*Retirement Blueprint*
**EP 24**

# You Make Good Money… So Why Don’t You Feel Rich?

**Transcript**
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Are you rich?

Most people think they know the answer to that question.

They look at their income, their house, their car, and their lifestyle.

But after sitting across the table from thousands of families over the years, I can tell you something that surprises almost everyone:

Some of the people who look the richest are actually the most financially fragile.

And some of the people you’d never notice have built the most real, lasting wealth.

Today, I want to talk about what actually determines whether you’re rich.

And trust me—it has very little to do with how much money you make.

## What being rich really means

I work with business owners, executives, professionals—people at every income level.

And here’s the pattern I see over and over again:

Being rich isn’t about income.

It’s about how much of your income you don’t need.

The more of your income that’s optional, the richer you are.

The more income required to keep your life running, the more exposed you become—regardless of how much you earn.

Most people have never been taught to think this way.

When you ask someone if they’re rich, their mind immediately goes to:

Can I afford my life?
Do I make good money?
Am I doing better than I used to?

But those aren't wealth questions.

Those are comfort questions.

Wealth is about resilience.

Flexibility.

Margin.

## The question that matters

Here's the simplest way I explain it to clients:

If your income stopped tomorrow, how much of your life would break?

That answer tells you far more about your financial health than your salary ever will.

## Translating money into time

Let's convert income into something more honest:

Time.

If you earn $100,000 per year, you're roughly earning about $50 per hour before taxes.

Now look at your spending.

A $500 monthly car payment?

That's roughly 10 hours of work every month.

A $1,200 monthly payment?

That's nearly a week of work every month just to support that obligation.

And here's the dangerous part:

Most people don't feel that cost when they swipe the card.

They feel it years later.

As pressure builds.

Pressure to earn.
Pressure to maintain.
Pressure not to make mistakes.

## A real-life example

A few years ago, I worked with a couple in their late 30s.

I'll change the details, but the story is real.

They had two strong incomes.

By every external measure, they looked successful:

Nice home.
Nice cars.
Good schools.
Annual vacations.

And one day they sat down and said something I hear all the time:

"We make great money, but it doesn't feel like we're getting ahead."

So we did what we always do.

We mapped everything out:

Income.
Spending.
Savings.
Net worth.

Then we stepped back and looked at the full picture.

The problem became obvious.

They weren't poor.

They weren't irresponsible.

They were fully subscribed.

Every dollar they earned already had a job:

Mortgage payments.
Car payments.

Subscriptions.
Lifestyle upgrades they barely remembered choosing.

Their income was high.

But it was already spoken for.

I asked them a simple question:

“If one of you wanted to step away from work for a year, could you?”

The room went silent.

The answer was no.

They couldn’t miss a paycheck without stress.

That’s when it clicked.

They weren’t rich.

They were funding a lifestyle.

## Buying back freedom

We didn’t tell them to live like monks.

We told them to buy back freedom.

They downsized obligations—not happiness.

They paid off unnecessary commitments.

They stopped upgrading simply because they could.

Within 18 months, something remarkable happened.

They felt lighter.

Calmer.

More in control.

Not because they earned more.

Because they needed less.

## What wealthy people understand

This is where many people misunderstand wealth.

They assume wealthy people spend more.

In reality, wealthy people are often more selective.

They don’t ask:

“Can I afford this?”

They ask:

“Does this make my life more fragile?”

They protect margin like it’s oxygen.

Because, financially speaking, it is.

Margin is what lets you say no.

Margin absorbs mistakes.

Margin turns money into freedom.

## A better definition of rich

So let’s define it clearly.

You’re rich when:

A meaningful portion of your income is optional.

Your lifestyle doesn’t require perfection.

Your spending doesn’t own your calendar.

You can absorb surprises without panic.

Rich isn’t louder.

Rich is quieter.

It doesn’t need to prove anything.

## Final takeaway

So I’ll ask you again:

Are you rich?

Not based on how much you make.

Not based on what you own.

Not based on what others see.

But based on how much of your income you no longer need.

Because that's where real wealth lives.

And if this idea made you a little uncomfortable—that's okay.

Sometimes discomfort is simply clarity trying to get through.

And if you know someone who makes good money but still feels trapped, share this with them.

It may change the way they think about wealth forever.

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