

Living with an Eternal Perspective

Zoom Bible Study | Tuesdays @ 7:00pm (CST)

Led by Mary Lowman

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Lesson Five

Does money burn a hole in your pocket?

Did you know that the Bible has more than 2,000 verses about money? God considers money and its place in our lives to be a matter of great importance.



Money's Bid for Control

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 6:24).

From Richard Foster's book, *The Challenge of the Disciplined Life: Christian Reflections on Money, Sex and Power*:

"Money has power, spiritual power, to win our hearts. . . Mammon asks for our allegiance in a way that sucks the milk of human kindness out of our very being (page 26). And in point of fact, money has many of the characteristics of deity. It gives us security, can induce guilt, gives us freedom, gives us power and seems to be omnipresent. Most sinister of all, however, is its bid for omnipotence" (page 28).

Love-of-Money Grievs

Paul wrote to young Timothy:

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (1 Timothy 6:10).

Self-inflicted griefs are often caused by the love of money, such as:

- Broken or damaged relationships**

Once money becomes an issue in a friendship, the damage can be irreparable.

- Dishonesty and deception**

When money is at stake, how easy it is to lie or deceive.

- Workaholism**

Can you think of other self-inflicted griefs that could have been avoided if money was seen from an eternal perspective?



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The Smell of Money's Control

Here are some of the telltale smells that give you a clue as to whether or not money has burned a hole in your heart:

- Money causes you a great deal of fear and anxiety.
- You find yourself dreaming about somehow coming into a lot of money, and the things you'd do with it.
- You envy people who seem to have all the money they need.
- You think of money as the solution to all your problems.
- You look to money for security.
- You evaluate people by their financial success.

I was amazed to read this account of the Hebrew Christians:

You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions (Hebrews 10:34).

"Joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property" – imagine! How could they do it? Because they looked beyond the here and now and fully believed that their eternal possessions were better, and nothing or nobody could confiscate those.

Think of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus wanting to know what he must do to have eternal life. Jesus said,

"If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Matthew 19:21).

But the young man went away sad.

What do you think that young ruler would say to us now if he were here?

Rejecting the Lordship of Money

Here's a good suggestion: On a regular basis mentally hold up to God every asset you have, and say to God, "These are not mine, they are yours. I am possessionless."

And then a very powerful way to make certain that money does not control us is to give it away. Again from Foster's book:

"Without question, money has taken on a sacred character in our world, and it would do us good to find ways to defame it, defile it, and trample it under our feet. So step on it. Yell at it. Laugh at it. List it way down on the scale of values...And engage in the most profane act of all - give it away. The powers that energize money cannot abide that most unnatural of acts, giving. Money is made for taking, for bargaining, for manipulating, but not for giving. This is exactly why giving has such ability to defeat the powers of money."

Here are four quick practical things you may need to do if money is always burning a hole in your pocket:

1. Think differently about little expenses

Figure out how much you spend on "little things" without even realizing it. Think about those expenses and how much of it was just a waste of money. You're building a better personal "money sense" for yourself every time you do this.

2. Start automating your savings

If you never see it, you won't spend it.

3. Set achievable financial goals

A good goal is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-limited.

Possessing or Possessed?

In **Luke 12:15** Jesus warns us again about being possessed by our possessions:

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed: life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

Please note this passage from 2 Peter 3:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming (2 Peter 3:10 – 12a).

Your Heavenly Audit

Imagine a heavenly auditor assessing your wealth right now – your heavenly wealth. How much have you sent on ahead of you? Jesus said, *"What people value highly is detestable in God's sight"* (**Luke 16:15b**).

These words convict me. I wonder how embarrassed I would be if I had a heavenly audit.

Looking at money and possessions with an eternal perspective will be a continual challenge for most of us. But we can do if it we really want to, and if we even begin to see them through God's eyes.

The Dishonest Shrewd Manager

Luke 16:1 - 9:

Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ²So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'

³"The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg— ⁴I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'

⁵"So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

⁶"'Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied.

"The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.'

⁷"Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?'

"'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied.

"He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'

⁸"The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. ⁹I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

Is Jesus condoning dishonest behavior? What is the meaning of this strange parable?

Jesus said,

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19-20).

This shrewdness is personified in a manager who looked beyond the current mess he was in and prepared for his future. He had a long-term perspective and it paid off!

No Bed of His Own

Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (Luke 9:58).