

STUDY & REFLECTION **Are you serving God? Or ‘Mammon?’**

I am delighted that you are on this journey with us to hear God and see your life changed, in a positive and powerful way as you embrace spiritual understanding in Faith. I challenge you to take a real look, letting go of what you have understood before, to discover the real issue regarding financial health and money.

I think we would all agree that Jesus is The Master Teacher! He wants us to ‘know the truth’ about every issue of life. I can think of none as important as a genuine Biblical understanding and practice when it comes to finances and money. The Lord teaches us...**MONEY AND GIVING ARE SPIRITUAL ISSUES!**

Finances, money, gain, and the way we see them is a serious matter. Jesus declares that they are Matters of the Heart.

“Where your ‘treasure’ is ...that’s where your heart is!”

If I want to discover what’s important to me, what’s dear and precious to me, what I value, I need look no further than my Heart! Jesus says that we need look no further than how we spend, utilize, invest our resources...our ‘treasure.’

We may think that these are practical, logical, pragmatic decisions. Decisions made in light of resources available and the simple priorities of living our lives.

The Lord says, that the pattern of how and where we utilize and spend our resources, indicates decisions deeper than ‘just trying to live.’ The Lord teaches us that behind the ‘common sense’ decisions that we are making every day, they reveal something much deeper and critically important.

HOW WE USE OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES ARE MATTERS OF THE HEART!

ACTION ITEMS

I challenge you to open your heart to this principle that Jesus puts forth in Matt 6:21.

Exactly what is His intention? What would the Lord want us to understand? How has this passage informed us and directed our decisions regarding money? **Don’t rush or gloss over this.** Give it real focus and attention.

INVOLVING OTHERS

Real integrity and growth regarding this principle will be found in your willingness to discuss what Jesus means, and how it should affect our decisions. Share in your small group, being open to allowing the ministry of the Holy Spirit to change and elevate our understanding and enrich our lives.

**STUDY &
REFLECTION**

In Matt 6:21, Jesus challenges us regarding resources and finances. He teaches us that where we use, spend, invest our money displays what we value...**what's in our hearts!**

He takes us even deeper in genuine Biblical understanding of this subject in the next 3 verses, 22-24.

His teaching is emphatic and concise. It is not ambiguous nor complex. Jesus teaches us that the battle regarding our thinking and operating in the area of finances and money is in fact a matter of WORSHIP!

He teaches us that our lives are either governed by double-mindedness characterized by 'darkness.' Or, our lives are governed and enriched by *singlemindedness* and light.

Could this really be true? Have we not seen the effect of Satan and the world when it comes to this crucial area?

The Lord is clear.....**YOU CANNOT SERVE TWO MASTERS!!** Notice carefully His words. The word serve in the original language is one that is common to the New Testament. The word is *douleuo*. This word describes a lowly, common, slave, whose life was to serve and please his master. It is a word and a position that indicates that the person is in 'bondage' to something or someone. The slave was 'devoted,' singularly focused on pleasing the master.

The other word the Lord uses is translated, mammon. Mammon is a term describing financial resources, money, riches, possessions. Our Lord says whether we realize it or not, we are either serving, or devoted to HIM or Mammon.

That's the fight.

**ACTION
ITEMS**

I am convinced that in many respects, money, or the urge to get more, is the 'god' of this world.

Which one are you serving or devoted to? **God? Money?**

I urge you to spend real time in personal introspection. Sometimes we are doing something that seems so mundane, not realizing their spiritual nature.

**INVOLVING
OTHERS**

To be effective this must become a group or community discussion and exercise. Others' perspectives often gives us a clearer and more objective perspective on our decisions and actions. Don't be defensive. Be open and listen.

Let the Lord enlighten you within your group and then collectively commit to living out what is learned and revealed.

FINANCIAL HEALTH WELLNESS WHOLENESS

USING OUR FINANCES TO PLEASE GOD

GIVING: GIVE!!!!

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY Wednesday, September 15, 2021

John 3:16a; Luke 6:38

STUDY & REFLECTION

This is called the “Golden Text,” of scripture. This is the core and central principle of the entire Bible! God so loved the world that He **GAVE!** Giving is the primary, the essential, the loving act of God. God Loved so God Gave! Genuine love is expressed in Giving.

Giving is central to Who God is and What God does! God’s people, like God, are at their heart and core, GIVERS!! GIVE:

- To present voluntarily and without expecting compensation; to bestow;
- To give is to offer up; to yield; to share.
- Giving as taught by the Word of God, costs you something; it is in its very nature sacrificial!
- Genuine giving is a spiritual principle of manifested faith and sacrificial love.
- Giving is a direct evidence of loving obedience and honoring of the Spirit of God.

