



Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees

Stewardship Learning Community

Living in God's Economy

Money Gets in the Way

Opening Prayer

Scripture Read **Luke 18:18-29** In *Jesus, Money, and Me*, Ron L. Jones titles his commentary on this passage, "The Man Whose Money Made Him Sad." How can money, especially a lot of it, make someone sad?

Introduction

"...from its earliest days, the church saw money as neither good nor bad, but as a gift from God that could daily provide for one's own needs and regularly meet the needs of others...Money in itself is neither righteous nor evil – it is morally neutral," writes John MacArthur in *Whose Money Is It Anyway?*

"Money is a dangerous commodity. Not neutral. Dangerous. Those who crave it, those who hoard it, and those who put their faith in it place their spiritual life in jeopardy and set themselves up for disappointment and disaster," writes Bob Hostetler in *American Idols*.

- With which of the above quotes do you most agree?
- Why?

Read the following quote from the First Commandment in *The Large Catechism*,

"Many a person thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and possessions. He trusts in them and boasts about them with such firmness and assurance as to care for no one. Such a person has a god by the name of 'Mammon,' on which he sets all his heart. This is the most common idol on earth. He who has money and possessions feels secure and is joyful and undismayed as though he were sitting in the midst of Paradise. On the other hand, he who has no money doubts and is despondent, as though he knew of no God. For very few people can be found who are of good cheer and who neither mourn nor complain if they lack Mammon. This care and desire for money sticks and clings to our nature, right up to the grave."

- What does **Matthew 6:24** have to say about divided trust?
- What do people gain when they spend all their time and energy working for possessions and wealth? (See **Luke 12:16-21**)



A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

Gracious God,
You have much to say in Your Word
about money and possessions.

Guard me from the temptation to
put Your gifts above You and
forgive me where I have failed.

You graciously and generously give
us money and possessions to care
for our own needs, but also to care
for the needs of others.

Keep my eyes focused on You, the
author and perfecter of my faith,
so that I might use money and
possessions as You desire.

In Jesus Name,
Amen.

A Closer Look At The Story of the Rich Young Ruler

Read the story of the Rich Young Ruler in **Matthew 19:16-26** and in **Mark 10:17-27**.

- What is known about the man who came to Jesus? (See **Luke 18:1, 21, 23** and **Mark 10:17**.)
- Why would this man be the envy of many today?
- What is implied in the question the man asks? (“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”)
- Why does Jesus answer as he does in **Luke 18:19**?
- What was the attitude of the man toward the commandments?
- What was the “one thing” the man lacked?
- Which commandment had he broken and how did he break it?
- Why did he go away sorrowful?
- Why is it so difficult for someone with wealth to enter the kingdom of God?
- What point does Jesus make concerning this man to His disciples?
- What point can we take from this story?
- How might Jesus’ response to the man’s question apply to my life?

What are some ways money can get in the way according to the following passages?

Matthew 6:22-23
Luke 12:15
Matthew 6:24
1 Timothy 6:9-10

Mark 13:22
Proverbs 19:4-6
Ecclesiastes 5:11-12
Deuteronomy 8:17

What are some ways Christians can keep money from getting between God and them?

Deuteronomy 11:18-21.

In session one of the Stewardship Learning Community the follow quote from Craig Blomberg was cited “I have discovered that many Christians today are not willfully choosing to be disobedient to the Scriptures in the area of financial stewardship. They are merely unaware of the Bible’s teaching on the topic” (*Neither Poverty nor Riches*, page 9).

What are some concrete things that can be done to help all members of our congregation understand and live out what Scripture says about money?

Closing Prayer

Provide time at the end of each session for questions, comments and group prayer. The prayer can take one of the following forms or be done in a way the group decides.

Adoration...
Confession...
Thanksgiving...
Supplication...

Praise...
Remember...
Ask...
Yield...



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