



Managing GOD's Money

Theme for the November: Jesus Is Lord

This month's theme stresses the reality many folks do not wish to confront: Jesus is Lord. We may surrender to His Lordship and allow Him to direct our paths, or we may not. But if we don't, still He is Lord and rules the world.

When we surrender control of our lives to Jesus, choose to love Him with all our hearts, souls, and minds, our stress levels will fall because we correctly transfer our burdens to Him. That's what He asks us to do. He knows we can't do it on our own, so He invites us to cast our worries onto Him. He deals with them much better than we could!

We will review these topics this month:

- 🕒 November 1-7: *The Bible is the Source of Truth*
- 🕒 November 8-14: *Invest in His Kingdom*
- 🕒 November 15-21: *Count the Cost*
- 🕒 November 22-30: *Is Money His Competitor?*

Topic for the Week: Invest in His Kingdom

November 8-14

The Word

Storeroom

Matthew 6:19-21

“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. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Although Jesus spoke about money, wealth, and possessions more than other items, His essential message during His three-year ministry was about the eternal, His Kingdom. So, as a primary focus, let's share the salvation message (**John 3:16-17**), point folks to Him, and be salt and

light in the world. That's how we store treasures in heaven.

Once I was a guest on a Christian call-in TV program discussing the question: *What's your spending decision procedure?* Several callers mentioned Jesus as their decision-making source, but said often they responded to urgent needs by borrowing and not trusting Jesus because they feared they would not get “needed” funds in time. In essence, they admitted they did not trust Jesus to supply their needs.

One person's testimony, however, blessed us. This individual tried always to pattern Jesus' teachings about storing treasures in heaven. As a believer in Jesus, she knew her main goal was to use time, talent, and possessions God gave her to further His Kingdom. So she knew she needed to listen and respond to Jesus as He showed her where to apply His funds, time, and talents. Most important, however, she needed to trust Jesus to supply her needs.

Quickly she realized her daily financial issues weren't about needs or money but about her relationship with Jesus. For example, when her car

broke down, rather than panicking and borrowing to fix it, she knew she had to go to the Lord and ask Him what to do. Always He showed her the way, and she never had to borrow when she followed His way. But, she said, sometimes she had to humble herself as part of His solution.

She decided that with the Holy Spirit's help she would live a simple life and love Jesus with all her heart, soul, and mind (**Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Matthew 22:37**). Daily she got to know Him better as she invested time listening to Him through His Word and through prayer. Slowly her “needs” grew closer to His wishes as she started to have less difficulty separating needs from wants.

Collecting stuff she didn't need soon became history. After all, she said, *how many pairs of shoes, how much furniture and other items do I need? Why do I have to get the latest, the best of everything?* So she reduced clutter, and started to maximize funds available for the Lord's work. She did this by presenting all her funds to the Lord and asking Him to show her how to earmark them. She gave to her church, Christian charities and else-

where, not based on people's requests, but at the Holy Spirit's promptings. She realized what seemed like a great need in the world's eyes might not be the place God wanted her to spend His funds.

Moment by moment she tried to focus on the Lord. She believed correctly the issues she faced daily were not financial but spiritual. She met several crises in succession after she started to follow this lifestyle, but not once did she borrow to pay for anything she "needed," even when she couldn't see clearly the material funding source for the funds she "needed" urgently. She confessed that often she thought about borrowing but decided to wait on the Lord. He provided, always. That's how she practiced storing up treasures in heaven: using His time, talents, and possessions under His direction!

Folks, God knows our sin nature and the greed that flows from it. That's why He cautions us about piling up wealth here on earth. **Proverbs 3:4** tells us, *wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death; while Proverbs 22:16* states, *He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty.*

In explaining the parable of the Farmer sowing seeds, Jesus described wealth as a distraction preventing us from absorbing the Word after hearing it (**Mark 4:19**). As well, in the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 6:19-21**), Jesus reminds us we can't take possessions with us when we die. So it is futile to devote our efforts to getting materially rich, quickly or slowly!

Many folks agree they do not dedicate effort mainly to become wealthy. But when you look at their financial affairs, you notice their spending stress possessions, rather

than sharing His Word to those in need.

To prevent wealth from choking us and taking our focus away from the eternal, we must understand Jesus' Lordship. He is Lord even if we don't like to admit it; we can't make Him Lord. So, heed His call and get to know Him as personal Lord and Savior; and then follow the advice in His Word. Remember, He calls us; we cannot start this journey on our own; we need only listen and obey (**John 14:6**).

Without Jesus, we will not know truth; we will behave like the secular world with His finances, act in darkness, and place our security in earthly treasures. To be sure, even when we know His Word, His Spirit must fill us continually so we may resist temptations to follow the world.

