

God's Purposes for Money

Proverbs 3:9

As I have mentioned before, the way that we handle our money is perhaps the truest indicator of the spiritual condition of the heart. It is often a subject that many feel awkward discussing, God's Word places great emphasis on the matter of money and possessions.

For example, the Bible contains more than 500 references to prayer and almost 500 references to faith, but there are more than 2,000 references to money and possessions. Out of 38 parables that Jesus gave in the Gospels, 16 deal with how we handle our money. Jesus said more about money and possessions than about heaven and hell combined. One out of every 10 verses in the gospels deals with money or possessions: 288 verses in the four gospels!

A man with a natural mind uses human reasoning before he decides to obey God's Word. A man with a spiritual mind begins by obeying a Scriptural command. The man with a natural mind resorts to his own understanding and experiences the destruction and disillusionment that go along with it. It is important that we understand God's purposes for money and His wisdom behind those purposes.

There are four basic purposes that God has for money. To provide basic needs, to indicate direction, to unite Christians, and to demonstrate supernatural power. We see these four purposes in the account of Elijah in 1 Kings 17:1-6. READ!

- Elijah's needs were met beside the brook.
- God demonstrated supernatural power in using the ravens to feed him.
- God allowed the brook to dry up as a signal for Elijah to change direction.
- He then used the widow of Zarephath to accomplish His purpose of uniting believers together and seeing the rewards of thanksgiving and fellowship which come by meeting the needs of others.

The purposes of money are not to provide security, establish independence, or create power and influence. God's purposes are:

I. To Provide Basic Needs. Mt. 6:26-30

A. This establishes daily dependence upon God.

1. Since the beginning of time, mankind has attempted to become independent of God.
2. There is within each one of us a desire to be self-sufficient so that we can be our own boss.

3. We tend to pray, "Give us riches for our future needs" or "Give us this month our monthly paycheck".

4. However, God taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt. 6:11).

5. He knows that daily needs produce daily dependence.

B. This will deepen our love for the Lord.

1. When we fail to recognize our need for a person, we tend to lose our love for that person.

2. God created us to need Him...we are only complete in Christ, and apart from Him we can do nothing at all.

3. Every man, whether rich or poor, must recognize his daily dependence upon God.

C. This will develop a spirit of gratefulness.

1. Gratefulness is a delightful by-product of contentment with what God provides.

2. We begin to lose our contentment when we compare what we have with what others have.

3. As our expectations increase, our contentment decreases.

D. This will help us enjoy our possessions.

1. We know that God has given us all things to enjoy.

2. A contented person feels wealthy because he knows that he already possesses more than he needs for daily living.

3. Discontent destroys our ability to enjoy the things that God has given to us, since our focus is on what we think He should have given us rather than what we do have.

4. God warns us against covetousness and tells us to "...be content with such things as ye have..." Hebrews 13:5

II. To Confirm Direction. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him..." Ps. 37:7

NOTE: God will use the supply of money or the lack of it to confirm His direction for many of the decisions we must make in our lives.

A. To build our faith and vision.

1. Faith is discerning what God wants to accomplish in and through our lives. cf Hebrews 11:7
2. Everyone of us should ask ourselves what can we allow God to accomplish through our lives that will build up Christians and benefit the cause of Christ?
3. We can be sure that if God gives us clear direction that is confirmed by Scripture, He will provide whatever is necessary to carry out that direction.
4. In contrast to faith, presumption is deciding what we want to accomplish and trying to get God to do it for us.

B. To determine who is the lord of our life.

1. We may say that Jesus Christ is the Lord of our life...
2. However, His Lordship is confirmed when we are obedient to the leading of the Spirit and the principles of His Word in making our daily decisions.

C. To teach us patience.

1. Patience is an essential quality for maturity in life.
2. Having to wait for God to provide funds is one valuable way to perfect patience.
3. Note: James 1:3-4

III. To Give To Christians. "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality." Ro. 12:13

A. To unite Christians.

1. Jews and Gentiles had no social interaction.
 - a. this carried over into the early church which was made up of both Jew and Gentile.
 - b. when a severe famine caused many Jewish believers to suffer, Paul urged every Gentile church to collect an offering for these Jewish Christians.

2. Note: 2 Co. 8:14

B. To demonstrate the mark of a Christian.

1. The mark of a true Christian is that they want to do good. cf Titus 2:14.
2. God gives a special desire and power to a generous Christian so that he is able to

multiply his good works. cf. 2 Co. 9:8

C. To multiply the potential for giving.

1. God likens giving to planting a harvest.
2. 2Co. 9:6, "...He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."
3. The Law of the Harvest = one kernel of corn planted produces a stalk with 2-3 ears of corn resulting in as much as a 1000 kernels of corn.

IV. To Illustrate God's Power.

Malachi 3:10, "...Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

God is a supernatural God. He wants to demonstrate His reality and power to both Christians and non-Christians. One means by which He has chosen to do this is through the miraculous provision of money.

A. To cause Christians to trust Him.

1. Elijah proposed a test to prove whether Israel should worship God or Baal in 1 Kings 18.
2. Whichever one answered by supernatural power was the one whom they should worship.
3. In this test not only was God shown to be the supernatural God that He is, but the false god Baal was mocked for his inability to supply.
4. God is still mocking the powerless gods of today.

B. To purify our lives and motives.

1. A prerequisite in experiencing God's supernatural power is actively seeking Him with a pure heart and unselfish motives.
2. God has warned us that if we regard iniquity in our hearts, He will not hear us. cf Ps. 66:18
3. The need for God's miraculous intervention in our financial affairs is a powerful motivation for us to examine our own lives.

C. To glorify God and bring the lost to salvation.

1. God is glorified when His people praise Him for His mighty acts.
2. He does great things for us so that we can report them to others. cf. Ps. 50:15
3. When Christians are in a right relationship with the Lord and each other, and when they are experiencing God's miraculous provision in their lives, the lost are drawn to Christ and to the local church.
4. The greatest explosion of church growth occurred when the believers demonstrated the supernatural power of God in their lives. cf. Ac. 5:12-14

Conclusion: Four basic purposes that God has for money:

- To provide our needs
- To indicate direction for our lives
- To unite believers together in giving and
- To demonstrate His supernatural power to us and the world.

Does our understanding and desire of money fall into line with God's purposes? Not for future security, power, influence, or to be seen as a success in the eyes of men. Is our use of money fulfilling God's purposes or ours? Do we need to re-evaluate our priorities when it comes to finances?