

MONEY MATTERS MIGHTILY – NOW AND ETERNALLY

- I. **WHAT IS THE GREATEST USE OF MONEY?** - Jesus answers this question in Luke 16:9, “I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.”

Does that verse surprise you? What is Jesus saying? A few things He is not saying:

- (a) He is not saying, “Buy your way into heaven.”
- (b) He is not saying, “Pay for your salvation.”
- (c) He is not saying, “Bribe God.”

What, then, is He saying? In black and white, He is saying, “The greatest (wisest) use of money is to invest it in getting people into heaven, that is the highest and best use of it.” We are thus to use our temporary resources for permanent good. Note: Most churches spend almost all of their money on themselves. They have lost focus on their primary mission – reaching lost people. I believe every local church should set aside at least 25% of their budget for evangelism.¹

- II. **IS JESUS INTERESTED IN MY CHECKBOOK?** Listen to His words in Luke 16:10-12: verse 10, “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.” That is, if I am faithful with what I have, then God can trust me with more of it. Continuing in verses 11-12, Jesus says, “So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?”

So God uses money to test us. Think about this for a moment: If you were to let me take a look at your checkbook, do you think I would understand a lot about you?

No matter what I say is important in my life, you can tell what is really important by looking at two things:

- 1. My Checkbook Register, and
- 2. My Day Planner

The way I spend my time and the way I spend my money tell what’s really important to me regardless of what I say.

¹ Tom Evans, “Coaching from a Crook”, sermoncentral.com/ p. 5

MONEY AFFECTS EVERY SINGLE AREA OF OUR LIVES. In the above passages, Jesus teaches that there is a direct relationship between what I do with my money and the spiritual depth in my life. If I am faithful with money, God can trust me with spiritual riches, if not, He cannot.

III. **IS GOD OR MONEY FIRST IN YOUR LIFE?** Luke 16:13, “No servant 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 God and money.” Jesus is not vague in this verse. He lays it down in language that is crystal clear:

- (1) I must choose what I will love most in life, and when you get down to it,
- (2) The choice is very simple because it comes down to two things
 1. God or
 2. Money.

Illus.: The Last Day Church, the lukewarm church of Laodicea, is spiritually bankrupt because it is enraptured with materialism, and this church makes Jesus so sick that He vomits it out of His mouth (Rev. 3:14-22). Thus the overwhelming condition of church people living in the last days will be love for money to spend on self.

So Jesus demands that we make a choice: Give Him sole possession of First Place. If I try to live for God and money at the same time, I have mass confusion in my life. **GOD INSISTS ON FIRST PLACE IN MY LIFE AND IN YOUR LIFE.**

IV. **DOES GOD HAVE FIRST PLACE IN YOUR LIFE?** Is there any Scripture that teaches us how you can know that God has first place? This verse may surprise you – Deut. 14:23, “The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God first in your lives” (TLB). Tithing is God’s way to keep our focus on track. The principle of tithing says I give the FIRST ten percent of everything I make back to God. Why the first ten percent? It is the constant reminder that says, “God, You’re number one. I wouldn’t have anything if it weren’t for you. I would not even be alive if it were not for you.”

What is the Bottom Line? If I am not tithing, how can I say God is first place in my life? Our use of money is the top indicator of our spiritual commitment. Follow a financial plan that will bless your life abundantly and above measure in this life and even more in eternity – give a tithe of all you make through your local church.

- V. **SHOULD I ALSO GIVE OFFERINGS ABOVE THE TITHE?** Yes. The tithe is a good place to start but a bad place to stop. An obedient Christian will give “according as God has prospered him” (1 Cor. 16:2) which in most cases would include some kind of offering. There are people with small and very limited incomes who do well to tithe. However, in our affluent culture, most persons can tithe and give some offering even if small, if they spend their money well. Even when I had a meager salary (\$45 and \$52 weekly), I gave tithes and offerings and God blessed me miraculously. God charged His people under the Old Covenant of “robbing Him of tithes and offerings”, and said the people were cursed for their disobedience (Mal.3:8-10). A word to the wise is sufficient!