

BIBLICAL ECONOMICS

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

Begging to Be a Blessing

[2 Corinthians 8:1-24 \(NASB\)](#)

¹“Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia,

² that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

³ For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord,

⁴ begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,

⁵ and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.”

I HAVE SEVEN KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK OF US:

- 1) What do you want to do with your life?
- 2) How do you want to live?
- 3) What drives you?
- 4) What is the focus, the priority of your life?
- 5) Is the quest of each day to serve yourself, live for yourself, cater to your every whim and desire, or have you found a higher purpose for living?
- 6) Do you want to be a blessing to the Lord and to other people?
- 7) Is it your desire to touch the lives of people with your love, kindness, concern, and Christlikeness?

Loving money makes people forget God ([Deuteronomy 8:11-14](#); [Proverbs 30:9](#)),

[Deuteronomy 8:11-14 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹“Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today;

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.”

Proverbs 30:9 (NASB)

⁹“That I not be full and deny *You* and say, “Who is the LORD?” Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God.”

Trust in their riches rather than Him ([Job 31:24-28](#); [Psalm 52:7](#); [Proverbs 11:28](#)),

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.”

Psalm 52:7 (NASB)

⁷“Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, But trusted in the abundance of his riches *And* was strong in his *evil* desire.”

Proverbs 11:28 (NASB)

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

They are deceived ([Mark 4:19](#)),

Mark 4:19 (NASB)

¹⁹“But the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

They compromise convictions, be proud ([Deuteronomy 8:14](#)),

Deuteronomy 8:14 (NASB)

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.”

They steal from 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.”

And they ignore the needs of others ([1 John 3:17](#); cf. [Proverbs 3:27](#)).

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?”

Proverbs 3:27 (NASB)

27 “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do it.”

The love of money causes people to pursue it illegitimately by stealing (whether directly ([Exodus 20:15](#); [Ephesians 4:28](#)),

Exodus 20:15 (NASB)

15 “You shall not steal.”

Ephesians 4:28 (NASB)

28 “He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.”

The love of money causes people to pursue it illegitimately by fraud ([Psalm 37:21](#); [Hosea 12:7](#); [Amos 8:5](#); [Micah 6:11](#)),

Psalm 37:21 (NASB)

21 “The wicked borrows and does not pay back, But the righteous is gracious and gives.”

Hosea 12:7 (NASB)

7 “A merchant, in whose hands are false balances, He loves to oppress.”

Amos 8:5 (NASB)

5 “Saying, “When will the new moon be over, So that we may sell grain, And the sabbath, that we may open the wheat market, To make the bushel smaller and the shekel bigger, And to cheat with dishonest scales.”

Micah 6:11 (NASB)

11 “Can I justify wicked scales And a bag of deceptive weights?”

The love of money causes people to pursue it illegitimately by usury ([Exodus 22:25](#); [Leviticus 25:36-37](#); [Nehemiah 5:7, 10](#); [Psalm 15:5](#); [Proverbs 28:8](#)), and gambling, which foolishly trusts in chance rather than in the providence of God.

Exodus 22:25 (NASB)

25 “If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest.”

Leviticus 25:36-37 (NASB)

36 “Do not take usurious interest from him, but revere your God, that your countryman may live with you.

37 You shall not give him your silver at interest, nor your food for gain.”

Nehemiah 5:7 (NASB)

7 “I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said to them, “You are exacting usury, each from his brother!” Therefore, I held a great assembly against them.”

Nehemiah 5:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“And likewise I, my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Please, let us leave off this usury.”

Psalm 15:5 (NASB)

⁵“He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.”

Proverbs 28:8 (NASB)

⁸“He who increases his wealth by interest and usury Gathers it for him who is gracious to the poor.”

The Bible lists several acceptable ways to acquire money, including gifts ([Acts 20:35](#); [Philippians 4:16](#)),

Acts 20:35 (NASB)

³⁵“In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Philippians 4:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“For even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than once for my needs.”

Acceptable ways to acquire money, including investments ([Matthew 25:27](#)),

Matthew 25:27 (NASB)

²⁷“Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my *money* back with interest.”

