

“Stewardship of Our Finances”
Mark 10:17-27, page 981/893

Introduction:

1. Reinhold Neibuhr is famous for the following prayer: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as the pathway to peace. Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His will; that I may be reasonable happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen.”
2. The Bible is an amazing book, and it gives us a detailed outline of how to manage our resources:
 - A. Personal life.
 - B. Marriage.
 - C. Government.
 - D. Personal finances.
3. In our responsive reading, Jesus told the young man to sell all he had and give to the poor.
 - A. This was very unusual.
 - B. It was not the common teaching concerning finances.
4. The Bible teaches that tithing of ten percent given to God’s ministry would be an acceptable gift.
 - A. In reality, it all belongs to God, but He gives us ninety percent for our personal use.
 - B. The tithe is what the church and religious organizations use to minister to the needs of people.
5. I believe Jesus was trying to teach the rich man in our responsive reading a much higher principle of stewardship.

I. Become a cheerful giver.

- A. *II Corinthians 9:6-7: “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”*
 1. The Biblical law of giving a tithe of ten percent falls short of the intent of this scripture.
 2. Becoming a cheerful giver is a philosophy of life! (My dad is a good example.)
 3. It is not regulated by a particular command of the Bible.
 4. This type of giving is in direct proportion to the needs that exist within the church and the people with whom we share life.
- B. *Luke 5:34-35: “And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.”*
 1. Perhaps this is the lesson Jesus is attempting to teach the wealthy young man in our responsive reading.
 2. Again, it’s not about a legalistic teaching of the Bible; it’s about the needs of others.
 3. It is all about being a dedicated disciple that realizes God has blessed us by giving all things to us; realizing we cannot repay Him, we use a portion of our finances to minister to people.

II. We must realize that our financial blessings are temporary. Matthew 6:19-21: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- A. Money is only good for this earthly life.
- B. There are many things money cannot buy, such as:
 1. True friendships.
 2. Real love.
 3. Good health.
 4. Life.

- C. There are, however, many things that money can buy: Good things.
 - 1. Food.
 - 2. Property.
 - 3. Transportation.
 - 4. Education.
 - 5. Books.
 - 6. Health care.
 - 7. Gifts for family and friends.
- D. Stewardship (managing) of our finances is critical, and making wise choices will determine our success or failure in life.
- E. Solomon is pictured in the Bible as a very wise and wealthy man.
 - 1. He had everything money could buy.
 - 2. His wealth was unbelievable.
 - 3. In the closing chapters of his life, he made the following evaluation of life: *Ecclesiastes 12:7-8*:
“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. ‘Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher, ‘All is vanity.’”
- F. What a picture of an empty life in the center of wealth and prosperity. “Only one life; it soon will pass. Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

III. Set some ministry goals and help finance those goals.

- A. There are thousands of excellent ministries that need finances to minister to people around the world:
 - 1. Local church ministry.
 - 2. Missions (our missions board and website).
 - 3. Home missions (Focus on the Family, etc.)
 - 4. Kid’s Camps.
 - 5. Bible Translators (Wycliffe).
 - 6. Many other quality, trustworthy organizations.
- B. Select one or two of these trusted ministries and then decide to support them with a weekly amount.
- C. Put these ministries in your monthly budget and make them a priority.
 - 1. This is wise stewardship.
 - 2. This is good management of our finances.
 - 3. This will improve our world and have eternal results.

Conclusion:

- 1. I would like to share a stark contrast between two individuals that Jesus talked about and their financial giving. *Luke 21:1-4*: “*And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, ‘Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.’”*
 - A. The larger gifts were fine, but they gave with the wrong motives.
 - B. The poor woman gave from a cheerful heart with no fanfare.
- 2. We are not on equal ground when it comes to our financial blessings.
 - A. I have a friend that served with me on the board of trustees of Indiana Wesleyan University. He wrote a check for one million dollars.
 - B. My son has worked with teens for several years. First he worked as a youth pastor. Now he works with troubled teens as a social worker. He is able to give a few hundred each year.
- 3. It is all about the attitude of the heart and mind.
- 4. Where is your treasure?
 - A. Some here today can give thousands to help God reach out to a very troubled world. You should!
 - B. Some here today can give hundreds to help God minister to our world. You should!
 - C. Some here today can give dollars to help spread God’s message around the world. You should!
- 5. I urge you to become a cheerful giver!