

BIBLICAL ECONOMICS INTRODUCTION

THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL INTEGRITY, [2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15](#)

The Biblical View of Money

We remember, of course, the spiritual conversion of the Ephesian occultists recorded in [Acts 19](#). And immediately upon their repentance and their conversion, they demonstrated their transformation by a willingness to burn their magical books which were worth a veritable fortune. You remember it indicates there they were worth 50,000 days' wages.

[Acts 19:11-20 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹ “God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,
¹² so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.

¹³ But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, “I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.”

¹⁴ Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said to them, “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”

¹⁶ And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

¹⁷ This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified.

¹⁸ Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices.

¹⁹ **And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.**

²⁰ So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.”

And you can also see in the first few chapters of [Acts, chapter 2](#), particularly, and [chapter 4](#), that the early church manifested its transformation by a willingness to sell their property and make sure there was money for everybody who had need.

[Acts 2:41-47 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴¹ “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

⁴³ Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

⁴⁴ And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;

⁴⁵ **and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.**

⁴⁶ Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Acts 4:32-35 (NASB)

³² “And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of *them* claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.

³³ And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.

³⁴ For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales

³⁵ and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.”

What you do with money has a whole lot to do with demonstrating your spiritual condition. The saints in the early church were willing to liquidate and disperse cheerfully all their assets that they had spent a lifetime accumulating, something they wouldn't have thought of doing before their salvation, but something they were eager to do upon that salvation.

Jesus has more to say about this matter of money. In particular, He talked in [Luke 12](#) about a rich man. And now we don't know how this man got rich, but we don't have to assume that he made his living dishonestly, not at all. There's no reason to assume that he was exploiting people or anything like that. He probably attended the synagogue weekly. He probably was like a lot of other businessmen, just going about doing his business. Maybe visited the temple three times a year at the appropriate celebrations and tithed and prayed as most Jews did on a daily formula, at certain periods in the daytime.

Luke 12:13-21 (NASB)

¹³ “Someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the *family* inheritance with me.”

14 But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?”

15 Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not *even* when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”

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.”

He had every appearance of a man who worked diligently to build his business. That’s all. He’s just a “Mr. Businessman.” And he’s just doing what Mr. Businessman does. And he gets to a point in his business where, like any good businessman, he wants to expand his business. So he says, “I’m going to tear down my barns and build bigger barns,” which is no different than saying, “My warehouse is too small. I can’t contain in my warehouse all my inventory,” or “My office is too small; I’ve got too many sales people in here crowded into this small deal. I need new space.”

I need a new fleet of trucks to carry off whatever I’m going to do. I need to hire new salesmen; I need to open an office in another city. And all of that is just part of the normal expanse of business. Now why did he do this? So that someday he might be able to say to himself, “Sit down, eat, drink, and be merry.”

Now is there anything wrong with that? Nothing wrong with eating. Some of you are living proof that it’s a pleasurable thing. There’s really nothing wrong with eating something, nothing wrong with drinking something, nothing wrong with being happy. I hope you’re happy and the Lord hopes you’re happy, and I hope your life is filled with joy and I hope that all the things that God has put in this marvelous creation richly for us to enjoy, you’re enjoying. There isn’t anything wrong with eating.

There’s nothing wrong with...what is he talking about? He’s talking about retirement, that’s all he’s talking about. “All I want to do is get to the place where I don’t have to run this deal.” I understand that, everybody understands that. It’s a lot of responsibility to run a business. “I just need to expand my business. That way it will be more productive. I’ll make more income and I can set that aside and retire earlier.” Hey, that’s

the American dream, right out of [Luke 12](#). That's it. Accumulate enough wealth to retire early, enjoy yourself and have a good time. That's what he wanted to do.

What did God say to the man? **"You fool."** Why did He say that? Are you a fool to build your business? No. He said, **"You fool, this very night your life will be demanded from you."** You fool, you're going to die, He says.

Luke 12:20-21 (NASB)

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."**

The problem with you is you've taken care of life here, but you haven't done anything to take care of life there and you're going there tonight. That's the folly. There's no folly in building your business. Oh listen, I pray that all the businesses of all the members of the Church prosper greatly, flourish. I mean, that's a wonderful thing. And we have every right to work hard and to build that business strong or to do all that we can to succeed in that regard.

The problem with the man was he was a fool because he hadn't prepared for the life to come. That was the issue. He was big on preparing for the life here and had no preparation for the life to come. That was the folly of it. And Jesus made that clear in [verse 21](#) of [Luke 12](#). He said this, **"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."**

Luke 12:21 (NASB)

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

He doesn't do anything in terms of dealing with God. He doesn't lay up any spiritual riches. That's the folly of it. Build your business, friend, build it. Build your company. Build your career. Be successful. Do what you need to do. And be rich toward God. Invest in eternity.

On the other hand, in [Mark 12](#), Jesus met a poor widow lady. She didn't have a business. She didn't have anything, really. She had two tiny little copper coins, tiny ones. In fact, I came home from Israel my last trip with a number of these actual widow's mites that they have dug up through archaeology. Wonderful, simple, little, tiny copper coins worth a fraction of a penny. **"This is all she had,"** Jesus said. And she gave it all. She gave it all. She came in to worship the Lord and she gave all of it. She put it in the temple offering box.

Mark 12:41-44 (NASB)

⁴¹ **"And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.**

⁴² **A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.**

⁴³ Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; ⁴⁴ for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.”

And Jesus called His disciples together. And they might have thought He was going to say, “Now see that widow woman, she’s foolish because now she doesn’t have anything.” But He didn’t say that. He didn’t say, “You know, she probably got emotionally carried away because she just felt guilty about her sins and so she thought she ought to just put it all in there.” He didn’t say that either. He never questioned the wisdom of her actions. He never questioned the motive of what she did. In fact, He gave her an unqualified commendation.

He said to the disciples, **“I tell you the truth, gentlemen, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others” (v.43)**. They gave out of their wealth, she gave out of her poverty. She put in everything, all she had to live on. And Jesus regarded that woman as wise and the model for the disciples and for all of us to follow. **Literally, she is enshrined as the all-time example of generosity, commitment, and sacrificial giving.**

And Jesus calls the rich man the fool and the poor woman wise. Better to have everything in heaven and nothing here, then to have everything here and nothing there, right? A study of Zacchaeus, a study of the rich young ruler, the poor widow, the rich fool and a lot of other things that Jesus said **leads you to an understanding that how you deal with money is in fact a litmus test of your spiritual condition**. It is an index to your spiritual life. As one writer says, “It’s your biography.” It tells the story about you.

Now in that account of the poor widow in [Mark 12](#), there’s a most interesting note there at the end of...or near the end of the chapter, [Mark 12, verse 41](#). Listen to what it says. **“Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury.”**

Mark 12:41-44 (NASB)

⁴¹ “And He sat down opposite the treasury, and *began* observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.