Acceptable ways to acquire money, including saving ([Proverbs 21:20](#); [Proverbs 30:25](#)),

Proverbs 21:20 (NASB)

²⁰“There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man swallows it up.”

Proverbs 30:25 (NASB)

²⁵“The ants are not a strong people, But they prepare their food in the summer.”

Acceptable ways to acquire money, including wise planning ([Proverbs 27:23-24](#)),

Proverbs 27:23-24 (NASB)

²³“Know well the condition of your flocks, *And* pay attention to your herds;

²⁴For riches are not forever, Nor does a crown *endure* to all generations.”

Acceptable ways to acquire money, including primarily, work ([Exodus 20:9](#); [Proverbs 6:6-8](#); [Proverbs 14:23](#); [Proverbs 24:30-34](#); [Proverbs 28:19](#); [Ephesians 4:28](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:10](#); [1 Timothy 5:8](#)).

Exodus 20:9 (NASB)

⁹“Six days you shall labor and do all your work.”

Proverbs 6:6-8 (NASB)

⁶“Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise,

⁷ Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler,

⁸ Prepares her food in the summer *And* gathers her provision in the harvest.”

Proverbs 14:23 (NASB)

²³“In all labor there is profit, But mere talk *leads* only to poverty.”

Proverbs 24:30-34 (NASB)

³⁰“I passed by the field of the sluggard *And* by the vineyard of the man lacking sense,

³¹ *And* behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; Its surface was covered with nettles, *And* its stone wall was broken down.

³² When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, *and* received instruction.

³³“A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest,”

³⁴ Then your poverty will come *as* a robber *And* your want like an armed man.”

Proverbs 28:19 (NASB)

¹⁹“He who tills his land will have plenty of food, But he who follows empty *pursuits* will have poverty in plenty.”

Ephesians 4:28 (NASB)

²⁸“He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need.”

2 Thessalonians 3:10 (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.”

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.”

Those who violate biblical principles in regard to money may find that they do not have enough of it. People in that situation need to consider whether they actually need more money, or merely want more. They should also recognize that their limited resources may be God's way of revealing that their priorities are wrong.

Misuse of the resources God has given in the past—especially the abuse of credit (cf. [Proverbs 6:1-5](#); [Proverbs 11:15](#); [Proverbs 17:18](#); [Proverbs 20:16](#); [Proverbs 22:7](#))—may lead to a lack of resources in the present.

Proverbs 6:1-5 (NASB)

¹“My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, Have given a pledge for a stranger,

² *If* you have been snared with the words of your mouth, Have been caught with the words of your mouth,

³ Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, Go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor.

⁴ Give no sleep to your eyes, Nor slumber to your eyelids;

⁵ Deliver yourself like a gazelle from *the hunter's* hand And like a bird from the hand of the fowler.”

[Proverbs 11:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵ “He who is guarantor for a stranger will surely suffer for it, But he who hates being a guarantor is secure.”

[Proverbs 17:18 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸ “A man lacking in sense pledges And becomes guarantor in the presence of his neighbor.”

[Proverbs 20:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶ “Take his garment when he becomes surety for a stranger; And for foreigners, hold him in pledge.”

[Proverbs 22:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷ “The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower *becomes* the lender's slave.”

People may also lack money because of stinginess ([Luke 6:38](#); [Proverbs 11:24](#)),

[Luke 6:38 \(NASB\)](#)

³⁸ “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, *and* running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”

[Proverbs 11:24 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴ “There is one who scatters, and *yet* increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, *and yet it results* only in want.”

People may also lack money because of impulsiveness or hastiness; ([Proverbs 21:5](#)),

[Proverbs 21:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵ “The plans of the diligent *lead* surely to advantage, But everyone who is hasty *comes* surely to poverty.”

People may also lack money because of lack of discipline ([Proverbs 10:4](#); [Proverbs 13:18](#)),

[Proverbs 10:4 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴ “Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.”

[Proverbs 13:18 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸ “Poverty and shame *will come* to him who neglects discipline, But he who regards reproof will be honored.”

