

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

STEWARDSHIP [WHAT DO I DO WITH MONEY?]

THE HURDLE

It'd be nice to have a multi-million dollar contract for playing sports and promoting products, but that's not my reality right now. Money is always on my mind. I often talk to myself about how much I'm going to need, how I'm going to get it, the things I will own, the places I will go. If I'm honest, I probably think more about money and "stuff" than just about anything else. But what's wrong with that? Taking care of me and my family is an important pursuit, isn't it?

How much time and energy do you spend thinking about money? Why is/isn't this an issue for you?

Do you consider money more of a burdensome responsibility or a pleasurable pursuit?

When you think about God and money at the same time, what comes to mind?

“

I'm tired of hearing about money, money, money, money. I just want to play the game, drink Pepsi, and wear Reebok.

*Shaquille O'Neal
Professional Basketball Player*

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Particularly in the American culture, money plays a huge role in our thinking about education, lifestyle, access to pleasure, etc. Every day books are published, TV and radio shows broadcast, and seminars taught on how to increase our wealth.

I HEAR YA

The Bible includes examples of people and their approach to money...

Solomon: ...God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you. " ... Solomon answered, "So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people." ... The Lord was pleased ... so God said to him, "Since you have asked for this—not long life or wealth for yourself ... I will do what you have asked. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for – both riches and honor..." (I Kings 3:5-13)

Haggai: "The silver is mine and the gold is mine declares the Lord of Hosts." (Haggai 2:8)

A Poor Widow: "But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more in the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.'" (Mark 12: 42-44)

Jesus: "So do not worry, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:31-33)

LISTEN UP

Read Matthew 25: 14-19.

1. How does the master treat each servant the same? Differently?
2. While the servants have differing amounts at their disposal, they each have to decide what they will do with it. Make a general list describing how they might use the money.
3. In summarizing verses 20-30, we discover the master labeled the first two servants “good and faithful” for investing his money and getting a return on their investment. The last servant, who buried his money and gave it back to him unchanged upon his return, is deemed “wicked and lazy”. What do you think about the master’s response? Do you think he is justified in casting judgment on his servants for what happened with the money? Why or why not?
4. According to vs. 24-25, why did the last servant hide the master’s money? What role does fear play in your handling of money?
5. How might the first two servant’s attitudes toward the master affect what they did with the money?

FOR THE RECORD

God owns it all! Though the resources and amounts He gives vary from person to person, we’re each responsible to boldly invest “our” resources in what God deems important. The key idea in both directions is trust: He wants to entrust us with His resources and we trust Him by seeking ways to bless others with what He gives us, keeping our hands open so He can give and take away as He pleases. When

we close our hands we short-circuit the flow of trust in both directions. We must embrace His ultimate ownership of “my stuff” and allow Him to trust us with more or less as He sees fit. Investing resources with a kingdom mindset in this life pays dividends both here and in the one to follow, guaranteeing a “well done, good and faithful servant” for all who take His promises seriously!

YOUR MOVE

1. Do you really believe that “your” money is actually His money? What has shaped your current belief?
2. As you consider your thinking and use of money to this point in your life, are you mostly a spender, giver, saver, worrier, hoarder, or something else? Why? If you viewed money the way God does, how would you manage your money differently?
3. Sometimes we use money in an attempt to satisfy a deeper need. Look at the examples below and see if you are trying to meet deeper needs through money.

- Money gives me power to rule over others
- Money lets others know I am smart and/or successful
- Money keeps me from being under someone else’s control
- Money gives me freedom to do what I want
- Other _____

What is wrong with this belief?



Money and possessions are a very effective tool God uses to grow us up. Therefore, we shouldn’t ask, ‘God, why are you doing this to me?’ but ‘God, what do you want me to learn?’

Ron Blue
Financial Counselor/Author



4. How is your view of money challenged after doing this study? Be honest about what you’re still struggling with when it comes to stewarding money. Ask God to help you surrender your thoughts to His will for you in this area.

A Wise Prayer: “Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God (Proverbs 30:8b-9)”

For additional work on your own, visit **The Training Room** on the next page for practical exercises in managing the Master’s money.

AS YOU ENTER

**“IF WE HAVE FOOD AND COVERING, WITH THESE WE SHALL BE CONTENT.”
(1 TIMOTHY 6:8)**

Meditation about Money

Pick 3 days to read and meditate upon these 3 passages. We are in a growth process where God uses money as a...

- **Tool** to teach us contentment, balance and interdependence (Philippians 4:10-14)
- **Test** of our faithfulness and trustworthiness (Luke 16:10-12)
- **Testimony** of Jesus living through us producing good works and leaving a “good taste” in the mouths of others (Matthew 5:13-16)

Money is a major topic in the Bible! Sixteen out of 38 of Jesus’ parables deal with money. The New Testament speaks more about money than heaven and hell combined. Money is written about five times more than prayer, and while there are 500 plus verses on prayer/faith, over 2,000 verses deal with money and possessions.

God wants to guide our hearts and minds toward a proper perspective about money. While His instruction is challenging, it is also the gateway to fully enjoy the riches He entrusts to us!

My Personal Budget

Put together a simple personal budget. Record for 2 months...

- what you earn as wages
- what you receive as gifts
- what you give back to God and others
- what you spend on needs and wants
- what you save for the future

What changes do you need to make to become more responsible and generous with what God gives you to manage?

Your Heart Is With Your Money! (Luke 12:34)

Read these statements and verses then write down what God is saying to you through them.

- If you attend to your financial plans and dreams, your investment strategies, your clothes closet, and your salary package more than knowing and serving God, than your heart isn’t really with God. (See Matthew 6:19-24)
- Don’t try to fool God with “appearances” for how giving and generous you are! (See Acts 5:1-4)
- Loving and longing for money leads to all sorts of evil and sinful actions (see 1 Timothy 6: 7-10)

A Wealthy Landowner: Speaking to the people, he (Jesus) went on, “Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot.” Then he told them this story: “The farm of a certain rich man produced a terrific crop... Then he said, ‘Here’s what I’ll do: I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll gather in all my grain and goods, and I’ll say to myself, Self, you’ve done well! You’ve got it made and can now retire. Take it easy and have the time of your life!’ “Just then God showed up and said, ‘Fool! Tonight you die. And your barn full of goods—who gets it?’ “That’s what happens when you fill your barn with self and not with God.” (Luke 12:16-21)

How do these truths stir your thinking?

What specific challenges do you think they provide accomplished athletes and coaches?

AS YOU LEAVE

- » OFFER YOUR HEART TO GOD DAILY
- » CONFESS GREED, FEAR, COVETING
- » SEEK WAYS TO BLESS OTHERS FINANCIALLY