

## MONEY AND FINANCES

Money and our management of it is covered broadly in the Bible in both Testaments. The Israelites had many commandments in the Law about money and finances under their covenant with God (Old Testament). In the covenant of grace through Jesus Christ (New Testament), we discover that many of the financial principles established for the Israelites carry forward to us as guidelines for being good stewards of all that God has given us. Jesus spoke about money and finances, as did Paul and others who wrote letters to Christians in the first century. This article highlights many biblical guidelines and points to many other resources on this extensive subject.

### Stewardship of God's Resources

When it comes to money and finances, the key matter is **stewardship of resources**, the resources God has given freely to the human family. Regardless of whether you believe you have many or few resources, God expects you to be a good steward or manager of them.

God has given us extensive resources and they fall under two broad categories – **spiritual** and **material**. Spiritual resources are embraced by faith and include eternal life in Jesus Christ, the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22**), gifts of the Spirit (**1 Corinthians 12:1-11**), and many others. Material resources are the focus of this article and include stewardship of money, property, and other tangible resources. Whether spiritual or material, we are to wisely use the resources we have with God's guidance and blessing.

To be a good steward of the resources you have, it is important to first understand that God created all things and made them possible for you. **God is the Source** of all that you possess and enjoy. Each of us should praise God and extend constant thankfulness for all of our provisions. Understanding God as the source sets the stage for us to manage them.

Expectation of stewardship is found early in the Bible where it says, **"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15).**

God's expectation of stewardship continued when animals were created, and Adam was asked to name them (**Genesis 2:19-20**). Still further, God told Adam and Eve to have **dominion or rule over** all the resources He had provided (**Genesis 1:27-30**). That expectation extends to all of us today. We are to have dominion over them, not vice versa.

## Money

The initial resources of the earth did not include money. They were tangible blessings of plants and animals created by God for the use and sustenance of humanity. As those resources were used and expanded into more complex resources (tools, implements, homes, etc.) and, as humans spread out to different parts of the world, their cultures created currencies (money) as a means for buying, selling, and exchanging resources.

Though we are to be stewards of non-currency items (real estate, homes, furniture, and much more), money has become the primary vehicle in the use of our resources. When persons are asked about their net worth, they usually ponder how much *money* they possess. A major challenge for Christians arises when focus is on money.

In Paul's letter to Timothy, we find a key understanding about money, "**Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows**" (**1 Timothy 6:6-10, KJV**).

Money is not evil; it is but *one* of the many resources made possible by God. It is the love of money that is at the root of much of the sinfulness in human lives and has led many away from their walk with God. View money as a resource from God, made available to you while you're here on earth, then manage it wisely. The Bible shares many suggestions for doing that.

## Financial Management

The list of financial management issues we face in life is lengthy and the Bible speaks to many of them directly or indirectly. We will not cover them all here; we will briefly share the essentials about these important issues:

## Budgeting

Budgets are financial plans about projected income and expenses for a given period. Governments have budgets but struggle to adhere to them. Corporations and smaller businesses establish budgets and usually manage to them as they have an obligation for a return on investment to shareholders or themselves to make a profit and/or earn a living. Without a budget, these entities have no idea whether they can possibly succeed or fail financially. The same is true for individuals and families.

Saying this does not negate faith in God; it is good stewardship.

Many do not budget and do not know whether they are succeeding or failing financially. They do not know whether they are spending more than they are taking in until they run out of cash, the checking account goes to zero, or they are deep in credit card or other debt. This matters because those who do not manage their money well may not be taking care of themselves or their families (**1 Timothy 5:8**), they may have nothing to share with others in need (**Leviticus 23:22, Deut. 14:28-29, Proverbs 28:27; Acts 11:27-30; 20:35; Romans 15:26**), and they are not honoring God. Good stewardship is God's intent for the human family.

The Bible makes references to the need for being prudent with finances. Though the word *budget* does not necessarily appear in those passages, it is implied. These passages suggest proper financial planning, good investments, and wise stewardship: **Proverbs 3:9-10, 27:18; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 16:1-12** and **Matthew 6:19-21**.

It should be noted that many in the world are extremely poor and not in a position to do budgeting. They have nothing to budget. They are just trying to survive day to day. They should be seeking support and many, especially in the Body of Christ, should extend support to them, so they can not only survive but ultimately support themselves and exercise good stewardship in the sight of God.

## Debt, Borrowing and Lending

Debt, in a financial sense, is money you owe others. Too much debt occurs when more money is owed than your income can possibly pay back. Some levels of debt in personal and family finances are acceptable when planned and managed properly, including home mortgages, car loans, student loans, or others.

Unfortunately, many have borrowed excessively and have huge debts to banks, credit card companies and others, some so high that they have little choice but to file for bankruptcy to ease the financial devastation. In many cases, this is the only prudent recourse to insurmountable debt, but a much better path is to avoid unmanageable or any debt altogether.

