

CAN WE USE WORLDLY WEALTH?

The Parable of the Unjust Steward: Man and Money, [Luke 16:1-13](#)

[\(Luke 16:1-13\)](#) **Introduction— Unjust Steward**: this passage is looked upon as one of the most difficult passages in all of Scripture to understand.

Loving money is destructive ([1 Timothy 6:9](#)), numbering among its victims Achan ([Joshua 7:1-25](#)), Balaam ([Numbers 22-24](#)), Judas ([Matthew 26:24](#); [Acts 1:25](#)), and Ananias and Saphira ([Acts 5:1-10](#)).

Loving money leads to a lack of trust in God ([Job 31:24-28](#); [Proverbs 11:28](#); [1 Timothy 6:17](#)),

[Job 31:24-28 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴“If I have put my confidence *in* gold, And called fine gold my trust,

²⁵ If I have gloated because my wealth was great, And because my hand had secured *so* much;

²⁶ If I have looked at the sun when it shone Or the moon going in splendor,

²⁷ And my heart became secretly enticed, And my hand threw a kiss from my mouth,

²⁸ That too would have been an iniquity *calling for* judgment, For I would have denied God above.”

[Proverbs 11:28 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁸“He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like the *green* leaf.”

[1 Timothy 6:17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”

Loving money results in ungratefulness and pride ([Deuteronomy 8:12-17](#)),

[Deuteronomy 8:12-17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹²“Otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived *in them*,

¹³ and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies,

¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

¹⁵ He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, *with its* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint.

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

¹⁶ In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.

¹⁷ Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.'

Loving money causes people to behave foolishly ([Luke 12:16-21](#)),

[Luke 12:16-21 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶ "And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive."

¹⁷ "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?'

¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.'

¹⁹ 'And I will say to my soul,' 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years *to come*; take your ease, eat, drink *and* be merry.'

²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This *very* night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?'

²¹ "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Loving money cause people to rob God ([Malachi 3:8](#)),

[Malachi 3:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings."

Loving money cause people to be indifferent to the needs of others ([1 John 3:17](#)).

[1 John 3:17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷ "But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

The Bible also establishes the proper use of money. People are to earn it to support themselves ([2 Thessalonians 3:10-12](#)),

[2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁰ "For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

¹¹ For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

¹² Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread."

People are to earn it to support their families ([1 Timothy 5:8](#)),

[1 Timothy 5:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

And people are to earn it to support their nation ([Romans 13:6-7](#)),

[Romans 13:6-7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶“For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.

⁷Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”

People are to earn it to help people in need ([Matthew 6:2-3](#); [James 2:15-16](#)).

[Matthew 6:2-3 \(NASB\)](#)

²“So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

³But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.”

[James 2:15-16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵“If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that?”

Above and beyond those things, there are some necessary biblical prerequisites to giving to kingdom purposes.

First, those who would truly honor God in giving must transfer ownership of their money, possessions, time, and talents to Him.

Second, they must make exalting Christ and proclaiming the gospel the supreme purpose of their lives.

Finally, they must put themselves in a position to use their money to honor God by taking steps to get out of debt (paying bills, prioritizing spending, eliminating nonessential spending, selling items that perpetuate debt, refusing to borrow money for luxuries, pursuing contentment, etc.).

Several principles mark New Testament giving. First, Christian giving is entirely voluntary (cf. [2 Corinthians 9:7](#)).

[2 Corinthians 9:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷“Each one *must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*”

The argument that Christians are biblically mandated to tithe ten percent of their income is based on a flawed understanding of the Old Testament.

Far from being legalistic, giving is to be willing, joyful, eager, enthusiastic, and from the heart.

It is also to be secret, unlike the showy public giving of legalists and hypocrites ([Matthew 6:2-4](#)),

[Matthew 6:2-4 \(NASB\)](#)

²“So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

³But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

your right hand is doing,

⁴so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done in secret* will reward you.”

Giving should be regular and systematic ([1 Corinthians 16:1-2](#)),

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (NASB)

¹“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.

²On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.”

And finally giving should be motivated by love, not legalistic compulsion ([2 Corinthians 8:8](#)).

2 Corinthians 8:8 (NASB)

⁸“I am not speaking *this* as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.”

Many people have a mind-set that “**business is business**” and “**church is church.**” They separate the two almost completely in their minds and sometimes in the way they act. They have differing attitudes toward money and toward worship. It may come as quite a jolt to your thinking to face the reality of God’s Word: God doesn’t separate your business life from your spiritual life. The two are vitally and intricately connected.

Again, we go back to our understanding of prosperity. You simply cannot be prosperous if you are succeeding, growing, and bearing fruit in only one area of your life. Prosperity has to do with all your life. In a very practical way, God is just as concerned about your finances and your ability to meet your physical and material needs as He is with your spiritual growth and development.

Many people have been taught—incorrectly, I hasten to add—to think of money as being filthy lucre. They view finance and business as unspiritual matters, and certainly not anything that could ever be considered holy. They regard money and financial principles as subjects that should be outside the domain of the church.

Let me assure you, God doesn’t see money as filthy. Money itself is neutral in His eyes. It is what we do with our money that counts before God. His desire is that our financial life become sanctified, which means that we deal with our finances in purity, governed by right motives, and in ways that are wholly acceptable to God.

Furthermore, if church leaders had taught people through the years more about good financial stewardship based on principles in God’s Word, many people would have been spared heartache and sorrow.

As a pastor, I have talked to or corresponded with thousands of people over the years who have shared with me their problems and difficulties. A very large percentage of the problems have been rooted in financial difficulty, have been compounded by financial difficulty, or have resulted in financial difficulty.

Many people who have marital difficulties readily admit that their difficulties involve money. Others are heartbroken that they aren’t prepared for retirement, unexpected illness, or major financial expenditures—such as helping a child with college—because they have never learned to manage their money according to God’s principles. Still others are frustrated that they seem to be unable to do the ministry work that God has called them to do because they don’t have the resources to meet their needs or the needs of their

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Pastor Eddie Idefonso

ministries—again, because they aren't living according to God's principles of sound financial stewardship.

One thing I know about financial difficulties—they affect all other areas of a person's life. You cannot have a major problem or crisis involving money and not experience some degree of difficulty, doubt, or frustration in your mind, emotions, and relationships, including your relationship with God.

It is a good, right, and scriptural undertaking to talk about money and to discover what God has to say about its acquisition and use. It is good for you, and it is good for the church as a whole, to know God's will for the material life.