

## **MONEY Matthew 6:19-34**

Money can buy acquaintances, but there is not enough money in the world to buy a single friend. Money can buy facts, but money can't buy wisdom. Money can buy social acceptance, but money can't buy virtue. Money can buy a reputation, but money can't buy character. Money can buy objects, but money can't buy objectives. We exist in the things that money can buy. We live on the things it can't.

### **The Truest indicator**

The way we handle our money is perhaps the truest indicator of the spiritual condition of our heart. The Bible contains more than 500 references to prayer and almost 500 references to faith, but there are more than 2,000 references to money and possessions. Out of 38 parables that Jesus told in the gospels, 16 deal with how we handle our money. Jesus said more about money and possessions than about heaven and hell combined. One out of every ten verses in the Gospels deals with money or possessions....288 verses in the four Gospels.

### **A Story – the son and the car**

The son of a wealthy man expected to receive a sports car for his graduation. Instead his dad called him into his study, told him that he loved him, and handed him a present. When the son opened it, he found it to be a box containing a leather bound Bible, with his name inscribed on it. Angrily, the young man tossed the box on his father's desk and stormed out saying, "With all your money, all you can give me is a Bible." And they never spoke again, despite the fact that the young man's father tried hard to contact him. Years later, he got a call to say his dad had died, leaving him everything. And he was going through his father's belongings, he found that Bible still in its box. Curious, he took the Bible out of the box and opened it. The page fell open at the passage his father had marked. And as he looked at the page, he noticed that his dad had underlined Matthew 7:11 "If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall Your Father give what is good to those who ask Him" And as he read it, a car key from inside the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name on it....for the sports car that he had wanted years before. On the tag beside his graduation date were the words, "Paid in full, love dad."

### **Matthew 6: 9-35 Money & Giving – Where Should I Invest my Money**

Matthew 6:19-21, "Don't store up treasures on earth! Moths and rust can destroy them, and thieves can break in and steal them. Instead, store up treasures in heaven, where moths and rust can't destroy them, and thieves can't break in and steal them. Your heart will always be where your treasure is."

When investing your money, you research different kinds of opportunities out there, and what are the pluses and minuses. You desire what is going to give you the best return, don't you? e.g. Bank of Queensland 8.35% over 6 months, Commonwealth Bank 8.45% over 8 months (short time) GDIF 7.25% 3 years

OR D O H but, Do you think of giving tithes, giving to missions ,etc AS INVESTING? You should. Especially if you are considering how to invest your money and what will bring you the best returns. What is our relationship to money? What is the Biblical view of Wealth?

(1) Crucial to realize that the "earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" Psalm 24:1

Came with nothing, take nothing away! Quote Eccles 5:10ff

"If you love money and wealth, you will never be satisfied with what you have. This doesn't make sense either. The more you have, the more everyone expects from you. Your money won't do you any good, others will just spend it for.

You came into this world naked, and when you die, you will be just as naked."

## Owner/stewardship relationship

Take note, we are stewards of God's money. God tells us how to invest His money and tells us by doing things His way we will be the recipients of spiritual dividends.

### SO WHAT DOES HE TELL US?

(a) Don't stock pile your treasures on earth

Decay, thieving moths, rust, diminish our wealth investing in earthly treasures makes no sense!

(b) Store your treasures in heaven

Heaven's vaults are 100% moth, rust, thief proof. Investments kept safe and multiply. You can't take it with you...but you can send it on ahead. So, either invest in earthly things and lose it eventually, or invest in the things of God, giving up temporary riches that will last.

See Luke 12:16-21 "The Rich fool" Storage on grain..."eat drink and be merry!"

This is not a passage designed to rebuke those who responsibly save emergency funds, this is a warning for those who hoard stuff for themselves in this life to the detriment of their eternity.

### So, HOW SHOULD YOU INVEST?

Make sure you are storing up treasures in heaven. If home is where the heart is, then where is my heart? "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Many times we are obsessed by what we possess. There is nothing wrong with possessing riches, there is something wrong with being possessed by riches. When riches possess us, we are so earthly minded, we are of no heavenly good. In Matthew 19....there was "a rich young man" who couldn't leave the god of riches to follow God of the universe....see TEXT

Unfortunately, many times we are like the rich young man who probably couldn't fathom getting rid of his possessions and storing up possessions in heaven, as being greater than the luxurious living he was involved in.

Jesus may never call you and I to give away all of our earthly possessions as He did this man, but He does demand that we surrender our rights over to Him to do whatever we please, with our money. God knows that the man who pursues riches is captivated by those riches, much like the young rich man of Matthew 19.

God doesn't want your heart to be captivated by these so-called riches that rot away. He wants you to enjoy the real stuff. He offers abundant living far beyond what our temporal wealth can supply and He wants you to take part in it. I challenge you to begin to put your wealth in eternal things. Move from a "me" centered agenda to investing in what pleases God and what will have eternal results.

By doing that it reveals where our heart already is. But also, when you do that, your heart will follow where you've invested your treasure and you'll find yourself more focused on heavenly things than earthly things.

When you invest in a stock, you are concerned with what happens with your investment. When you really catch a vision of what giving does to advance God's kingdom at home and around the

world, you'll be moved by that reality that you'll be excited to give.

Hudson Taylor said " The less I spend on myself and the more I gave to others the fuller of happiness and blessing did my soul become."

