

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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One “Ring” To Rule Them All

Mark Robbins, CPA

If you enjoy home movies, you might know that the second movie of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Two Towers*, was recently released. The third part of the trilogy came out this month.

For those not acquainted with Tolkien’s fictional trilogy, written in the mid 1900’s, there is a master evil ring that must be destroyed. An evil lord created the ring in order to control the world, but he has lost it. People greatly desire this ring and want to own it, not destroy it. The ring not only has the power to control, but it also causes people to lose control of their senses. People will kill, lie, steal, and cheat to gain the ring. The desire of the ring leads to disaster.

This is a fictional story, but there are some analogies we could make. A “ring” in our world is wealth. “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many a pang” (1 Tim 6:10, NASB).

In Tolkien’s story, many people say they do not want the ring, but their actions speak otherwise. In real life, many people say they do not love money. Many would agree with the statement, “You can’t buy happiness.” Let’s consider some current events:

- Enron and WorldCom – Executives were looking for a way to improve their financial results. The means: lying. The payoff: bonuses and a higher personal stock portfolio.
- Malcolm Forbes – Perhaps you have heard the famous quote from the famous tycoon: “He who dies with the most toys wins.”

Admittedly, those are dramatic examples. But let’s consider a less dramatic, yet more prevalent example – “The American Dream.” Nice house, happy marriage, great job, 2.5 children, etc. Part of that

dream revolves around “financial security,” which is the state of never having to worry about money. You have all that you need to be secure and happy.

I have a little secret for you. “Financial security” does not exist. People with nothing are not content and would like a few million dollars. People with a few million dollars would like a few million more. More money is not the answer.

Do you see the “ring” in wealth? People can seriously hurt their spiritual lives by seeking it. If you are not careful, your money can end up owning you. Consider Paul’s thoughts on how we can escape the desire of money. “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life” (1 Tim 6:7-19, NASB).

“Life that is truly life” – now *that* is worth seeking. Here are two practical tips:

- Increase your giving in order to decrease your desire to accumulate
- Increase your contentment so you can decrease your debt

If you would like information on how to create a budget for these goals, please contact us.

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