Scripture has some verses on debt and borrowing, many from the wisdom books of the Bible. These passages do not say that debt and borrowing are sin, but they provide guidance on managing them:

Avoid debt if possible (**Proverbs 22:26**).

Strive to pay off your debts (**2 Kings 4:7; Ecclesiastes 5:5; Romans 4:4**).

Release people from debt; do not enslave them (**Deut. 15:31; Neh. 10:31**).

The Bible speaks mostly to how we should handle or respond to debt. Those with debt find themselves enslaved to the lender and, if possible, should avoid it. Those who lend, especially personal loans, are directed not to be masters of those who have borrowed from them, but to forgive their debts.

One final comment on debts. The overarching use of the word *debt* in the Bible relates to sin and spiritual matters. As God has graciously and mercifully forgiven us, so we should forgive others of trespasses or sins they have committed against us (**Matthew 6:12**).

## Taxes

Taxes have been levied on populations by governments as a source of revenue for much of recorded history. Taxes are highly unpopular and many rebel against paying them. Jesus said this about paying taxes, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s” (see the whole passage in **Matthew 22:17-22**). The point Jesus made that was amplified later by the apostle Paul is “Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor” (**Romans 13:7**).

Respect governmental authorities in your life by paying your taxes (**Romans 13:1**) AND pay what you owe others, especially respect and honor. We can never repay the tremendous debt we owe God for taking away our sin through Jesus

on the Cross. Jesus paid our sin debt in full (**Colossians 2:13-15**). But what we can pay or extend is our respect, honor, adoration, praise, glory, worship, and much more to God now and for all eternity, for who He is and what He has done. The surrender of our lives to serve and glorify Him is what God expects of us sacrificially and whole-heartedly.

### Bankruptcy

As we have stated, if we owe debts, we should persist and pay them off if at all possible (**2 Kings 4:7; Ecclesiastes 5:5; Romans 4:4**). If we cannot pay them and the debt is insurmountable, it is wise to pray to God for wisdom (**James 1:5**) and seek relief under bankruptcy laws, since many laws pertaining to bankruptcy are based in scriptural guidance. Financial miracles happen and many have unshackled themselves from burdensome debt by seeking the Lord and following Godly principles.

### Giving

Most think of *money* when they hear the word giving. Actually, we can give **ourselves** to God more fully, as well as give or share our **time, talents, and treasure**, including money. Whatever you give, “. . . **you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver**” (**2 Corinthians 9:7**). If you give reluctantly out of obligation, you are giving with the wrong motivation. If you give freely and cheerfully from a generous heart unto the Lord, you will be most blessed.

Tithing or the giving of 10% of what you earn was a commandment in The Law in the Old Covenant for the Israelites. Many Christians today still give 10% or more, though the requirement to do so is debated. You are encouraged to read the article on **tithing** found in the resource list below.

Other items and articles about **giving** can be found on the **Forward, Grow** and **Resources** pages of this website.

### Closing Thoughts

Money, as with all resources that God provides, is a gift to be used wisely – to sustain our lives, to share with others in need, and to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to a needy world. When we do, God is glorified.

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This is an introduction on the subject of *Money and Finances*. Many fine resources exist to guide Christians in stewardship. Below is a list of other resources you may wish to explore.

## Written Works

Dave Ramsey, *Money Matters*

Dave Ramsey, *The Total Money Makeover*

Larry Burkett, *How to Manage Your Money*

Scott LaPierre, *Your Finances God's Way*

Jim Newhauser, *Money, Debt, and Finances*

Tim Maurer, *Simply Money*

## Websites

[What is biblical stewardship? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[The Christian and Money — Article Index | GotQuestions.org](#)

[A Proven Plan for Financial Success | RamseySolutions.com](#)

[What Does the Bible Say About Money? \(openbible.info\)](#)

[50 Top Bible Verses about Money, Finances and Giving - Scripture Quotes \(biblestudytools.com\)](#)

[Money and the Bible | Christian History | Christianity Today](#)

[What does the Bible say about handling money in a marriage? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[What does the Bible say about budgeting? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[What does the Bible say about paying taxes? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[What does the Bible say about managing your finances? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[What Does the Bible Say about Lending and Borrowing? \(crosswalk.com\)](#)

[What does the Bible say about lending money? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[What Does the Bible Say About Bankruptcy? \(christian-attorney.net\)](#)

[Should a Christian declare bankruptcy? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[25 Bible Verses about Giving - DailyVerses.net](#)

[Why is giving so emphasized in the Christian faith? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[What does the Bible say about Christian tithing? Should a Christian tithe? | GotQuestions.org](#)

[Wealth-and-Poverty.pdf \(sourceoftruelife.com\)](#)