

“Seven Grave Mistakes with Money!” (Part 1)

Psalm 24:1

Intro. – Several years ago I read an article that claimed you and I spend 50% of our time thinking about money – how to get it, spend it, save it, and how much is needed to pay for this and that... Regardless of the accuracy of this percentage... it is a fact isn't it – money is “heavy on our minds?”

Is this necessarily wrong? No – God puts great stress on the way we handle dollars and cents. This is a key area of one's life in Christ – one that if not in harmony with God's Word results in serious problems.

As Christians we continually face money issues. E.g. do we really think about money that much..., how do we earn money... how do we spend money etc.? You see money is an everyday happening with us – we use cards... we write checks... we make deposits/withdrawals... we buy this and put change in that. It is a constant reality and the handling of this reality is an area of life the Bible covers in great detail. The Word of God is not a big vague when it comes to our financial planning; yet, this is one area of our lives often greatly neglected.

Illus. – our text says, “*The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*” Simply means every cent that God gives us becomes an assessment of our loyalty. All the money we have (note: didn't say *our* money) can be used to honor the Lord. Many have mistaken the notion that 10% is the Lord's and other 90% is ours to use as we please. 100% is the Lord's and all should be used to honor Him. Doesn't mean give all to Lord's Church, but does mean we use all to honor Him!

In short, God want glory/honor out of the money matters confronting each of us. Satan wants misuse and abuse. The question is: “Does God manage *your* money?”

Purpose: to examine 3 of 7 deadly mistakes in the use of money

The following money mistakes are areas where misuse is the rule rather than the exception:

I Getting in NEEDLESS DEBT (Proverbs 22:7)

- Illus. – “You load 16 tons, and what do you get:
Another day older and deeper in debt. (The Platters, T.E. Ford, Merle Travis)
St. Peter don't you call me 'cause I can't go,
I owe my soul to the company store.”
 - Proverbs 22:7 “*The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*”
 - anytime we incur needless debt, we assume a master/slave relationship
 - 1 Corinthians 7:21-23 “*Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. For he who was called in the Lord while as slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.*”
- A. Disqualifies Us
1. How many times have you disqualified yourself from active worship/service because of debt's demand – i.e. the extra work load?
 2. Illus. – know of a man went to Bible College, but had such a debt he became preoccupied with work to the point he neglected his studies and was eventually asked to leave.
- B. Distresses Us
1. The pressures of debt are all too common... few haven't experienced too much month at end of \$!
 2. Christ knew of that pressure – Romans 13:8 “*Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another.*”
- C. Discourages Us
- nothing like paying on something that is already worn out and useless before it is paid in full...
- D. Divides Us
1. Ideas as to how to use money are about as diverse as the insects walking the face of the earth.
 2. Illus. – wife says, “Honey, let's go out to eat!” “Can't afford it!” “No, but we could afford \$40 for a hunting license last week!” – The fight is on...
- We can be free of disqualifying, distressing, discouraging, divisive debt! Avoid needless debt!!

II Being WASTEFUL (Matthew 25:14ff; Luke 19:11ff)

- we're entrusted with certain resources and are expected to be faithful stewards...
 - principle is easy enough – misuse what little one has, even that will be taken away eventually... - parables of the pounds/talents make clear there will be accountability in use of God's goods...
 - look at a couple ways we can be wasteful:
- A. Incurring Needless Debt
1. Sound familiar? Note: not all debt is bad, but, *needless* debt is. Why?
 2. Money goes toward interest and carrying charges = i.e. pay far more and get far less...
- B. Careless Management (usually takes 2 forms)
1. Inattention to the use of money – Illus. – “Where did all the money go?!” Come conversation amongst husbands and wives: “Honey, I need some money.” “Why! You're already out?!”
 - God's way = don't ask where the money went; instead, tell it where to go!...
 2. Neglect of property
 - a. Proverbs 24:30-34 *“I passed by the field of the sluggard, and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense; and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles, its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest. They your poverty will come as a robber, and your want like an armed man.”*
 - b. bluntly, if we're too lazy to care for property entrusted to us, we impoverish ourselves!
- How can God be honored and we blessed if we are found irresponsible in the use of entrusted resources?!

III Having a MONEY-CENTERED LIFE (Luke 12:15)

- Illus. – in 1921 the world's most “successful money making business men got together at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. The elite group included: ceo of the biggest monopoly, the most successful Wall Street speculator, ceo of largest steel company, ceo of the largest utility company, ceo of largest gas company, the greatest wheat speculator, ceo of NY Stock Exchange, ceo of Bank of International Settlements, and a member of the President's cabinet.
 - all of these men were implicated in the Teapot Dome Scandal (prior to Watergate considered the biggest scandal in American politics... Makes what we're witnessing today look like a Sunday School picnic). 25 yrs later where were each of these men of wealth and power? Ivar Kruger, head of greatest US monopoly/suicide. Jessie Livermore, most successful speculator on Wall Street/suicide. Charles Schwab, ceo of largest steel co./died bankruptcy living on borrowed money 5 yrs prior to death. Samuel Insull, ceo greatest utility co./died a fugitive from law, penniless in foreign land. Howard Hopson, ceo largest gas co./went insane. Arthur Cotton, great wheat speculator/died bankrupt. Richard Whitney, ceo of NY Stock Exchange, was finally released from prison. Leon Fall, member President's cabinet was pardoned from prison so he could die at home.
- A. Lessons to be Learned
1. Remember October 1929 came (Big Crash) these men lost everything – they thought life was over
 2. Matthew 6:19-21,24,33 *“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy; and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also... No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon... But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.”*
 3. Obviously, the world doesn't believe this to be truth. The question of the hour – do we?
- B. Beware of Greed

1. Luke 12:15 *“And He said to them, ‘Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed, for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.’”*
 2. It is way too easy to get preoccupied with wanting more and more...
- C. Contentment is Great Gain
1. 2 Timothy 6:6-8 *“But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”*
 2. In short, we are urged to avoid the deadly mistake of worshipping the all mighty dollar; instead of worshipping all Mighty God!

Conclusion: A young girl was preparing for her first year of college. She loaded up every conceivable item needed to begin her independent life including her very first checkbook. Within two months, bank overdrafts began arriving at the parents’ home, all on their daughter’s account. The dad called her. Here’s how the phone conversation went. “How are things at school?” “Just fine, Daddy.” “Julie, you’ve written over \$300 in checks when there was only \$10 left in your account. You are substantially overdrawn.” “But that can’t be,” said Julie, “I still have checks left!”

Mistakes are made with money because money training has not been taught or it has been taught and it simply has been missed. God’s Word is *the source* for money training. We have covered but three of seven deadly money mistakes. Next, week, Lord willing, we will cover the remaining four mistakes.