

MANAGING YOUR MONEY ACCORDING TO BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

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INTRODUCTION

How you spend your money reflects on where you are spiritually. Money plays a big role in our lives. Sadly, most of the time it plays a too important role. Jesus knows that money can impact our lives in a major way and therefore He spent quite a lot of time dealing with the topic of money while He walked the earth.

Giving is a spiritual issue and in fact, a relational issue with God. In order to truly yield to God's ownership of our possessions, we must evaluate carefully what may be the most telling evidence of our stewardship – the part we give. Many see the responsibility of giving as a burden. How sad that is considering Paul's reminder that God loves a cheerful giver. Giving is actually a relational decision. In the process of making giving decisions we really establish our agreement with God about stewardship. As we continually decide to give, we constantly affirm how much we value our relationship to God as His children.

- Did you know that in the New Testament, Jesus spoke quite a bit about wealth and possessions. He spoke more about it than He did about heaven and hell put together.
- Jesus told about 40 parables and in about 16 of them He deals with the topic of money, wealth, possessions, etc —and how to use them and how to keep them from using and abusing you.
- It's almost as if God knew we would need lots of direction and clarity on the whole money and stuff issue.

Now that's not to say that finance is the most important subject in Scripture—it isn't. But it is a critical issue and the thing that often enslaves our hearts when God wants to own all that we are.

THE SPIRIT OF MAMMON

Matthew 6:24, NIV

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

Many people do not understand that mammon is a spiritual entity, a reality that seeks to capture your heart and make you worship it. The devil tempted Jesus in the desert by offering Jesus the kingdoms of this world. The devil said to Jesus, “All these things I will give You if You fall down and worship me.” The test here is this: WHO WILL JESUS' LORD BE? GOD OR MAMMON?

Mammon is a spirit that can attach itself to our finances if we fail to surrender it firstly to God. Don't give the enemy areas of dominion over your life. The principle of tithing was implemented to break the hold of mammon over the lives of God's people. By giving your first fruit 10% to God, it positions you spiritually to operate in a different realm of financial authority.

Proverbs 3:9, NIV.

Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops

Proverbs 3:9, Message

Honor God with everything you own; give him the first and the best.

Giving is a spiritual issue and in fact, a relational issue with God.

The enemy wants to divide loyalties and he uses money to do it. You become a servant of whatever you give priority to. The Christian walk is about priorities. Money is the test for things that are of eternal significance.

Unlimited financial freedom begins at the point where God has full authority in our material world.

Our financial and material world operates either in a surrendered or underdefended position. If it is un-surrendered it has the power to draw your heart away.

Mammon wants you to use your money to operate outside of the purposes of God. Mammon wants you to spend your whole week and ultimately your whole life pursuing and managing money. Life is all about alliances. God wants to prosper us, but Mammon wants you to believe that the blessing will come through him, not God. We should never forget that ultimately, God owns everything

Psalms 24:1, NIV

"The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;"

Mammon's outcome is control. He wants to control what you do with that which God has entrusted you with. Mammon wants you to worship it in exchange for greater wealth, control and status.

We really need to be wise when it comes to how we deal with our finances. The devil wants to distract you and dissolve your sense of responsibility when it comes to money.

GOD IS GENEROUS

Generosity is part of God's character. He not only gave to us what He has, but He gave Himself to us (John 3:16). Therefore, God wants His children to reflect His very character and nature while living on the earth. When we give towards the LORD and His work, we are living a lifestyle that reflects His character.

To reiterate the point that God is our provider, Jesus reminded his hearers of the birds of the field and how God looked after them. It is easy to say 'don't worry about food' when we have a full cupboard, but we are encouraged to recognize that it is God who is providing for us. This does require faith on our part, to be able to trust with 'simple, childlike faith' that our heavenly father really does know what is needed. Worrying won't get us anywhere. Rather than being anxious about these things, we could be resting in the love and provision of God. This is one of the most challenging things that we, as Christians, face. We can trust God for the unseen 'spiritual things'. However, to trust God for our daily requirements is much more tangible. It really is a test of our faith. Jesus wanted to refocus the people's attention on who the real provider is. Mammon will want you to believe that it is your source, not God.

You cannot separate your Christian walk with God and how you spend your money. How you manage your money is an outflow and the proof of your relationship with God.

GOD LOVES IT WHEN WE GIVE GENEROUSLY AND CHEERFULLY

Proverbs 22:9, NIV

The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.

Proverbs 11:24, HCSB

"One person gives freely, yet gains more; another withholds what is right, only to become poor."

Paul encourages the Corinthians to give generously

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians wanted them to understand that giving money, possessions, resources to God's work is part of God's plan for Christians. He encourages them to give generously because God will generously reward them for it.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7, NIV

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

HONOUR GOD WITH YOUR WEALTH

We honor God by what we say, by what we think, by what we do, and by how we steward what He has entrusted us with. Start being a giver today. Giving breaks to control that mammon has over our lives. The world teaches us to hold on to what we have and to always strive to get more, while the Bible teaches us that in order to be blessed, we need to be givers. It is better to give than to receive.

Acts 20:35, ESV

"In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"