant nations but against some neighbors. So it is an admonition "to leverage what we have and to leverage our extra for the sake of other people in Jesus' name, because that's what he did for us."

> **Insight** — *Compared with someone, nearly everyone is rich, and Paul's command is to turn that extra into good deeds for others.*

Devotion Becomes Visible When Generosity Is Shared and Structured — Be Rich pools ordinary gifts, partners with existing nonprofits, and funds what individual donors rarely will

"Devotion to God is best demonstrated and authenticated by doing for others," Andy Stanley says, because that is what God did for us through Jesus. He calls Jesus clear on this where many parables still puzzle, and places the proof in what can be seen rather than in interior life, prayer, or church attendance. Be Rich makes it visible together. The network partners with strong nonprofits rather than replicating or competing, with about 80 percent staying local and 20 percent going abroad, by his figures. There is a participation goal rather than a financial one, a single gift of $39.95, and every dollar given away. It even funds what average donors won't: staffing, operating costs, technology. "Let's show our communities that our faith is more than just sermons and songs."

> **Insight** — *Faith is authenticated by what others can see and touch, and ordinary gifts go farthest when pooled behind organizations already doing the work.*

DEVOTIONAL

The pile of cardboard at the edge of the street looked like a garbage-collection problem until something in it moved. That is how it begins in Janine's telling: not with a strategy but with a shape at the corner of the eye that turns out to be a child. Once she focused on it, she could not sit through a sugar-cereal sales meeting the same way. Most of us carry a Four Seasons somewhere, a goal that sounds innocent and quietly sets the order of things: the company, the family, Jesus, in that order. It took a shaking to rearrange her. Paul's word to Timothy is gentler and harder at once. It does not wait for catastrophe. It commands those already comfortable to be rich in another currency: good deeds, generosity, a willingness to share. Notice what the

story refuses. It refuses band-aids and the glow of a single trip. Toddlers become teenagers who learn to weld and sing on the worship team. A boy loses his mother and is handed a sister. Ordinary gifts, pooled, become a bus, a school, clean water. Somewhere on your street something is moving. God did not stay at a distance and offer encouragement; through Jesus he did for us what we could not do. To be rich is to look long enough to be undone, and then to answer with something that can be built.

Reflection

- What goal have you pursued that quietly sat above the others in your order of priorities, and what would it take to see its place honestly?
- Where have you offered a single gesture when the need called for a long-game commitment, and what would staying look like?
- Paul commands rather than encourages. Compared to whom are you rich, and what part of your extra could you leverage for someone's good this month?

Closing prayer

Father, you did not look away from us. Through Jesus you came near and did for us what we could not do. Open our eyes to the need we have learned to walk past. Loosen our grip on the goals that crowd you out of first place. Teach us to be rich in good deeds, generous and ready to share, and give us patience for the long game of love. Hold the children of Eswatini and every child still waiting for a home. In Jesus' name, amen.

FORMATION

One thing to remember

What you do with your extra is where devotion to God becomes visible to others; the question is not whether you are rich, but whether you are being rich.

This week

This week, join Be Rich with a one-time gift of $39.95 or more, at berich.org/give, by the QR code, or at the balloons. Before giving, read 1 Timothy 6:17-18 slowly, then pray for the people your gift will reach and thank God for what you have to share.

Return to 1 Timothy 6:17-18