

# Three Principles of Money

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## Isaiah 1:21-26

*21 How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers. 22 Your silver has become dross, Your wine mixed with water. 23 Your princes are rebellious, And companions of thieves; Everyone loves bribes, And follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, Nor does the cause of the widow come before them.*

*24 Therefore the Lord says, The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, "Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries, And take vengeance on My enemies. 25 I will turn My hand against you, And thoroughly purge away your dross, And take away all your alloy. 26 I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." (NKJV)*

We are living in a time where our country is in tremendous financial trouble. We hear many complaints about the scandals and scoundrels we have as our leaders when in fact they are a judgment upon us. The Church has become lazy, tolerant of sin and has abdicated her role as the discipler of the nations. We have the leaders that we deserve.

One popular topic of the last five years have been the heightened interest in the national deficit. We have heard debates about how the deficit is necessary and creates jobs through federal spending. The fundamental flaw in the way our nation handles money is a function of not seeking to glorify God with our money nor seeking to be instructed about how we should handle money from His word. Before the scoundrels will change their behavior their constituents will need to modify their behavior. This should begin with the Church and, as far as we are concerned, should have already begun with our church.

Today, we will look at a few principles of money from the scriptures that should be foundational to our thoughts actions and beliefs of money.

- **Wealth is a provision of God, not an invention of man.**

## Psalms 50:1-15

*1 A Psalm of Asaph. The Mighty One, God the LORD, Has spoken and called the earth From the rising of the sun to its going down. 2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth. 3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; A fire shall devour before Him, And it shall be very tempestuous all around Him. 4 He shall call to the heavens from above, And to the earth, that He may judge His people: 5 "Gather My saints together to Me, Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." 6 Let the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself is Judge. Selah 7 "Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, your God! 8 I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices Or your burnt offerings, Which are continually before Me. 9 I will not take a bull from your house, Nor goats out of your folds. 10 For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine. 12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, Or drink the blood of goats? 14 Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High. 15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." (NKJV)*

- God declares to us that the world is His. He has created every thing in it and everything about it. He consulted with no one when he laid the rivers in their courses. He chose to place land in one place and not another. He chose to create us in His image as no other creature and we were wonderfully created by Him according to His good pleasure. All things that can be owned are His and come from Him.
- Because of this truth, we realize that we own nothing but that all things belong to God. But ownership and stewardship are not the same things. God has entrusted us with varying levels of wealth and responsibility all according to His own counsel. We are called to be excellent stewards by faith of the things that we have.
- We are also to render unto Him the praise and glory through thanksgiving for the opportunity to be stewards. We have nothing that didn't come from Him. We cannot look at the fruits of our labor and say, "See what I have done" without also recognizing that our skills, ability and intellect which made the labor possible came from Him also. Cf. Vss. 22-23

- God has built the world in such a way that it is necessary to have money to buy provisions for our families. It is not necessary that we are all farmers and raise our food, it is clearly permissible to be a laborer. It would be a sin to call wealth a sin. Given that the love of money is a source of all kinds of evil, this does not mean that money is the evil. We should receive all that we get from the hand of the Lord with thanksgiving and without allowing ourselves to compare our wealth to others and thereby falling pray to covetousness.
- **The lack of sacrificial tithing is theft.**

### Malachi 3:6-12

*6 "For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. 7 Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances And have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the LORD of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?' 8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. 11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts; 12 "And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the LORD of hosts. (NKJV)*

- This is one of the most significant areas where the Church has been the disobedient. It has not just been that the Church is not tithing, but it is also the problem that the church has not tithed *properly*.
- Notice Paul's attitude toward the church in Phillipians 4:10-20. Paul thanks them for their faithfulness toward him in providing for his needs. But also note that he says he is without need. He gives this instruction not because he is looking for another gift but because he is hopeful for the fruit which will abound to their account. This is the kind of attitude that we should look for in those to whom we consider supporting.
- The tithe should not be considered as God's portion versus our portion; as we have seen earlier, all of it is his. It is to be offered as a tributary offering or one where we pay honor and thanks (tribute) to god for the provision. Therefore we are to tithe with thanksgiving not with relief, greed or guilt.
- The tithe was to be paid out of the increase of the land. Deut 14:22 The important thing to note hear is that we do not tithe capital, we tithe off the increase. Also note that when God did require a tithe from livestock capital he did not require that the very best ones be sacrificed lest the quality of the herd be threatened. Leviticus 27:30-34
- The tithe was to be paid to the Levites for the work at the temple (Numbers 18:21). Paul states that in the same way, (1 Corinthians 9:1-15) those who minister in preaching the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. In addition, Paul goes on to say that we are to share these good things with those whom we receive instruction (Gal 6:6) and thereby sow eternal things which will reap eternal blessings.
- We must be careful when bringing up the question of whether we should tithe off our gross or net income; we must not be like the man who asked Christ "Who is my neighbor?" so that he could get out from under the weight of the command. Although I believe there is probably a good answer to the discussion, we must examine our motives to ensure that we are not tithing reluctantly and without thanksgiving.
- **Debt is equated with slavery and is never a blessing.**

### Proverbs 22:7

*7 The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower is servant to the lender. (NKJV)*

- We cannot find in scripture anywhere where debt is explicitly called a sin. But we can identify many sins associated with debt. The first is that God told Israel that if they were to follow the Lord they would have the wherewithal to lend to others and would not have to borrow. Therefore it would not be a blessing for a nation to be faced with having to borrow. In this section we must remember the difference between indicatives and imperatives.
- Covetousness is another primary sin associated with debt. It demands that we acquire something now rather than when God has supplied the necessary provision. It imposes our timetable upon those areas where we disagree on God's timetable.
- When scripture so plainly compares debt with slavery we can learn things about debt from the scripture's teaching about slavery. We know that if we were slaves when we were saved, Paul instructs us not be concerned of the slavery. That is, don't attempt a revolt to remove yourself from that position. But Paul goes on to say that if you have the opportunity to get out of debt do so and as far as it is within your control, stay out of debt. Unfortunately, there are times when we have no other choice and in those cases we should continue to foster this attitude by asking the lord for mercy so as to get out of debt.