



WISDOM

WISDOM: Renewable Resources: What Proverbs Teaches About Money

July 25, 2021 | Speaker: Richard Fredericks, Founding Pastor

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE:

The **generous** are joyful. Less fearful. More grateful. It is one of the great truths of God's counterintuitive, unselfish kingdom we are a part of.

Jesus said the more we give away, the more blessings we have—and that our life does not consist (despite 10,000 adds) in the abundance of things possessed, but in the depth of our relationships, especially with the God who “***so loved the world that He gave.***”

Our goal is to be more like the self-giving God of the Cross and less like Satan, who is utterly wrapped up in himself/in his own ego (Isa 14:12-15).

Our **resources** are truly **renewable and life-giving** when we live as **rivers**, not reservoirs, for: “***The generous will themselves be blessed***” (Pro 22:9).

IF we are genuine disciples of Jesus ***we must*** wrestle with **what money means in our lives—because Jesus did**. In fact:

In all 4 Gospels, more than heaven or hell, more than sin or salvation, Jesus' #1 **topic** apart from the Kingdom of God is **money** and how we use the resources we are given **either** for God's purposes; **or** we allow them to become a **false god** which ***derails God's purpose in our lives***.

In Jesus' greatest sermon, He makes two statements that **define all His teaching about money**, both are offered as simple **statements of fact**:

Wherever **your treasure** (what you most value) is—
that is where **your heart** (your defining commitments) will also be.

Matthew 6:21

For **no one can** serve two masters. **Either** you will hate the one and love the other, **or** you will be devoted to one and despise the other.

You CANNOT serve both God and money.

Matthew 6:24

Listen: If we live in our own **house** with **running water and electricity** and we **own a car** we can afford to drive, we are **already among** the **wealthiest 10% of the earth—it's true!**

And so, Jesus reminds us, in **Luke 12:15**, that **our joy in life will never rest on how much stuff we have**. Then He tells a **parable** about a guy who thought of **all** the **resources** in his life only in terms of **"I, me and my."**

When God judges that man's life, He calls him a fool; then says:

Luke 12:48; Matthew 6:33

For to everyone who has been **given much**, much is **asked**; and from those who are **entrusted with much**, **much more** is expected (God wants to **bless us** that we might be **a blessing**)... So [Jesus says] **seek first** [put 1st in our plans] **God's Kingdom/His righteousness** and **everything else you need will be added to you.**

My testimony concerning the integrity of Jesus' promise in **Matthew 6:33**.

Jesus made His move on my life through Rom 5:8 and thankfully, I responded:

For God demonstrated **His love** for each of us **in this**: that even while **we are sinners, Christ died to save us.**

Romans 5:8

Through His Word here are the **three things God taught me** as a young Christian, about the huge issue of money:

1. God commands us to **partner with Him as managers** of **all the resources He entrusts to us**—and then He invites us to **test Him** on **this one point**:

Malachi 3:8-10

Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob Me. But you ask, 'How are we robbing You?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because **you are robbing Me**. Bring the **whole tithe** (10%) into the store-house, that there may be food in **My house**. [**Our first financial responsibility** is to resource the work of God through the church in the world.]

Malachi 3:10

Test Me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "**and see** if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

I faced the **first and most obvious question** of my naturally fearful young Christian heart:

"Is this a good time in life to give back to God 10% of my meager income?"

And God answered that honest question with His own question:

"Is this a good time in your life to enter into a partnership with Me, the **LORD Almighty**, in term of **My resources I have entrusted to you?"**

The 2 Essential questions:

Am I **the owner or the manager** of all I have in life?

Can I **trust God** enough to **obey Him**?

We can do life **two ways** when it comes to all He entrusts to our management:

1. **A** = My power and wisdom + **B. MY resources** = whatever; or
2. **A** = Me + **B. God's resources** in my life + **C. Partnership with God** = His abundant "**blessings**"—Blessing does not mean excessive wealth for conspicuous consumption, but God's promised provision in our lives; His guidance in our plans/choices and care for our family/relationships.

10 x \$10 = "All mine" Gollum; or 1 x \$10 + 9 x \$10 = I am God's Partner?

CHARLES SPURGEON: How we use God's resources is **NEVER** about **our level of INCOME**, but **ALWAYS** about **our level of TRUST**.

So, number **#1 part of my testimony = I trusted God's call** into partnership with Him (first 10% or more is His); and **we have done it together for 44 years**:

2. **God has been more than faithful** to His promise.

It has **been such a great adventure**—and I have known God's smile, even in tough times.

