

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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The Money Question

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Introduction

In our current economic situation 'the money question' is on everyone's mind including those who are called Christians. Is that a question that should be tasking our mental resources? As Christians do we have a Scriptural mindset concerning money or are we operating by the world's standards? What's God's view of money? Have we been taught about money correctly from those who are the 'so-called' leaders?

Some of you may remember a song by the O'Jays called "For the Love of Money". It is the theme song for the Donald Trump television show "The Apprentice". Its lyrics sum up the world's view of the pursuit of money very well. The second verse lyrics say it all:

*For the love of money\
People will steal from their mother\
For the love of money\
People will rob their own brother\
For the Love of money\
People can't even walk the street\
Because they never know who in the world they're gonna beat\
For that lean, mean, mean green\
almighty dollar, money*

That's the world's view but what is God's view?

For the Love of Money

Like the song says, the world is driven by a desire, a love for money and all that it buys. The pursuit of money is to achieve a luxurious lifestyle where you can do what you want, when you want, and where you want.

Paul makes it very clear in his instructions to Timothy that the desire to be rich and the love of money is a problem—a major problem to those who believe.

1 Timothy 6:9-10 NASB

- (9) But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.
- (10) For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

When a believer is driven by the desire to get rich it causes many attractive temptations that are contrary to God's will and commandments. The Enemy uses this to entrap us and snare us with many foolish and harmful desires which, when pursued, carry us to ruin and destruction with the result that we become useless in the Kingdom of God and the work of the Lord.

Loving money makes it an idol, which becomes the source of all sorts of evil. Pursuing money will lead us away from the faith and result in many griefs and pain.

Paul then told Timothy:

1 Timothy 6:11 NASB

- (11) But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.

We are to flee from the pursuit of money and instead pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.

1 Timothy 6:7-8 NASB

- (7) For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.
- (8) If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

When compared with our pursuit of a luxurious lifestyle, food and covering is a rather low goal. However, we are not serving money but we are serving God. Our mental resources are devoted to the pursuit of the Lord and His work and not toward wealth. Jesus spoke very clearly about this issue.

Matthew 6:24-25 NASB

- (24) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.
- (25) "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

Matthew 6:31-33 NASB

- (31) "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'"
- (32) "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.
- (33) "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Our first priority is not money nor is it even the necessities of life. Our first priority is His

Kingdom and His righteousness. If we get our priorities right, the Lord will take care of the rest. We can take our rest in Jesus' words, *"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."* (Matthew 6:34 NASB)

Money and the Church

The world's view of money is predominate in the institutional church and among the people of God. You can be rich or poor and still be driven by a love of money. The "prosperity gospel" plays on this. It takes the world's desire for money and dresses it up in religious garb and tells us that is is God's desire that we be rich. It also tells us the way to do this is by giving—first the tithe and then your 'seed' offerings. Of course, the 'good ground' that you are to sow into is their 'ministry'. The end result in most cases is that 'they' get rich and you struggle to legalistically pay your tithe and plant as big a 'seed' as possible. All of this is contrary to the Scriptures.

[*Note: for further study of the issue of the tithe see "The Principle of the Tithe" on the website.*]

The love of money is a heart issue. One that must be dealt with before the Lord can entrust us with true riches. However, if all that the 'so-called' teachers are telling us is that we 'give to get' God's favor and blessing, how will we ever have our heart attitude dealt with? How do the 'prosperity teachers' explain the words of Jesus?

Luke 12:32-34 NASB

- (32) "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.
- (33) "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.
- (34) "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Money and possessions are some of the issues that fall under Kingdom principles. As the Lordship of Jesus, the government of God comes into our life, our motivations change and all that we are and all that we possess become the property of Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NASB

- (19) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?
- (20) For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

We glorify God in our bodies when our actions, the things that we do, are in alignment with the desires of the Lord. This includes our money and possessions.

We have a good example of this in Acts.

Acts 4:32 NASB

- (32) And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.

Acts 4:34 NASB

- (34) For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or

houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales

How many institutional congregations do you know where “there is not a needy person among them”? Or, for that matter, even the house church groups? We seem more than willing to give money to television personalities, flashy 'power' ministries, the church building fund and operating budget but allow our brother or sister to struggle with buying food. What is wrong with this picture? Why is our scriptural understanding of money so twisted?

This was an issue even under the ministry of John the Baptist. He spoke of judgment to come and the need for repentance. The crowd that heard him asked “What shall we do?”

Luke 3:11 NASB

(11) And he would answer and say to them, "The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise."

This is even more applicable to us who have the fullness of the Spirit and yet we store up for ourselves and neglect the need of our brothers and sisters. There should be no one in our believer's fellowship that is suffering physical need if we are obeying the Spirit of the Lord.

We have seen in these days of economic crisis in America how quickly that which we have stored can be gone. There is no security in retirement accounts, IRAs, stocks, bonds, or anything else that is not dependent upon trust in the Lord. Unless we are obedient to the Holy Spirit and learn the correct heart attitude toward money, we will have turmoil and loss trying to find security in wealth. As believers we must learn to care for one another as the Lord intends and as He has told us.

While seeking the Lord about this month's teaching lesson, I felt that much more needs to be said on this subject matter. As a result, I am starting a new series, which is as of now un-named, about the subject of money and other aspects of a believer's financial worldview. Some of the areas to be addressed are body life financial provision, ministry financing, tithing, 'seed' giving, ministry support, financial deceptions, and false prophets with financial motives. Look for it on the website. --- Art Nelson.

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