

What does God say about money?

It may surprise you that throughout the Bible we find numerous references to the subject of money. Some Christians prefer to skirt round the subject and others place undue emphasis on it, but as we take a brief look at what God says about money we will come to a balanced understanding.

God owns everything

We should remember that ***“The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.”***(Psalm 24:1) This world is God’s creation and we as His creatures are, in a sense, managers of it. All that we have is a blessing from God – we enter and depart this life with nothing. God is wealthy!

He tells His people ***“The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine ...”*** (Haggai 2:8) and He does not want His children to be in constant poverty. To promote poverty as a desirable lifestyle for a follower of Jesus (as some do) is not in line with God’s Word. However there will probably be times in every believer’s life when we experience financial lack, and in those times we will learn to trust the Lord more fully. We will experience His faithfulness, even miraculous provision in our time of need. **(Read Matt. 6:25-34)**

We read in **Leviticus 25:23**:

“The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners (temporary residents) with Me.”

It is humbling, in these days of considerable affluence, to remember that we are only ‘tenants’ here on earth. Even unbelievers recognise that ‘you can’t take it with you when you die’! For this reason we need to have a right approach to money and live from an eternal rather than a temporal viewpoint.

God is exceedingly generous

The greatest gift to us all is undoubtedly Jesus Christ Himself, God’s beloved Son. Jesus and His Father, one yet separate expressions of the triune God, lived in perfect love and harmony in heaven. To Father God, Jesus was the most precious One, and we cannot imagine the cost of giving Him up to live in this sinful world and to suffer an agonising death for our sakes.

If we feel inclined to hold on to what we have received, whether it be money, our time or gifts, let’s consider with grateful hearts the extent of God’s generosity towards us.

Further reading: John 3:16; Matt. 7:7-11; 2 Cor. 8:9; 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Does the opportunity to be generous depend on whether or not a person is ‘well off’?

What does God say about giving?

Here in the West we live in comfortable affluence compared with many people in the less-developed nations, and yet many of us find that we only just manage to make ends meet. It is so important that we apply God’s principles to our finances so that He is enabled to release His provision into our lives. First of all we need to respond to the challenge that Jesus sets before us in **Luke 14:33**:

“So then, any of you who does not forsake (renounce, surrender claim to, give up, say good-bye to) all that he has cannot be my disciple.”

The early disciples took this very literally when they sold their possessions and divided them among all, as any had need. **(Acts 2: 44)** Although in our day and culture this is not generally practised in the same way, followers of Jesus today can, and many do, give to one another’s needs where they see lack, and we can share what God has blessed us with. For example, we can invite others to our home, provide transport in our car, or give away possessions to those in need.

2.

For guidance in our giving to the Lord, we need to look into the Hebrew Scriptures (or O.T.) so that we know where to begin. The Lord required the children of Israel to **tithe** their produce or exchange it for money. (**Deuteronomy 14:22**)

Read Deut. 14:22-29

From this passage, what can you learn about God's concerns? Whom should we consider in our giving?

In **Numbers 18:21** we read: ***"Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting."***

The tithes were given to the Levites (priests) who served God in the temple, since they possessed no land and had no other source of income. The Lord met their needs through the tithes of His people.

How does God supply the needs of those who serve Him in leading ministry roles today?

For further reading: Malachi 3:8-10

We do not find the word 'tithe' in the N.T. Scriptures but we do find plenty of teaching on generous giving! The tithe is a good place to start in our giving but could be considered as a minimum amount to give to the Lord as an expression of our deep love and gratitude towards Him.

Be a cheerful giver!

2 Corinthians 9 contains a very important verse concerning our attitude towards giving:

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."

The Hebrew word translated 'cheerful' means- **willing, good-natured, joyfully ready.**

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

What is the spiritual result when God's people give generously? (v.12)

We see from these verses that giving should be from our heart, with a desire to bless God and others. It is also true that how we give affects our heart and therefore we need to approach our giving diligently and with prayer.

Matthew 6:21 tells us that ***"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"***

In other words, if we value this world's goods more than seeking to bless God through our giving, our heart will be focused on things that have no lasting value.

Finally, let's remember that

God prospers us not to raise our standard of living, but our standard of giving!

You can be sure that the Lord will supply your every need as you are faithful in giving to Him, and He will greatly bless your finances. There will no doubt be times in our life when we need to continue giving to the Lord in the midst of financial hardship, when the supply seems meagre, but let's be sure that our motive in giving is purely that of love and obedience to God. We know that He is true to His Word: ***"Give, and it will be given to you"*** (**Luke 6:38**) In these days there is much emphasis in certain Christian circles on prosperity, but the various Hebrew words translated '**blessed**' in the Bible carry the meaning 'happy, satisfied, successful, right or straight' rather than 'wealthy'. So often, in our minds, we equate 'blessed' with having an abundance of money but we need to understand the fullness of God's true blessing in our lives.