3. It is what we **GIVE generously**—not what we GRASP fearfully or selfishly—that **makes our lives truly meaningful**.

In 47 years of pastoring, I've been with way too many **dying people**.

Not one has ever said to me: **I wish I'd had more STUFF**: More new cars, a bigger house, more clothes. **John Bunyan**: "Fetch your last day to yourself..."

The **nearness of death** has a wonderful clarifying effect on **what really matters**—and what **really matters at the end** is **NOT a big pile of perishable goods**. What matters is **the quality of your relationships—esp. with GOD**.

It is honestly pathetic when our **biggest, usually unspoken but real goal** is simply to **arrive at DEATH very comfortably**. In the end, **often too late**, people realize it is **NOT what you GET AND GRASP**, not what you **accumulate**, that **gives you joy and meaning**; **but what you have GIVEN—what you CONTRIBUTE as a river of God's love, not a reservoir of selfishness**.

I think one of the real marks of a **godly steward** is this bent toward **increasing generosity and simplicity**: a **content enjoyment of the good things** God brings; but with an **eye toward freeing up resources** for the sake of Kingdom work.

3 main lessons in Proverbs concerning money and our attitudes about wealth:

1. In the **arena of resources**—once again **God calls us into trusting partner-ship with Him**: PROVERBS 3:5-12 is the best summary of entire book:

Trust in the LORD with **all your heart**, *lean not on your own understanding*;
in **ALL your ways** submit to Him, and **He will guide Your steps**.

Proverbs 3:5

We speak and sing of Jesus as our LORD—and IF JESUS is, He is LORD of everything ...or He is not really LORD of anything; He is either LORD OF all or not really LORD AT all. Jesus said: “Why do you call Me LORD—and not do what I say? In Proverbs, **right after this call to TRUST the LORD with ALL** our heart, comes **this challenge/command**:

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the **firstfruits** (10th) of **ALL** your crops; then your barns (**lives**) will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine (**Spirit-filled joy**).

Proverbs 3:9-10

2. **Steady, honest work** results in **financial success** (Prov 10:4; 14:23). But the **desire for quick riches** is destructive (14:23; 28:20, 22).
3. The **joyfully generous** are continually **refreshed and renewed by God**; but the **fearful, grasping and stingy** grow continually smaller in their soul.

The generous will themselves **be blessed**...Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will **reward them** for what they have done.

Proverbs 22:9; 19:17

One person gives **freely**, yet **gains even more**; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. **A generous person will prosper; and whoever refreshes others will be refreshed**.

Proverbs 11:24-25

Those who give to the poor will **lack nothing**, but those who **close their eyes** to the poor **receive many curses**...Whoever **shuts their ears** to the cry of the poor will also **cry out** and **not be answered**.

Proverbs 28:27; 21:13

Matthew 24:31-46 is the **longest, most detailed** description of final judgment **by Jesus** in the Bible: **“When the Son of Man comes in His glory”**

Truly I tell you...**whatever you did for one of the least of these** brothers and sisters of Mine, **you did it for Me**.

Matthew 25:40

What makes **eternal life eternally joyful** is the **fullness of unselfish love**.

Final judgment is simply the **moment Jesus makes visible** the **internal home we have been building in our hearts our whole lives**. Jesus will essentially ask us on that day:

“Were you all Mine? Did you trust Me? Was My Spirit growing in you?”

And we will either say: “Well, all but this...this part of my life was mine, not yours” ...or:

“Yes, I was all Yours, Jesus—and wow, what a ride!”

REVIEW: What have I told you:

1. Jesus wants to **partner with us** as the **managers** (not owners) of **His resources**.
2. He invites us to **test Him in this arena of our lives**.
3. **He is always faithful** to His promises—so **grab this one for all it is worth**:

“Seek [**prioritize**] **FIRST** the Kingdom of God—embrace His righteousness
[**His generous love and grace**—and ***all you need will be added*** to you as well.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

(for personal and small group discussion)

1. What was most impactful to you from this weekend's service?
2. Read **Luke 11:41 NIV**. Discuss what you think Jesus means by this verse.
Then compare it with **Luke 14:12-14** and discuss.
3. When Jesus said in **Matthew 6:24** we only have two options, that we can only worship one of two masters, why do you think He said our only two options were God or money? Why not God or self; or God or the devil? What is it about money in particular that makes it ***Jesus' singular option B***?
4. Read again **Proverbs 11:24-25**. Share together as a group times in your lives when a decision to be generous has proved to be refreshing—even renewing? What are ways to build that spirit more into your life?

NOTES
