Book Review: The Richest Man in Babylon

Author George S. Clason’s book *The Richest Man in Babylon*, originally published in 1926, is a series of parables written to take place in ancient Babylon. The book mainly contained stories of Arkad, the main character who was able to rise from a simple scribe to be the richest man in Babylon. Other colorful characters included Dabasir, the camel trader who through his life tale illustrated the value of determination. Sharru Nada, a successful trader and merchant, praised the value of hard work as being his ticket out of slavery.

Valuable and timeless lessons are illustrated throughout Clason’s book. When dealing with financial affairs, we often focus our attention on those things that don’t matter, worry about things we cannot control, and miss larger day-to-day decisions that have a much more significant impact on our long-term financial well-being. Clason’s book brings focus back to the fundamentals of wealth creation and preservation.

Clason’s book lays out principles of saving and investing. Arkad’s “seven cures for a lean purse” include fundamental elements of wealth creation and preservation. Arkad advocates paying yourself first and saving at least ten percent of your income. “Wealth, like a tree, grows from a tiny seed. The first copper you save is the seed from which your tree of wealth shall grow. The sooner you place that seed the sooner shall the tree grow. And the more faithfully you nourish and water the tree with consistent savings, the sooner may you bask in contentment beneath its shade”.

With the popularity of self-help books and audio resources, one might not be surprised that Clason’s book, or variations of its original publication, are four of the top twenty selling books in Amazon’s “Wealth Management” section. While there are valuable lessons for all to learn from this book, I especially feel there is immense value for young readers who are starting out in creating life-long financial habits.

The book’s relatable stories supersede the awkwardly contracted sentences and sometimes archaic words used by the author. I am baffled as to why “classics” like Jane Austen’s *Senses and Sensibility* was required reading in my high school literature class while the practical lessons illustrated in the pages of Clason’s book sat on a shelf collecting dust.

*The Richest Man in Babylon* gets a definitive two-thumbs-up and is a highly recommended read. In fact, this book gets such high regards that I am offering a free copy of the book for the first 25 who stop by my office and simply ask for a copy.

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