Ananias and Sapphira represent folks who chose to store wealth on earth rather than heaven; they paid the price:

¹ Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ² With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. ³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God." ⁵ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened - **Acts 5:1-5**.

Sapphira also died after lying. They lied, not to Peter, but to God. Remember, before a word is on our tongues God knows it (**Psalms 139:4**). **We can hide our thoughts and deeds from people but never from God, the believers' perfect loving Heavenly Father.**

Cornelius, on the other hand, feared God, stored treasures in heaven and God used Him mightily (**Acts 10:1-48**).

Jesus wants us to love Him with all our hearts, souls, and minds. That's all. He will take care of our needs. That's a promise to *believers*: His *death* and resurrection paid for our *debts*. As well, He sends His Holy Spirit to live in *believers* to enable us to remain attentive to everlasting matters. Jesus reassures us in **John 14:26** that, "...the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." Take heed!

Often we forget the *believer's* guide is the Teacher who knows everything, including the future. Our great challenge is to be patient and accept His timing, which is perfect. Have you noticed?

So, should we present every dollar to the Lord? Yes, everything comes from Him and must be **available to Him** to use as He directs. He will return to us what we need to live on and more, based on His goals and plans for us. That's the meaning of *your will be done on earth* (**Matthew 6:10**, **Psalms 143:10**). You may be materially wealthy and Jesus calls you to give it all up and go start a project for which He will provide funding. Just do it. Mother Teresa and many others gave up everything to store treasures in heaven.

Sometimes we don't understand why we have "so little" compared with others. But that's not our

issue. Stay focused on Jesus. He will show us how to use what we have to satisfy our needs and how to store treasures in heaven.

He gives us *everything we need for life and godliness* including the ability to be good stewards of His possessions. But we will reach our potential only when He is our Lord and Savior. So, listen, you will hear His call if that's your heart's desire. Surrender all areas of your lives to Him. He will show you how to invest in His Kingdom. Start by ...

- ★ Obeying Him
- ★ Placing all funds at *His disposal*
- ★ Giving to your local Christ-centered church and elsewhere as he directs.
- ★ Caring for orphans, widows, and those in need.

Application



God is our refuge and strength Psalm 46:1-7

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

The LORD Almighty is with us ...

When was your last visit to a cemetery? Perhaps you may find a visit this week helpful to understand Jesus' teachings. You won't see cars, houses, or toys amassed on earth.

The essence of Jesus' message is about our hearts and eternity, not about wealth. For *believers*, investing in His Kingdom means:

- ★ Accepting our roles as Jesus' manager
- ★ Deciding to live with *open palms*
- ★ Deciding, under His' direction to work with budgets; not borrowing, but saving to buy stuff

How do you use time, talents, and possessions He entrusts to you? Do not allow money, wealth, and possessions to prevent you from hearing God's Word or from following Jesus.

Either wealth is your master or your servant. If you are in control,

Memory Verse

1 Timothy 6:17 and 19

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

it will be your master; it will cripple, then kill you. If Jesus is your Lord—you love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and do His will—wealth will be your servant. Then you will be free, Jesus will control your actions, and you will store treasures in heaven.

As you meditate on this week's Scripture verses, answer these questions:

- ★ What would Jesus say about the state of your finances? Where are you storing treasures?
- ★ Once you start to store treasures in heaven, you will experience His peace (**Romans 8:5-6**).
- ★ Is Jesus Lord of all areas of your life?
- ★ Partial surrender is no surrender (**Deuteronomy 5: 28-33**).
- ★ What's your spending decision procedure? Do you seek the Lord's guidance before spending?
- ★ Take all decisions to Him and He will guide you (**1 Peter 5:7**).

Considering this month's theme, *Jesus Is Lord*, this period's topic, *Invest in His Kingdom*, each day reflect on the specific verses in the *Personal Reflection* section on page 4. These questions might help your reflection:

- ◉ Who is talking to whom, about what, when and in what context?
- ◉ How do these verses apply to me today?
- ◉ What lessons from these verses can I start to do today?

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P e r s o n a l R e f l e c t i o n s

N o v e m b e r 8th : Matthew 6:19-21; John 14:6

N o v e m b e r 9th : Proverbs 22:16; Mark 4:19

N o v e m b e r 10th : Psalm 46:1-11; Psalm 143:10

N o v e m b e r 11th : John 14:26; John 3:16-17; Matthew 6:10

N o v e m b e r 12th : Romans 8:6; Acts 10:1-48

N o v e m b e r 13th : Deuteronomy 5:28-33; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Matthew 22:37

N o v e m b e r 14th : 1 Peter 5:7; 1 Timothy 6: 17-19