

## { *Sharing with others* }

The Bible consistently calls on people to share their wealth with any who are in need. This sharing became a core value in the early Christian church, where people even sold property and possessions so that others would not be in need.

Some of us have more money than others. This is part of how God has chosen to supply the needs of all people. Christians are aware of the great needs around the world, and are compelled to do something to relieve the poverty of others.

Paul writes, "Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality" (2 Cor. 8:13).

## { *Should I give it all away?* }

Is God asking each of us to sell all our possessions and give all our wealth to aid the poor? Some may be called to do just that, but the Bible does not instruct all of us to sell all our possessions. At the same time, most Christians in the United States would have to give much more than we do now to achieve anything close to equality. We know we need to change our habits with money, to be content with enough and share more. But the goal seems so unachievable that we may give up before we even start.

An honorable and realistic response is to follow Christ more closely today than we did yesterday. We need to strive daily to be more content with enough, more trusting that God will provide our needs and more willing to share more with others who are in need. Transformation takes time, but if we are continually being transformed into the image of Christ, then how we use our money will demonstrate God's transforming power.

## { *Rewards of healthy financial living* }

As we follow the Lord more closely in our dealing with money, our anxiety about the future will give way to trust in God's provision. Our struggle with the desire for more and more will give way to a joy that comes from sharing with others as a part of God's provision for their needs. As we allow Jesus to be Lord in this part of our lives, we will experience what God defines as the abundant life.

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# Faith & Life

Pamphlet Series

## Dealing With Money



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**D**oes being a follower of Jesus include dealing well with money? Even though most Americans are relatively wealthy, our thoughts of money are usually dominated by anxious concerns about our own future and occasional guilt about the local and global poverty around us.

Jesus spoke often about money not only because he wanted us to be free from anxiety and guilt, but because our money issues often grow out of our unwillingness to trust and submit. Jesus pointed out a conflict between our tendency to seek more money and our need to serve Christ as Lord: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money" (Matt. 6:24).

### { **What God has given us** }

It is important to understand that our money does not belong to us but to God. We are asked to manage and use it for God's purposes. This idea is called "stewardship" and begins at Creation. God places humans in a garden that will supply all their needs, instructing them to "work it and take care



### { **The idea of "enough"** }

Even though many of us already have more than we need, we still pursue greater and greater wealth. Jesus offers a radical alternative—the idea of enough. "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ... Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:31-33). The challenge is to trust God to give us enough.

Paul's statement, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me," is in the context of being satisfied with enough. Paul writes, "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:11-13). This "secret" is that by being in relationship with Christ we can be content with enough, freed from the tyranny of always wanting more. This can also enable us to live within our means and release us from the grip of excessive debt. This freedom makes it possible to invest generously for God's purposes.

of it" (Gen. 2:15). There is no sense of "owning" the garden—they are to tend it and live from its produce.

Jesus tells a story (Matt. 25) in which a man is about to go on a journey, so he entrusts his money to his servants. To each servant who used the money well for the master's benefit, the master says, "Well done, good and faithful servant." The one who does not use the money for the master's benefit is called a wicked, lazy servant.

Regardless of how much money we have, God clearly expects us to use it in ways that serve his purposes. This is our first principle of dealing well with money. Wealth, money, property and possessions are not primarily for our benefit; they are entrusted to us so that we can invest them for God's purposes.



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**