

Lifting Up Jesus

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GOD'S MONEY, OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Money and how we spend it is just as important to God as it is to us. There is more written in the book of Proverbs about money than any other subject. It can prove to be a blessing in our lives or a snare to us. In addition, it is our attitude toward it that determines how we use it in this life.

1. To whom, do we, our possessions, and the earth belong? Psalm 24:1, 2

2. Who gives us the ability to get wealth? Deut. 8:18; 1 Chron. 29:12

3. What does God warn about in our attitude towards money? Proverbs 11:28; Psalm 49:16–20; Luke 12:15–21; 1 Tim. 6:17–19

Note: All our money and possessions belong to God and it is He who gives it to us. He wants us to trust in Him to provide for our needs not in ourselves.

4. Can money become a snare with which we are tempted? In what way? 1 Tim. 6:6–10

Note: It is easy to fall into the trap of pursuing money to the exclusion of everything else in our life. Many people live as though money were the chief concern in this world. Moreover, eventually everything else gets crowded out especially our faith and trust in God. This is one thing we must guard against.

5. How does God address this problem to us? Luke 12:22–34

6. What should be our attitude toward money with relation to others? Prov. 11:25, 26; Luke 6:38

Note: The world says to hold on to as much as possible, but God blesses those who give freely of their possessions, time and energy. When we give, God supplies us with more so that we can give more. In addition, giving helps us gain a right perspective on our possessions. We realize

they were never really ours to begin with, but they were given to us by God to be used to help others.

7. Should we store up for the future? Proverbs 21:20

8. What about countersigning for another? Proverbs 17:18; 22:26, 27

9. Should we lend to others who ask us? Luke 6:34, 35; Deut. 15:7, 8, 10, 11

Note: The money we decide to give to others should be considered as a gift; not a loan. Therefore, we should make sure that we could afford to give such a gift in case there is no repayment.

10. What should be our attitude toward money in relation to God? Psalm 96:8; Proverbs 3:9, 10

Note: The 'first fruits' refers to the practice of giving to God's use the first and best portion of the harvest. (Deuteronomy 26:9–11). Many people give God their leftovers. If they can afford to donate anything, they do so. These people may be sincere and contribute willingly, but their attitude is nonetheless backward. We need to give God the first part of our income. This demonstrates that God, not possessions, have first place in our lives and that our resources belong to him and that we are only managers of God's resources. Giving to God first helps us to conquer greed, helps us properly manage God's resources, and opens us up to receive God's special blessings.

11. How much does God consider the 'first fruit'? Deut. 14:22, 23

12. What does God promise if we return tithe to Him? Malachi 3:6–10

Note: The people of Malachi's day ignored God's command to give a tithe of their income to His temple. They may have feared losing what they had worked so hard to get, but in this they misjudged God. 'Give, and it will be given to you,' He says in Luke 6:38. When we give, we must remember that the blessings God promises are not always material but He always keeps His word.

13. For what purpose was the tithe to be used during the days of ancient Israel? Num. 18:21, 23, 24

Note: When Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, each tribe was given a portion of land as its inheritance. The only exception to this was the tribe of Levi. As the priests, they were to spend their full time in serving the Lord. They were given no land to farm, only cities to live in. The other eleven tribes gave one tenth of their income, or increase, to support the Levites for God's work.

14. According to the Bible, how is the clergy to be supported today? 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14

Note: When we give our tithe, we are supporting the clergy so that the gospel of Christ can go forward. In this, we are honoring God and His work in our lives.

15. What special promise does God make for you and your family? Phil. 4:19

Conclusion: Money is NOT the root of all evil; it is the LOVE of money that is evil. Money is a necessary commodity that we all need in our life. In addition, God blesses us with money so that we may be a channel of blessing to others. Moreover, when the funds flow freely from our hearts so will the blessings of God flow freely to us and through us.¹

¹ Lewis, K. A. (2010). *Lifting up Jesus: Bible Study Lessons*. Walla Walla, WA: Karen Ann Lewis.