



25. Jesus' Solution to Everybody's Money Problem

An innocent child shows no love for money. But before many years, a normal human being develops a love for money as strong as an alcoholic's craving for liquor. It is something we all have to contend with constantly.

This love of money corrupts the sweet innocence of childhood. An adult who loves money is generally an unhappy, selfish, grasping person. "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). Almost all crime stems from a passion for money or a passion for sex.

It is common knowledge that most millionaires who have more money than they or their family can possibly spend in a lifetime, are always seeking more. Why? A greediness sets in that can never be satisfied.

Why is the love of money "the root of all evil"? How can a follower of Jesus solve the problem of getting enough to meet his proper needs, and still avoid the trap of wanting more than he needs?

This problem of money is also the root of the world's conflict between communism and capitalism. It has been largely responsible for the ruinous military expenditures of many nations. The love of money leads the world's nations captive in the same way that a farmer leads a hot-tempered bull by a ring fastened in its nose. Satan uses the love of money to lead both individuals and the world itself to ruin.

The Bible provides a solution to the problem of money. It would end the conflict between the "haves" and the "have-nots," and ensure that the world's population never suffers want. Most people don't know what that solution is. But Christians who appreciate the love of God revealed at the cross discover the secret for themselves. Let us look!

Jesus and the Problem of Money

1. Did Jesus and His disciples have at least some money in their possession to meet their needs? John 13:29.

YOUR ANSWER: _____.

2. Did Jesus use money to pay taxes? Matthew 17:24-27.

YOUR ANSWER: _____.

The point is that money itself is not evil. Jesus Himself used it. As a carpenter in Nazareth doubtless He earned it. What is evil is the love of money. To possess money is not a sin; to be selfish with it--that's where the sin comes in and ruins us as it did Judas Iscariot.

Money Problems Must Be Solved -- Or We Cannot Be Saved

3. Most of us are considered rich by the rest of the poverty-stricken world. Read how Jesus met the problem of advising an unhappy rich man, and try to answer these questions: Mark 10:17-31.

(a) Does Jesus love rich people (verse 21)?

ANSWER: "Then Jesus beholding him _____."

(b) Suppose all rich people in the world would obey Jesus' advice to this man; would millions have to live in abject poverty?

ANSWER: "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and _____ to the _____."

(c) Think carefully! Did Jesus say it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven (verses 23-25)?

ANSWER: "How _____ shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God."

(d) What do you understand that Jesus means the rich person must do?

ANSWER: "With men it is _____, but not with God: for with God all _____ are _____."

(e) What will happen "now" to the person who sacrifices his wealth for Christ (verses 29, 30)?

ANSWER: "He shall receive an _____ now in this time."

(f) And what will he/she have "in the world to come"?

ANSWER: _____.

4. One of Jesus' stories tells what we can do with money to get present value out of it, and eternal value as well. Read Luke 16:1-8. (For further clarity, the story below is taken from the Good News Bible.)

"Jesus said to his disciples, 'There was once a rich man who had a servant who managed his property. The rich man was told that the manager was wasting his master's money, so he called him in and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Turn in a complete account of your handling of my property, because you cannot be my manager any longer.'"

The servant said to himself, 'My master is going to dismiss me from my job. What shall I do? I am not strong enough to dig ditches, and I am ashamed to beg. Now I know what I will do! Then when my job is gone, I shall have friends who will welcome me in their homes.'

"So he called in all the people who were in debt to his master. He asked the first one, 'How much do you owe my master?' 'One hundred barrels of olive oil,' he answered. 'Here is your account,' the manager told him; 'sit down and write fifty' Then he asked another one, 'And you--how much do you owe?' 'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he answered. 'Here is your account,' the manager told him; 'write eight hundred.'

"As a result the master of this dishonest manager praised him for doing such a shrewd thing; because the people of this world are much more shrewd in handling their affairs than the people who belong to the light."

Underline the correct answer:

(a) The "rich man" in this parable is: (the Emperor Caesar); (any millionaire); (the Lord Himself).

(b) The "servant" is (a criminal); (myself).

(c) The "property" represents (the money God permits to come into our possession); (Roman military stockpiles).

(d) The "master's debtors" represent (lazy, good-for-nothing people); (souls whom we have blessed with a wise use of our money).

5. Read Luke 16:9-12 from the Good News Bible:

"And Jesus went on to say, 'And so I tell you: make friends for yourselves with worldly wealth, so that when it gives out, you will be welcomed in the eternal home. Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones; whoever is dishonest in small matters will be dishonest in large ones. If, then, you have not been faithful in handling worldly wealth, how can you be trusted with true wealth? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to someone else, who will give you what belongs to you? No servant can be the slave of two masters; he will hate one and love the other; he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.'"

