

May 11, 2008 (Mother's Day)

"Biblical Principles Of Money" (Part 2)

(Based on *How to Develop Deep Unity in the Marriage Relationship*, by Wayne Mack)

There is a story about a mother and son who were caught outside in a tornado that surprised them. The mother clung to a tree and tried to hold her son. But the swirling winds carried the boy into the sky, and he was gone.

The women began to pray: "Please, Lord, bring back my boy! He's all I have. I would do anything not to lose him. I you will bring him back, I'll serve you all my days."

Suddenly the boy toppled from the sky, right at her feet - well, a bit messed up, but safe and sound.

His mother joyfully brushed him off. Then she stopped for a moment, looked to the sky, and said, "He had a hat, Lord."

Isn't that the attitude we have toward money and possessions that God has given us? Even when God blesses us, we still want just a little more. When it comes to finances, many of God's people live in a constant state of dissatisfaction with what they have.

Here is the fourth Biblical principle of money...

4. To Covet, Worry, and be Discontent About Material Things Are Sins

Ex 20:17 (NLT)

"Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else your neighbor owns."

Col 3:5 (NLT)

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry.

Heb 13:5 (NLT)

Stay away from the love of money; be satisfied with what you have.

Matt 6:25 NLT

"So I tell you, don't worry about everyday life--whether you have enough food, drink, and clothes. Doesn't life consist of more than food and clothing?"

5. God Expects Us To Use The Ability He Has Given Us In Hard, Honest Work

Prov 6:6, 9, 11 NCV

Go watch the ants, you lazy person...How long will you lie there, you lazy person? When will you get up from sleeping? ...So you will be as poor as if you had been robbed;

you will have as little as if you had been held up.

Prov 10:4 (NIV)

Lazy hands make a man poor,
but diligent hands bring wealth.

Prov 14:23 (NIV)

All hard work brings a profit,
but mere talk leads only to poverty.

Eph 4:27-28 (NIV)

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Col 3:23-25 NLT

Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and the Master you are serving is Christ.

These verses support the principle that God wants us to use our strength and abilities in honest, hard work. That is the normal way of supporting our needs, and He usually rewards hard, honest work. However, they also teach and contain a warning about the dangers of get-rich-quick schemes.

Prov 13:11 (NLT)

Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows.

Get-rich-quick schemes usually cause you to lose more money than you get (e.g. gambling / lotto). And I have seen people do dishonest things to make money that have cause them to lose jobs, put them in jail, and destroy families.

Prov 28:22 (NLT)

A greedy person tries to get rich quick, but it only leads to poverty.

On the other hand, these verses also caution not to be so consumed with work that you neglect God, church, spouse, children, because you want to make more money.

Prov 28:20 (AMP)

A faithful man shall abound with blessings, but he who makes haste to be rich [at any cost] shall not go unpunished.

6. Giving To The Lord And To Those In Need Is A Privilege, And An Investment As Well As a Responsibility

2 Cor 9:7 (NLT)

You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully.

And look at the previous verse - 2 Cor 9:6 (AMP)

[Remember] this: he who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously [that blessings may come to someone] will also reap generously and with blessings.

Luke 6:38 NLT

If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving--large or small--it will be used to measure what is given back to you."

Prov 14:21(NIV)

He who despises his neighbor sins,
but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.

Prov 19:17 (NIV)

He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD,
and he will reward him for what he has done.

Prov 22:9 (NIV)

A generous man will himself be blessed,
for he shares his food with the poor.

7. We Must Live Within Our Income And Not Get Into Debt Which May Be Almost Impossible To Pay

Prov 6:1-3 (THE MESSAGE)

Dear friend, if you've gone into hock with your neighbor
or locked yourself into a deal with a stranger,
If you've impulsively promised the shirt off your back
and now find yourself shivering out in the cold,
Friend, don't waste a minute, get yourself out of that mess.

Prov 22:7 (NLT)

Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is servant to the lender.

Rom 13:7-8 (AMP)

Render to all men their dues. [Pay] taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due...Keep out of debt and owe no man anything...

These verses warn against getting into debt, especially putting yourself in a position where you may be obligated to pay a debt which is more than you can afford. It may lead to bankruptcy or hinder fulfilling your other primary financial obligations to God, or your family. A certain amount of borrowing may be legitimate, but Scripture warns against

excessive borrowing, becoming so indebt that you loose your freedom (financial and otherwise). You don't want to become a slave to your creditors. So, do not make bills you cannot pay, and pay all the bill that you do have.

8. We Ought To Plan How We Will Make and Spend Our Money

Prov 20:18 (NIV)

Make plans by seeking advice

Prov 27:23-24 (NLT)

Know the state of your flocks, and put your heart into caring for your herds, for riches don't last forever,

Luke 14:28 (NLT)

"But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first getting estimates and then checking to see if there is enough money to pay the bills?

Luke 16:9-11 (NLT)

I tell you, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. In this way, your generosity stores up a reward for you in heaven.

"Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won't be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?

Although not all these verses apply specifically to finances they do establish the need for planning important details. They do refer to planning carefully to manage our resources. Of course we must always have the attitude found in James 4:15-16 (NLT) What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." Otherwise you will be boasting about your own plans, and all such boasting is evil.

In other words we must prayerfully plan and use wisdom in the use of our money. However, our plans must be submitted to the Lord and we must be willing to adjust as He leads.

Now, I am going to close by giving you a very condensed outline of a plan to implement the Biblical principles of Money:

1. Begin by realistically determining your income

Before you can determine how much you can spend, you need to know how much you have to spend. Before you can determine how much can be sent out, you need to know how much is coming in. So first determine what is coming into the house, by way of salaries – your own and other family members, interest, savings, extra money from side jobs, etc.

2. Having determined your income, plan what has to be paid

Tithe and offerings (should be right at the top of your list)

Taxes

Family or Household needs

Mortgage / rent

Utilities / cable

Food

Auto payments and maintenance

Clothing (purchase, cleaning)

Insurance

Outstanding Debts

Medical (co-pays)

Hospitality (entertaining)

Family recreation

Savings and investments (it is better to save than borrow, to pay by cash rather than credit – there are very high interest rates when you borrow or pay by credit.

Don't use a credit card unless you will have the money to pay the credit card bill when it comes, to avoid paying high interest)

Education (you or your children)

Helping others

Incidentals (haircuts, postage)

Gifts (holidays and birthdays)

Emergencies (unexpected house repairs etc.)

Miscellaneous (spending money)

3. Compare your total monthly income with your total monthly out-flow.

If the out-flow is greater than your income you need a plan to bring those two into balance. There are only two ways you can do that:

a. Decrease your spending

b. Increase your income

a. Decrease your spending...ask yourself:

Is there anything on our list of spending that is totally unnecessary?

Is there anything we could use less of?

Could we use a substitute or cheaper item?

Is there another way of providing the item?

Could we postpone the purchase of the item?

Could we go shopping at SAM's and split that enormous bag of lemons with someone else?

Do we have something that could be sold and replaced by a cheaper or smaller version?

b. Increase your income ..ask yourself:

Is over time work available at my current job?

Could I ask for a raise?

Could I find a part-time second job? (use caution, you want to maintain time for your spiritual life, your family, etc.)

Is there work our family can do together? or could other family members become part of the work force?

Do we have anything we could sell? (or perhaps have a yard sale?)

Are there some things we could do ourselves? (lawn and garden maintenance, carpentry, auto repair)

Could I apply for a higher paying job either where I currently work or even consider changing jobs? (assuming you qualify)

Do I need to ask the advice of others?

Am I making my financial needs, planning, managing, a matter of prayer?