

A Dynamic Resource

Our own Christian & Missionary Alliance President, Dr. Gary Benedict, recently sent out an invitation for every attender of C&MA churches to join together in understanding our role as God's stewards. Dr. Benedict recommends the booklet pictured here, noting that it "provides a balance of Scripture and practical applications which convey the biblical foundations for being generous stewards of God's resources."



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Visionary Investment

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 3rd, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

DO NOT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES ON EARTH, WHERE MOTH AND RUST DESTROY, AND WHERE THIEVES BREAK IN AND STEAL. BUT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN, WHERE NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST DESTROYS, AND WHERE THIEVES DO NOT BREAK IN OR STEAL; FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO.

~MATTHEW 6:19-21 (NASB)

1) The Tension Of Talking About Treasure

- A) Generally speaking, religious organizations have a horrible reputation when it comes to "appeals for money."
- B) In fact, most pastors rarely speak about giving/tithing/donations despite the fact that Jesus Christ teaches more about money/treasure than Heaven & Hell -- combined.
- C) There is a natural fear in the pew & the pulpit when it comes to talking about money. This can produce a strange tension and sensitivity to the subject. Why?

2) The Clear Connection Between Our Spiritual Lives & How We Utilize Money

- A) When asked about bearing "fruits in keeping with repentance" (Luke 3:7), John the Baptizer noted...
 - i) Give from what you have to those who have nothing (Luke 3:11).
 - ii) Don't overcharge others for unfair or unethical profits (Luke 3:13).
 - iii) Don't extort money from people, be content with your wages (Luke 3:14).
- B) Note that John was never asked about money! He was asked "in light of our repentance from sins, how then should we live" (Luke 3:10)? The Baptizer's answers reveal the connection between the heart and our money!
- C) Jesus Christ alludes to the same connection numerous times in Scripture, most notably with Zaccheus in Luke 19:1-10. Note that Zaccheus...
 - i) Spontaneously gives what he owned, and what he had stolen as a tax collector, to the poor and to those he defrauded, with substantial interest (Luke 19:8).
 - ii) Jesus response is recognition of the connection between the spiritual life of a person and their material possessions (Luke 19:9-10).
- D) Contrast Zaccheus' response with that of the "rich young ruler" (Matthew 19:16-26). Note that the rich young ruler's response to Jesus reveals an intimate connection between our spiritual lives and material possessions (19:23-24).

3) Which Kingdom Receives Our Investment?

- A) Jesus' teaching about money is summarized in terms of investment (Matthew 6:19-24). The question Jesus asks is where your investment will reside, on earth or in heaven?
- B) Is Jesus saying that earthly treasures are evil? No. He is saying that earthly treasures are temporary. Earthly money won't last, it "flies away" like a bird (Proverbs 23:5).
- C) Jesus contrasts these earthly treasures with an investment which will last forever, an investment in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:20). This investment is insured by God Himself!

4) The "Zaccheus Principle" Of Investment

- A) Immediately after Zaccheus' response of generosity to the poor and repayment to those he had defrauded, Jesus tells a parable revealing the "Zaccheus Principle" (Luke 19:11-27).
- B) The parable (a story which has two levels of meaning, one of which reveals the Kingdom of God, cf. Mark 4:10-12) reveals that what we invest in this world carries forward into the future (Luke 19:15ff).
- C) The parable also teaches that our investment in the Kingdom of God is not a 1:1 (one-to-one) investment (Luke 19:17, 24-25, see also Matthew 19:29). The investment produces rewards which are lavish (Luke 19:25-26).
- D) The parable also teaches that neglecting to invest in the Kingdom of God is foolishness (Luke 19:20-23). This lack of investment reveals a heart which is not for God.