(a) What do you think is the "worldly wealth" ("mammon of unrighteousness" KJV)?

YOUR ANSWER: _____.

(b) Wouldn't you be happy in Heaven to be welcomed as a guest in the homes of people whom you have helped here in this life?

ANSWER (read Daniel 12:2, 3): "And they that be wise shall _____ as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the _____ for ever and ever."

(c) If you and I have not been faithful and loving in the use of the earthly money God entrusted to us here, can He trust us with the gift of eternal wealth?

YOUR ANSWER: _____.

6. Jesus told many stories about money. Read Luke 12:13-21 and answer these questions:

(a) What do you think "covetousness" is?

ANSWER: "The _____ of the _____ which he _____."

(b) Can you imagine any true Christian in these troublous times taking his "ease" to "eat, drink, and be merry" while the world plunges to ruin?

ANSWER: _____.

(c) What do you think it means to be "rich toward God"?

ANSWER: It is the opposite of someone "that layeth up _____ for _____."

The psalmist described this rich man when he wrote, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God (Psalm 14:1). This man has lived and planned for self. In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. For God is love, and love is life. To live for self is to perish. Covetousness, the desire of benefit for self's sake, cuts the soul off from life. It is the spirit of Satan to get, to draw to self. It is the spirit of Christ to give, to sacrifice self for the good of others.

How to Handle Money but Overcome the Love of Money

7. What is the first principle for us to learn in handling our money? Deuteronomy 8:11-13, 17, 18.

ANSWER: "Beware that thou _____ the _____ thy _____, ... it is He _____ thee _____ to get _____."

8. In what practical, common-sense way does a Christian confess that all he has comes from God? Deuteronomy 14:22.

ANSWER: "Thou shalt truly _____ all the _____ of thy _____, that the field bringeth forth year by year."

9. What does the word "tithe" mean? Leviticus 27:30, 32.

ANSWER: "All the _____ ... is the Lord's: it is _____ unto the Lord." "The _____ shall be _____ unto the Lord."

We are to tithe the "increase," that is, our net income. For example, a grocery store owner takes in \$ 1,000 gross income in a week but has to pay \$700 for rent, the cost of the goods he sold, and the salaries of his employees. His net income or "increase" would be the balance--\$300. That is what he pays tithe on. A farmer may sell his crop for \$10,000; but if he had expenses of \$8,500 in producing his crop, his "increase" would be \$1,500.

10. Is the principle of tithing upheld by Jesus? Matthew 23:23.

ANSWER: "Ye pay tithe of ...: these _____ ye to have done."

11. Speaking of the Old Testament tithing plan, what does Paul say is the Lord's plan now for supporting the work of preaching the gospel around the world? 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14.

ANSWER: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that _____ which _____ the _____ should _____ of the _____."

12. If we withhold our tithes and offerings, what sin are we guilty of? Malachi 3:7-9.

ANSWER: "Yet ye have _____ me."

13. Where should we bring the tithes? Malachi 3:10.

ANSWER: "Bring the _____ into the _____, that there may be meat in _____."

Just as one's body is "organized," coordinated, united, so the church is organized as the "body of Christ." The "storehouse" is the treasury of God's true church on earth. The work of the church is carried forward in an organized, orderly manner. Each minister receives equally from the "storehouse" or treasury a modest, living wage, so that the temptation to seek wealth by promotion is discouraged. The tithing plan benefits the church members in that it reminds them constantly that their wealth all comes from God. And in this way they are saved from the ruinous effects of human selfishness. Their lives become more beautiful. They become better people and the cause of God around the world goes forward.

This is in harmony with God's plan: "I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for ... their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Numbers 18:21). The words "service" and "ministry" mean the same. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14).

14. Returning our tithe to the Lord demonstrates our honesty. How is our love demonstrated? Psalm 96:8, 9.

ANSWER: "Give unto the _____ the _____ unto his name: bring an _____ and come into his courts."

15. When God sees that you are overcoming the sinful, selfish love of money, what will He gladly do for you? 2 Corinthians 9:8.

ANSWER: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always _____ all _____ in _____, may abound in every good work."

16. When Satan presses upon us the temptation to love money, what remembrance will always give us the victory? 2 Corinthians 8:9.

ANSWER: "For ye know the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for _____ He became _____, that ye through His _____ might be _____."

"We are brought into sympathy with Christ through the fellowship of His sufferings. Every act of self-sacrifice for the good of others strengthens the spirit of beneficence in the giver's heart, allying him more closely to the Redeemer of the world, who 'was rich, yet for your sakes ... became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.' 2 Corinthians 8:9. And it is only as we thus fulfill the divine purpose in our creation that life can be a blessing to us." Happiness Digest, pp. 37, 38.

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7 "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17

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