

Problem-Solving Chapters of the Bible

MONEY PROBLEMS: Matthew 6

Matthew, Chapter 6, right in the middle of our Lord's "Sermon on the Mount," has helped many solve their financial problems. The Bible has a lot to say about money, its management, and the meaning in our lives of how we manage our money. Before looking into this chapter to find the principles of solving money problems, we may want to look at other places in the Book of Matthew where Jesus is recorded as talking about money matters: Matthew 5:25-26, 10:5-10, 10:29-31, 13:44-46, 17:24-27, 18:21-35, 19:16-30, 20:1-16, 22:15-22, 23:16-24, 25:14-29, and 26:7-13. Isn't it amazing how often Jesus spoke of money in His teaching? Our use and management of finances says a lot about the way we live our lives. In Luke 16, we find this saying of the Lord Jesus:

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (verses 10 through 13)

Now let us see 3 principles we should learn in order to solve money problems.

I. The Principle of Divine Reward (vs. 1-18).

In this section of Chapter 6, Jesus talks about our heavenly Father rewarding us "openly" (verses 4, 6, and 18). Although this promise speaks somewhat of the rewards that will be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:10, I Corinthians 3:13-15), it refers to Christian activity that also have the promise of earthly reward: alms-giving, prayer, and fasting.

A. Giving.

Jesus said,

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38)

God rewards financially those of His children who give away their finances. See Malachi 3:10, II Corinthians 9:7-8, and Philippians 4:15-20.

B. Praying.

Jesus said,

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7:11)

God supplies the needs of His children who ask of Him. See James 4:2.

C. Fasting.

Jesus said,

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." (Matthew 17:20-21)

Fasting is an aid to effective prayer, and brings earthly rewards.

An important step for any believer with financial problems to take is to *deepen his spiritual life*. How much we know by experience about giving, praying, and fasting is tested in times of financial crises. Did you know that your heavenly Father can supply all of your needs? The normal way He does this is in response to our prayers. Jesus taught us in Matthew 6:11 to include a request for our physical needs in our daily prayers. But Christians are not to be self-centered, and God expects praying believers to be giving believers.

II. The Principle of the Single Eye (vs. 19-24).

As in Luke 16, Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount dealt with the conflict between serving God and serving "mammon" (which means wealth—v. 24). You cannot serve both. Everybody

needs money, but there is such a thing as *serving* money, being its slave, and that we cannot do and serve God at the same time. The people who listened to Jesus on the day He spoke these words were mainly *poor* people. It is not only the rich who serve money (See I Timothy 6:1-10). The poor who surrender their lives to going after money are among the many who *love* it and *serve* it. The key to serving God freely is also the key to making money your servant (and not your master). It is the principle of the “*single*” eye. See it here.

- A. Wisdom calls for concentrating on earning heavenly rather than earthly wealth (vs. 19-21).
- B. The light of your life is your “*eye*” (v. 22).
- C. If your “*eye be single*,” your life is illuminated (v. 22).
- D. If your “*eye be evil*,” your life is darkened (v. 23).
- E. You cannot serve “*two masters*.” The eye of your life must be focused on God alone for your life to be full of light (v. 24).

The focus of his life has much to do with how a Christian does financially. It even affects his prayers.

“*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*” (James 4:3)

God isn’t going to bless the believer who has an evil eye in the same way He blesses the one with a single eye to serve Him.

III. The Principle of Kingdom Priorities (vs. 25-34).

This last part of Chapter 6 tells us not to worry (“*take thought*”—verses 25, 27, 28, 31 and 34), but it is also about our priorities.

“*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” (verse 33)

If we put God first, He will take care of the rest. Do you see how this principle fits with the other two? It is not that God’s kingdom must be the *only* thing on our list; it is that it must be *first*.

- A. Put God and the things of God first in your life.
- B. Stop focusing on your material needs and wants, and start focusing on serving God.
- C. Put the giving part of your income first in your budget.
- D. Seek God first for your needs, in believing prayer.
- E. Be righteous in your handling of money. Put God first in this, too. Pay your bills or level with your creditors. Buy only what God directs and enables you to buy (Beware of debt).