

# Money and the Bible, Pt. 1

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Matthew 6:19–34 (NKJV) “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. <sup>22</sup> The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness! <sup>24</sup> No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. <sup>25</sup> Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? <sup>28</sup> So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.”

The Bible has a lot to say about money. There are more verses in the Bible about money and the proper use of money than there are about heaven. What is money? Money is a medium of exchange, a measurement of value, and as a means of payment. Almost everything in life involves the receiving and spending of money at some level. Our worries and desires in life become centered around issues of money. Therefore our view and attitude about money directly affects our relationship with God.

Contrary to what some have believed, God is not against us having money. However, God does want us to live responsibly with money. Responsibility with money begins when we see it connected to God’s higher purpose. Regarding their benevolent giving toward other believers, Paul exhorted the believers at Thessalonica saying, “*But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; <sup>11</sup> that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup> that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.*” (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 NKJV)

Is money evil? Money in itself is not good or bad. It’s not righteous or evil. Money is neutral. It is amoral. Money is a *measure* of our morality. Some say money corrupts. Money doesn’t corrupt. It just reveals more visibly the corruption that already exists in the heart of the one who possesses it. For instance, there are corrupt people with money who use it in a way that manifests their corruption. On the other hand, there are uncorrupt people with money who use it in a way that manifests their righteousness. In addition, there are corrupt people who have no money and there are people who have no money and are godly people. You take a corrupt person, give him a lot of money and he’ll be able to spread his corruption further.

Money is not the problem; the heart is the problem. Money simply measures out the corruption that is in the heart. Money is an index to the heart. It defines how we live. Matthew 6:21 (NKJV) says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The question then becomes, "Where is your heart?" How do we evaluate our heart? We begin by looking at our spending. Look at your checkbook. Look at your credit card statement. Look at your storehouse. How you use money will give you a clear picture of what is in your heart.

Is our life purpose determined by the amount of money we possess? No, our life and purpose is not determined by the money and things we possess. Rather, our life and purpose is determined by God and His plan. In fact, our life and purpose may be actually hindered by the money and things we possess. This is highlighted in the following passages:

Luke 12:22–23 (NKJV) *"Then He said to His disciples, 'Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on.'<sup>23</sup> Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing."*

Luke 12:13–15 (NKJV) *"Then one from the crowd said to Him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.'<sup>14</sup> But He said to him, 'Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?'<sup>15</sup> And He said to them, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.'"*

Matthew 16:24–26 (NKJV) *"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'<sup>25</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.<sup>26</sup> For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

The real issue is not money but the "love of money" in our heart. The love of money is a characteristic of people living in the last days: *"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money..."* (2 Timothy 3:1-2 NKJV) The opposite of the love of money is *contentment*: *"And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."* (1 Timothy 6:8 NKJV) The love of money is dissatisfaction with God and His provision that brings great spiritual peril for those who fall into its trap: *"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition."<sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* (1 Timothy 6:9-10 NKJV)

God is not against His people having money; He is against money having them. Money is a great servant but a cruel taskmaster. The love of money is enslavement to materialism that resists our submission to the Lordship of Christ: *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."* (Matthew 6:24 NKJV) We cannot serve two masters. The question then becomes: "Are we going to serve God or are we going to serve money and wealth?"

(Continued next month)

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