

always be freewill offerings, not compulsory payments. They should be given gladly by the members, and not begged from those who are not members.

6. Faithfulness

A true Christian must be absolutely faithful and trustworthy in money matters. Only to such men will Jesus entrust the “true riches”, that is, everlasting life in God’s Kingdom (Luke 16:11). If a payment is due to someone else, the true disciple will make that payment promptly, and will not conveniently ‘forget’. In regard to debts, the ideal is: “Owe no man anything” (Romans 13:8). The Christian will remember that failure to repay what is owed (unless hard poverty makes it impossible) is considered by God as robbery. A servant or employee is not to “purloin” his employer’s things—that is, take for his own use, without permission (Titus 2:10). It is often by a right attitude to money, both our own and other people’s, that we show how faithful to Christ we really are. It was the mishandling of money that led to the downfall of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).

7. A Wonderful Example

When the Lord Jesus wanted to show us a supreme example of how to use money to God’s glory, whom did he choose? A millionaire spending huge sums to provide schools and hospitals and libraries? No, a poor widow who gave 2 mites (the smallest coins) as a freewill offering: so small, yet how great—greater than all the other offerings, for it was all that she had.

She is a great example to us of someone with the right priorities in her life. She knew that service to God was far more important than worldly wealth.



The Root of all Evil

BIBLE ADVICE ABOUT MONEY

When you have read this leaflet you will know the answers to these questions:

1. What is the root of all evil?
2. What is a worldly attitude to money?
3. What should be the Christian’s attitude to money?

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1. Money can be Good or Bad

“Money is the root of all evil”—many people think that this is Bible teaching. But they are wrong! Look up the quotation from 1 Timothy 6:10. This says that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil”. Jesus told us a similar thing: “The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word” (Matthew 13:22).

In itself money is not a bad thing. Without it modern life would not be possible. It is money that pays for food and shelter, for clothes and education. Money can help the sick and support the aged. However, money can also do many evil things. It can give a person power over others, making them proud and cruel. It can become a terrible master, making people discontented with what they have, and eager to grasp more of this world's perishable treasures. Money becomes a great evil when it is used wrongly.

2. The Worldly Attitude to Money

The worldly person has one aim: to get more money and the things money can buy, in the quickest and easiest way possible. This constant lusting after money and worldly things Jesus calls "covetousness"—a word which means 'eagerness to get more'. Gambling, sweepstakes, raffles, avoiding income tax, giving short change, workers deceiving employers and stealing—all these are examples of covetousness. These evils are very common because unconverted men and women are naturally selfish.

A person who wants to be Godly and contented will resist this desire for worldly things. Jesus said, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses" (Luke 12:15). There are many people who possess fine houses, motor-cars and many attractive things, and yet they are inwardly sick and without that true joy and contentment which Paul says are "great gain". He also says that covetousness is idolatry

(Colossians 3:5). He means that the worldly man makes a god of the things he possesses, or wants to possess, and forgets the one true God.

3. Pride

Money is often used—or rather, misused—by people who want to impress others with their own importance. This is a dangerous form of pride. Some people spend far more than they ought to spend (more than they can afford to spend) on belongings just to show off. They get seriously into debt because they are not content with simpler, humbler things which they can afford. So they are never in a position to help others with their money. Just to show off, such people "fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Timothy 6:9).

4. The Christian Attitude to Money

Money which a Christian possesses should be the result of honest labour. The Bible has not one good word for men and women who try to live off other people, or the Church, when they are capable of providing for themselves. "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Paul writes very sternly to the person who is idle and a busybody. Such a man must learn to "labour, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need" (Ephesians 4:28). The life of Paul is also a witness against those who live off others in the name of religion. Although he was an apostle, he worked hard with his hands as a tentmaker, so that he did not

become a burden on those to whom he preached.

Money should first be used to provide food and other necessities for the family, and where necessary for the children's schooling, and not on luxuries. Some children have to go hungry because their father spends too much on drink and tobacco, or because their mother spends on expensive clothes and hair setting. Such people sin against God.

5. Giving to God

The Jews of Old Testament days gave a tenth of their income for the temple service. This was a kind of income tax to pay the wages of teachers, judges and other necessary people. But over and above this, Godly Jews gladly offered "freewill offerings" when they went to worship. "They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which he has given you" (Deuteronomy 16:16,17).

This freewill offering is held up as an example to Christians. Paul urges each believer to set something aside for the service of God, according "as God has prospered him" (1 Corinthians 16:2). On the first day of the week the members of the ecclesia met together to "break bread" (Acts 20:7). It was then that they took up these offerings. This formed a very important part of the communion service. To give like this is one very small way of expressing our thanks to God for His great gift of forgiveness and salvation through Christ. The community cannot work without funds, but these should