

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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Changing our Focus on Finances

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I recently lost my glasses. Don't ask me where I placed them. If I knew, they wouldn't be lost. I need my glasses to help me focus on the details of objects. Without them, things look blurry. I went about a month without glasses hoping and praying that I would find my old pair. My daughters got blamed more than once. However, I did not find them. When I got a new pair, I was shocked at how clearly I could see again. I had gotten accustomed to seeing things unclearly. That happens to us in our spiritual lives as well—especially in the area of finances. As we look toward a new year, let's develop a clear, biblical view of finances. Let's see as God sees so that we will do as God says.

- **God owns everything** – 1 Chronicles 29:11 states, "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours" (NIV). You are a steward, not an owner, of everything you have. You won't even take the clothes on your back to the next life. Therefore, it is important to be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ (Romans 13:14).
- **The love of money is the root of much evil** – Christian sociologist George Barna surveyed the American population for his book, *The Second Coming of the Church*. He writes that 49% of Americans misunderstand Scripture on this point. First Timothy 6:10 teaches that the *love* of money is the root of much evil, not the money itself. Don't be intimidated by a society that speaks in terms of billions and trillions. God has not been anxious during the bumpy ride of the stock market this year. Be mindful not to love money and lose perspective.
- **People are blessed by God to be a blessing to others** – God does not give us possessions so that we can consume them ourselves. He gives

so that we might give. As we bless others in need, we are God's instrument of comfort and help. God blessed Abraham with the view that he would be a blessing to others (Genesis 12:1-3).

- **Giving is a means to worship God** – Often we fall into the trap of believing that our giving is simply a means to fund ministry. No doubt, money does that. But that is not the ultimate value in money. If we believe that money is simply a means to fund ministry, then we may feel justified in withholding giving to our local church in order to communicate dissatisfaction. However, giving is a means to worship God. Consider the widow Jesus pointed out in Luke 21:1-4.
- **Finances are a test for true spiritual riches** – Consider Jesus' parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-15). The manager misused his master's finances. But before he was fired, he took the opportunity to secure a future for himself by making friends with his money. Jesus commended the servant's actions and said, "I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings" (Luke 16:9, NIV). God can use your wealth to expand evangelism and discipleship, thereby seeing them go to heaven. God can use your wealth to impact people for eternity.

Do you see your finances with 20-20 biblical vision? If not, what do you need to change?

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: bbcfoundation.org; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org