



WEEK FIVE: MASTERING MONEY

Jesus assures us that we cannot serve both him and money at the same time. But since money is such a big part of life, we still have to use it and deal with it every day. According to the scriptures, the best way for us to do that is to foster an attitude of **stewardship** and to let that drive us towards contentment and generosity.

TEXT: LUKE 16:1-13

1. WHEN JESUS SPEAKS OF US AND OUR MONEY, HE REFERS TO US MOST COMMONLY AS STEWARDS

- Read Luke 16:1-13

With regards to our relationship to money, Jesus calls us stewards. In his time, stewards were people who were appointed to manage and grow the assets of a wealthy land owner.

Stewards were not wealthy people themselves, but did have the benefit of enjoying some of their boss's assets, while under their care. God wants us to view our finances and resources in the same light: we are stewards of his resources; we are not the owners.

- God Owns Everything We Have - this means that everything that comes into our bank account belongs to him, not just the 10% amount that we tithe to the church every month. This means that every decision we make about spending should be made in light of being a manager of *God's* money, and not as though we are the owners ourselves.
- We Are Responsible for Everything We Have - knowing that the money is not actually ours should make us even more responsible for how we spend it.
- We Will Give an Account for Everything We Have - there are consequences to the wastage and misuse of our resources. God will hold us to account of every cent he put in our care.

- ❖ Q: If we truly believe that God owns all of our money, how much do you think we should be giving to the work of the ministry?
- ❖ Q: Why does the idea of stewardship change the way in which we view the money that comes into our bank accounts each month?
- ❖ Q: Why does the idea of stewardship increase the responsibility of how we manage our money, rather than decrease it?

2. JESUS ISN'T OPPOSED TO PEOPLE SPENDING AND INVESTING, HE IS OPPOSED TO PEOPLE SPENDING AND INVESTING UNWISELY

- Read Matthew 6:19-21

Scripture is full of advice for preparing for the future and being wise about saving and investing. In fact, Paul was quite firm on the fact that as Christians, we should work and provide for ourselves, and not become lazy and a burden to the church.

10 THINGS JESUS I WISH NEVER SAID

In this passage Jesus, was not suggesting poor financial planning. He was and is however, fiercely against the unwise, selfish and foolish use of money on the wrong things. And if we are honest with ourselves, this is something we are all guilty of, at least at some level. Jesus was and is challenging our hearts on money, and calls us to think differently about how and when we spend it:

- Be thoughtful and careful
 - To intentionally consider the eternal value
 - To obey in this area, regardless of how we feel about it
- ❖ Q: Why is it important for us to see that Jesus was not suggesting that we be irresponsible with money and not plan wisely? (What could the temptation be if we got this wrong?)
 - ❖ Q: Do you think that in our wealthy environment, we need to caution people against over-investing because of the temptation towards greed and excessive comfort? Explain your answer.
 - ❖ Q: Why do you think that Jesus was pushing on their heart attitude towards money rather than telling his hearers how exactly to spend their money?
 - ❖ Q: Ask yourselves honestly, and then share among the group, if you personally ever think about the eternal value of your spending (apart from when you do your EFT tithe to the church each month)?

3. YOU CAN'T SERVE GOD AND MONEY BUT YOU CAN SERVE GOD WITH MONEY

- Read Matthew 6:22-24

As Christians, we cannot serve money, but we have to deal with money every day. But before we can learn how to deal with it in a Godly way, we first need to identify the following ways in which we currently serve money:

- i. Coveting – we want what other people have.
- ii. Discontentment - we are not satisfied with what we currently have.
- iii. Being Ungenerous – we do not give sacrificially or joyfully from what we have now – but always imagine that we will give more when we have more.

As a church, we have such great potential to give to the work of the kingdom of God and we can only do that when we are choosing to serve God rather than money.

4. THE BEST WAY TO SERVE GOD INSTEAD OF MONEY IS TO LIVE LIVES OF COUNTER-CULTURAL CONTENTMENT AND GOSPEL MOTIVATED GENEROSITY

- Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10 & 2 Corinthians 8:1-12

In order to serve God, we need to learn how to be content with what God has entrusted to us, and how to be generous, knowing that it is all his in the first place. The gospel has to be the lens through which we view money, if we are ever to have the right hearts about it.

- ❖ Q: In what ways mentioned above, do you realize that you are currently serving money? (I.e. coveting, discontentment or lack of generosity).
 - ❖ Q: Why is it important for us to acknowledge where we are in fact serving money, rather than God, in order to change in this area of our lives?
 - ❖ Q: How does a gospel lens on money enable us to live lives of contentment and generosity?
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