People may also lack money because of laziness ([Proverbs 14:23](#); [Proverbs 19:15](#); [Proverbs 20:13](#); [Proverbs 24:30-34](#)),

Proverbs 14:23 (NASB)

²³ “In all labor there is profit, But mere talk *leads* only to poverty.”

Proverbs 19:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ “Laziness casts into a deep sleep, And an idle man will suffer hunger.”

Proverbs 20:13 (NASB)

¹³ “Do not love sleep, or you will become poor; Open your eyes, *and* you will be satisfied with food.”

Proverbs 24:30-34 (NASB)

³⁰ “I passed by the field of the sluggard And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense,

³¹ And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; Its surface was covered with nettles, And its stone wall was broken down.

³² When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, *and* received instruction.

³³ “A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest,”

³⁴ Then your poverty will come *as* a robber And your want like an armed man.”

People may also lack money because of indulgence ([Proverbs 21:17](#); [Proverbs 23:21](#)), and

Proverbs 21:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ “He who loves pleasure *will become* a poor man; He who loves wine and oil will not become rich.”

Proverbs 23:21 (NASB)

²¹ “For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe *one* with rags.”

People may also lack money because of craftiness ([Proverbs 28:19](#)).

Proverbs 28:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ “He who tills his land will have plenty of food, But he who follows empty *pursuits* will have poverty in plenty.”

The Bible also gives guidelines on how to spend money. It is to be used to provide for the needs of one’s household ([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.”

It is to be used to pay debts ([Romans 13:8](#)), and

Romans 13:8 (NASB)

⁸ “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law.”

It is to be used to save for the future ([Proverbs 21:20](#); [Proverbs 30:25](#)).

[Proverbs 21:20 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁰“There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man swallows it up.”

[Proverbs 30:25 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁵“The ants are not a strong people, But they prepare their food in the summer.”

Having met those basic obligations, believers are ready to give money to further the kingdom.

Though many view giving as merely another obligation, it is in reality a priceless privilege, because it is the pipeline which brings God’s promised blessings to His people.

In [Luke 6:38](#) Jesus promised, “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.” Paul added, “He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” ([2 Corinthians 9:6](#)).

Significantly, the only direct quote from Jesus’ earthly ministry recorded outside of the Gospels addresses the issue of giving: “In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” ([Acts 20:35](#)).

Generous giving to God results in greater giving from God; it is impossible to out give Him. The promises associated with giving should stimulate believers to be sacrificially generous givers. Sadly, the powerful lure of the world’s advertising, slick appeals from purportedly Christian ministries, self-indulgence, and lack of faith all hinder believers from experiencing the full blessing of giving.

The early believers experienced no such hindrances. They freely gave in two general ways. **First**, they gave to support those who were responsible for leading and serving the church. In his first inspired epistle to the Corinthians Paul reminded them,

[1 Corinthians 9:6-14 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶“Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?”

⁷Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?

⁸I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?

⁹For it is written in the Law of Moses, “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING.” God is not concerned about

oxen, is He?

¹⁰ Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*.

¹¹ If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?

¹² If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

¹³ Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the *food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?

¹⁴ So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.”

Let us pray,

Father, again we're so blessed. You have already poured out such abundant blessing on us. We have so much and more. And, Lord, yet there is blessing we haven't received, riches we haven't experienced because we haven't given. We think of these poor Macedonians who had so little and gave the little they had, and thus were always replenished to give again and give again.

Father, we pray that You might teach us that if there was nothing else said we would give if we believed the promise, "Give and it shall be given to you." We would give if we obeyed the command, "Give." We would give if we believed that it was more blessed to do that because we crave so much to be blessed.

Father, You have shown us a path to blessing, a path to abundance, a path to obedience, and You ask us to trust You and obey You and walk it. May we do that. And teach us, continue to teach us that we might know the fullness of Your blessing and eternal glory for that treasure in heaven which can never be corrupted and never rusted and never stolen, but which we shall enjoy forever and ever in Your presence. Thank You, Lord, for Your Word to us. In Christ's name, amen.