

WISE WORDS ABOUT MANAGING GOD'S MONEY

Mark 8:36



INTRODUCTION

- A. Financial management should be a matter of concern for every child of God
 - 1. Poor financial management makes life more difficult, damages a person's reputation, and hinders one's ability to influence others for good
 - 2. Poor financial management is equivalent to poor stewardship and will keep some people from making it to heaven (e.g., Mt. 25:14-30)
- B. All who hope to please God must consider what the Bible says about financial matters because improper reverence for money has caused many to walk away from God
 - 1. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. 6:10)
 - 2. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mk. 8:36)
- C. One doesn't have to learn about sound financial management the hard way; one can learn a great deal by simply heeding some biblical words of wisdom on the subject

I. IN MANAGING GOD'S MONEY, SOME THINGS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN WEALTH

- A. Those who serve God must keep financial matters in proper perspective; this is the principal import of the Lord's question
- B. Right living before God is far more important than acquiring earthly riches
 - 1. "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right." (Prov. 16:8)
 - 2. "Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich." (Prov. 28:6)
 - 3. "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." (Ps. 37:16)
- C. A good reputation for integrity is far more important as well
 - 1. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." (Prov. 22:1)
 - 2. "Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool." (Prov. 19:1)
- D. A peaceful, loving home is far superior to material gain
 - 1. "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." (Prov. 15:17)
 - 2. "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife." (Prov. 17:1)
- E. Godly wisdom is better than precious stones and metals
 - 1. "Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it" (Prov. 8:10-11)
 - 2. "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!" (Prov. 16:16)

- F. All will make better financial decisions if we keep financial matters in their proper context; many things are more important than money
 - 1. Those who are striving to please God must remember that, while money matters have their place, they must never give them a place above things that are truly more important
 - 2. “. . . if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.” (Ps. 62:10b)
 - 3. Remember the Lord’s warning; “. . . a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” (Lk. 12:15b)

II. **IN MANAGING GOD’S MONEY, HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY**

- A. Honesty is “the quality or condition or being honest;” and it suggests truthfulness and sincerity¹
- B. God is pleased with honesty, and He is displeased with dishonesty; so then, honesty is the best policy in managing His money
 - 1. “Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.” (Prov. 20:10; see also Prov. 20:23)
 - 2. “A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.” (Prov. 11:1)
 - 3. “A just weight and balance are the LORD's: all the weights of the bag are His work.” (Prov. 16:11)
 - 4. “Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have” (Lev. 19:36a)
- C. Dishonesty is characteristic of those who aren’t concerned about consequences
 - 1. Dishonesty can lead to ruin here on earth
 - a. In the end, it is not profitable to cheat others; “He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand . . .” (Prov. 10:4a)
 - b. Ultimately, it is not profitable to oppress others; “He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.” (Prov. 22:16)
 - c. Focusing on money leads one towards dishonesty; “He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.” (Prov. 28:22)
 - 2. While dishonesty can lead to ruin on earth, it will lead to ruin in eternity
 - a. “The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.” (Prov. 21:6)
 - b. “Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.” (Prov. 11:4)
- D. One million dollars is ultimately worthless if the price for acquiring it is dishonesty

¹Joseph Pickett, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 4th ed.* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 842.

III. IN MANAGING GOD'S MONEY, HARD WORK DOES PAY

- A. Work is “physical or mental effort or activity directed toward the production or accomplishment of something”²
- B. God expects people to work
 - 1. God expects people to work hard; “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” (Eccl. 9:10)
 - 2. God expects His people to work sincerely; “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” (Col. 3:22-24)
- C. An unwillingness to work, i.e., laziness, leads to material poverty
 - 1. They that are lazy seemingly want everything but have very little
 - a. “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing” (Prov. 13:4a)
 - b. “The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.” (Prov. 21:25)
 - 2. Laziness is only acceptable to those who aspire to poverty
 - a. “Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.” (Prov. 6:10-11, 24:33-34)
 - b. “Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.” (Prov. 19:15)
 - c. “The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.” (Prov. 20:4)
 - d. “He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.” (Prov. 18:9)
- D. Honest, diligent labor, however, is always profitable
 - 1. “Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.” (Prov. 13:11)
 - 2. “. . . but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” (Prov. 10:4b)
 - 3. “He that gathereth in summer is a wise son . . .” (Prov. 10:5a)
 - 4. “. . . the soul of the diligent shall be made fat” (Prov. 13:4b)
 - 5. “In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury [severe poverty].” (Prov. 14:23)
- E. So many want to “get rich quick,” or make lots of money with minimal effort
 - 1. Only the dictionary puts “success” before “work”
 - 2. If at first you don’t succeed, try a little **ARDOR**
 - 3. “While our live should not be consumed by work, we must remember that it is work that creates the wealth that can then be used to care for our families and others.”³

²Joseph Pickett, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 4th ed.* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 1981.

³Jim Palmer, “Work for a Living,” *Think* (January 2006): 10.

- F. Financial gain that results from hard work is better appreciated and lasts far longer than any other kind

IV. IN MANAGING GOD'S MONEY, WEALTH PRESENTS ITS OWN UNIQUE CHALLENGES

- A. Wealth is “an abundance of valuable material possessions or resources; riches” “the state of being rich; affluence”⁴
- B. One challenging thing about financial wealth is that it does not last forever
 - 1. Because material goods do not last forever, financial wealth, of itself, is not a worthwhile goal
 - a. “For riches are not for ever:” (Prov. 27:24a)
 - b. “Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.” (Prov. 23:4-5)
 - 2. One should not allow wealth, or the pursuit thereof, to draw his focus from amassing true treasure that will never pass away
 - a. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:” (Matt. 6:19)
 - b. “The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” (1 Jo. 2:17)
- C. Although material wealth is fleeting, it can present significant spiritual stumblingblocks for those who have it
 - 1. Solomon, who enjoyed exorbitant wealth, said, “Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.” (Prov. 15:16)
 - 2. Horace, a first century Roman poet, agreed with him, “Why should I exchange my Sabine valley for riches which just make more trouble?”⁵
 - 3. The love of great wealth oftentimes makes it more challenging for people to put their trust in God rather than their wealth
 - a. “And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!” (Mt. 10:24b)
 - b. “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17)
 - 4. Having enjoyed material prosperity, some turn away from God
 - a. “For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.” (Deut. 31:20)
 - b. It might be best for most people that they do not have an abundance of material resources; “Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me

⁴Joseph Pickett, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* 4th ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 1948.

⁵*The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, Third Edition* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980), 260.

neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.” (Prov. 30:8-9)

5. Amassing large sums of money quickly often requires one to transgress God’s will in doing so; “A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.” (Prov 28:20)

D. People often think about the good things they expect will come with having financial wealth, but we would do well to consider the challenges that will come along as well

CONCLUSION

A. “The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.” (Prov. 22:2)

B. The eternally important matter is not how much we have, but how we handle it

C. If we have what is truly important, if we’re honest, and we work hard, then we will have what the Lord intends for us to have

D. It is never wise to covet more