As we proceed deeper into this tremendous subject we will discover that Biblically directed giving is a principle, a promise and a commitment!

When we yield ourselves to God, to pleasing Him and blessing others, we trigger supernatural favor and abundance in our own lives and in the lives of those we are called to influence and affect.

ACTION ITEMS

Search your heart and see how committed you are personally to GIVE. Have you experienced what the Bible teaches and promises as we give? Get ready for favor and abundance to begin to manifest in your life as you yield yourself to the worship and grace of Biblical Giving.

INVOLVING OTHERS

Share with transparency and openness your history and experience in giving. Share what you have learned this week and discuss these principles with others. Look for a fresh manifestation of the blessing of God as we Obey Him in Faith.

FINANCIAL HEALTH WELLNESS WHOLENESS

USING OUR FINANCES TO PLEASE GOD

GIVING: HOW TO GIVE

SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY Thursday, September 16, 2021

2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 2 Corinthians 9:7

STUDY & REFLECTION

I am sure that many of you want to get into the 'what' to give. That is reasonable and important, but I challenge you to think about and give focused time and attention of the **'how'** to give first.

How to God is critical to and should precede the what. In what way or manner should we give? What motivates my action of giving? We have already learned that giving, Biblical stewardship, is a matter of the heart and a matter of spiritual worship. In our text, Paul uses the example of the poor churches of Macedonia as a powerful way to demonstrate what pleases God as we give. Let their example teach and motivate us as we seek to please God in our giving.

Paul enlightens us as he begins to share with the Corinthian church, the 'how' of giving. This church at Corinth was rich in both material possession, as well as in spiritual giftedness. Paul had shared with them a critical financial need among the brethren. Corinth responded immediately with a pledge and a promise, but over a period of time did not act on their commitment. Paul shares with them how the poor churches of Macedonia responded.

He properly characterized their response as a 'grace from God!' Paul shares that he was overwhelmed at the 'how' of their response that far exceeded his expectation. Although poor in possessions, they responded by 'first giving themselves to God's Will,' and then giving with Liberality, Joy, and Thanksgiving!

They gave WITH GENEROSITY! This 'how' of giving denotes, singleness of intention, (they wanted to give to bless others, bountifulness, (overflowing abundance), and sincerity, (no drama or showiness involved).

ACTION ITEMS

Please reflect on the overall nature of your giving. **How have you given?** What is your motivation? Is your giving a reflection of your faith and worship to God? Does your giving arise out of a commitment to bless others and does it bring you joy?

INVOLVING OTHERS

Please use your small group to compare notes on the history of your giving. How can you move it forward? How and in what ways can we give so that it blesses others, gives us joy, and gives glory to God!

USING OUR FINANCES TO PLEASE GOD

2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 2 Corinthians 9:7

GIVING: HOW TO GIVE II

STUDY & REFLECTION

The model of giving that the Lord gives us in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, is exhilarating, instructional and inspirational. We have learned that as a result of their first yielding themselves to God's Will, and then to the call of Paul, the manifestation God allowed them to produce was miraculous. Key and central was their heart-flowing demonstration of **GENEROSITY!!**

While this was an act, a response to God's call, it teaches us something deep and meaningful about a person, a church, a community, truly dedicated to Christ and His Kingdom..... **Their GENEROSITY** went beyond an act. It demonstrated for them a perspective of living and a Way of Life!

Biblical Generosity is an outward manifestation of God, actively at work in our lives. Look at this lifestyle expressed in the early church in chapters 2 and 4 of Acts. Here generosity was a lifestyle expressed in an inner-desire to **SHARE** all that they had. It was so pervasive in the early church that as a result none lacked or had a need that was not met. Biblical Generosity flows from an understanding that all that we have and possess is His and is to be used not only for ourselves but for the blessing of others and the Kingdom.

As we dare with Faith to embrace Generosity, the supply is unending. He promises that as we walk in this level of Faith, we will always, under every economic and social condition, have to give for every meaningful cause and have enough left over to meet our needs and the needs of others.

ACTION ITEMS

Carefully read and reflect the testimony of Macedonia and those who Paul was addressing. I realize that for many this teaching seems farfetched and fanciful. That is because for many we have let the world and its greed culture to direct our thoughts and acts of stewardship.

I am believing that for anyone who will embrace these teaching in Faith, the results will be life-changing.

INVOLVING OTHERS

God's Will is that these teachings and understandings will not be embraced by individual Christians but by communities of Faith. What would happen if the Global Body of Christ would walk in these Biblical Truths?

DEVOTIONAL REVIEW

**REVIEW
DEVOTIONAL
SCRIPTURES**

Spend real time mining the teaching that have been presented this and last week.

Focus on one or two new understanding that you are willing to commit to and to share in a personal way with others!

SHALOM!!