" God loves a cheerful giver" 2 Cor. 9:7

This doesn't mean we should give only when we're feeling cheerful-.The cheerfulness often comes during and after the act of obedience, not before it. Another point to make is that "big givers" won't necessarily find treasures in heaven. You see there is a heart issue Why do we give? Do we give like the Pharisees who wanted only the recognition of man? Or do we give to please God, to show Him our heart is after the things He desires.

Luke 16:14, speaks of "the Pharisees, who loved money." They didn't care about God, they were just trying to look spiritual. Our giving should first and foremost be out of our heart that loves God, and what God loves. So if we expect to receive rewards for our giving, our hearts must have pure motives for giving.

Am I really being God's steward with God's money?

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

Colossians 3:5 refers to greed as idolatry. Greed, the love of money are the same thing. You can't serve God and idols. If we are not careful, we will find ourselves serving money, pursuing it, doing anything we can to have more and more wealth and possessions. We become a slave to its enticements. It becomes our focus on life, "if I could just have that". Rather than serving God, we spend our lives serving money. God won't settle for that. Money was never meant to be your master. God was! So, rather than serving money, make it serve God's purposes in our lives.

Truth is there is nothing wrong with using some of the money God has blessed you with to have nice things or go to nice places. God told the Israelites in Malachi to test His faithfulness in pouring out blessing to them in abundance, if they'd be faithful in their tithes and offerings.

Paul told the Corinthians church that if they gave generously they'd reap generously. Where money becomes an idol is when having nice things and going nice places becomes the purpose of accumulating more and more wealth.

It also becomes an idol when we hoard the blessings of God entirely for ourselves. Paul told the Corinthians that they'd be made rich in every way so they could be generous on every occasion. We should share God's blessings, not hoard them. This brings us to the question: If you are giving to God at all, are you giving God the leftovers of your finances?

Paul gave instructions for Timothy to tell the rich

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life"

1 Timothy 6:17-19

What is distracting you from giving? Verses 25-34 READ

Let's be honest, not only does the amassing of wealth distract us from an eternal perspective, but so do the basic cares of life. Matthew 13:22 mentions the "worries of this life" as being one of the factors that chokes out the fruitfulness of the seed that fell among the thorns. We worry about clothes, food, paying accounts, etc. Those are legitimate needs.

But we so over concern ourselves with worrying about the stuff of this life that those things take precedence over seeking God's Kingdom. If the Apostle Paul had acted this way, the Roman world wouldn't have been evangelized.

Perhaps you're going through a financial hardship and you are finding it hard to financially invest into God's kingdom. In fact, financial hardships, to you might seem like a good excuse to pull what's left of your financial resources out of the work of the kingdom. The problem, according to Jesus, is not that we need certain things; the problem is the priority we place on meeting those needs.

Our concern becomes worry. Our worry reflects lack of faith. Our lack of faith surfaces in our priorities. So we prioritize our wants and wishes first and God's kingdom last Jesus suggests we reverse the order.

Let me encourage you to give despite your circumstances and then trust God's provision. Rather than holding out and holding back, give generously even in the hard times. That's what the Macedonian churches did. And they were going through it themselves. But did they let that stop them from answering the call to helping others monetarily No way!

Listen to what Paul says in 2 Cor. 8:1-3

"And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability"

The need for you to practice giving has nothing to do with how -- much you currently bring in each week or month. Jesus observed a poor woman at the Temple that, while giving far less than the rich man, exceeded them percentage wise.

If you don't give when you are less fortunate, then what makes you think that you'll change when your circumstances improve? Giving when you don't have an abundance to give is an act of faith! Do you really believe God will take care of you? Then seek God's kingdom first.

So how will you use your wealth to make an eternal difference? Jesus said it was more blessed to give than to receive. Do you believe that? Our cheque books and bank statements tell the story.

Some thoughts on GIVING....

(i) You should give in proportion to your income.

Obviously the person who makes less will give less than the rich person if both are giving in proportion to one's income. Don't worry about what so and so gives, you give what you can.

(ii) Give sacrificially.

There will be times your giving will be above what you normally would find comfortable. We already saw that the Macedonians did this despite their own poverty. God wants us at times to give more to His kingdom and sacrifice some other things we normally can't do without This helps to make us more kingdom minded.

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(iii) I'd encourage you to tithe.

Though it is hotly debated, it makes very little sense to me that the principle of tithing should be tossed to the side just because there is no explicit New Testament command to tithe. In fact, if tithing was beneficial for the work of God in the O T, how much more beneficial is it now under the N T? In fact 10% of your income should be seen as a place to start, not a goal to get to. Once you realize 100% of your income is God's anyhow, your attitude in giving the tithe should change quickly.

(iv) You should give over and above the tithe.

The tithe is a good place to start, but there are so many other worthy causes in the kingdom that should be considered as well....

(v) Ask God what he wants you to give to!

You cannot support every ministry under the sun. Ask God what you should invest in personally. He's given you your money for specific purposes. Find out what these purposes are.

(vi) Investigate every ministry you are considering to give to. Go to the website, read the journal, check with the Missions etc.

Whilst we have focused on money today, giving includes much more than just giving your dollars. Time, talents and resources can be included in storing up treasures in heaven. Volunteers, Friends, the office, the soup kitchen. While we all must give financially, some of us can also give incredible amounts of time.

We all need to use our talents for God. So look at life with an eternal perspective and give all you can to the K of K

James Dobson "God does not need our money. But you and I need the experience of giving it."