

CRISIS, WHAT CRISIS? Doing Money God's Way

Part 3 – The Principle of the First

5 THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR MONEY

1. SPEND it = For ME
2. Repay DEBT = For ME
3. Pay TAXES = For ME
4. SAVE it = For ME
5. GIVE it away = For GOD & OTHERS

Andy Stanley: "ME FIRST LIVING with some LEFTOVER GIVING."

→ *Is this the order your money gets distributed? Why is it upside-down? Why might reversing that order deal with much of your financial angst?*

How much time & energy do we spend WORRYING about the affairs of this life? (Matthew 6:19-33)

It's not that those are unimportant, but Matthew 6:33 provides crucial PERSPECTIVE SHIFT we all need to catch.

→ *Do you worry about your financial situation? Why? What are your particular anxieties right now? What did Jesus say about that in Matt 6?*

THE POINT: Get FIRST things FIRST and everything else will FALL INTO LINE (Matthew 6:33, 22:37,38, Luke 10:41,42).

- * If Jesus is at the CENTRE of our life, there is BALANCE and ORDER. As soon as He is DETHRONED, we're in TROUBLE.
 - * Systems that put anything else IN GOD'S PLACE are doomed to FAILURE.
- *Who is at the centre of the list of financial priorities at the top of this page? Is that approach 'doomed to failure?' How do you measure financial 'success' or 'failure?' What does Matt 6:19-20 say about that?*
- *How do you think the story of Mary & Martha in Luke 10 applies to our financial lives, decisions & priorities?*

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE FIRST

3 ways God showed His people the importance of PUTTING HIM FIRST. God knows what happens if we get everything in the RIGHT ORDER and what happens if we DON'T

1. FIRSTBORN (Exodus 13:1-2)

- * To dedicate = To SET APART to a sacred purpose.
 - * Applied both to your CHILDREN and LIVESTOCK.
 - * Why? Because God gets the FIRST.
- *How do you think this principle applies to us today? If so, what would it require?*

2. FIRST DAY (Acts 20:7)

- * Consecrating that FIRST parcel of TIME to the Lord is a powerful principle for many reasons.
- *Why is this such a powerful principle? What about Sabbath? Where does the Lord come in the ordering of the priority of your time and why is Sunday worship an important part of that? Where do you position your personal devotions in your day and is that significant?*

3. FIRSTFRUITS (Proverbs 3:9-10)

- * The Hebrews were required to give to the Lord the FIRST and BEST of their harvest (Exodus 23:19, Deuteronomy 26:2).
 - * Comes down to who are you TRUSTING as your source and supply? What or whom do you FEAR? What financial WISDOM are you drawing upon? (Proverbs 3:5-10)
- *How does this principle apply to us in the modern world? How do we give God our best and first? How does the tithing principle fit into that?*
- *How does our relationship with money demonstrate whom we trust, what we fear and to whose wisdom we are listening? If you're brutally honest, do you trust God with your finances or someone/thing else? Perhaps yourself, your job, your savings, future inheritances?*

Jesus' Teaching in Matthew 6:19-33

- * God knows what has hold of your HEART has hold of YOU.
 - * Your heart will always FOLLOW your treasure and your treasure will always FOLLOW your heart.
 - * God knows that, hence the PRINCIPLE of the FIRST.
- *How & why does your heart follow your treasure? How & why does your treasure follow your heart? Is it possible to intervene and force both your treasure & your heart to change direction?*
- *Why did Jesus say you cannot serve God & money? What does it mean to 'serve money?' Why is that so perilous?*

God's call for us to honour Him with the firstfruits is not because He is hard up, but because as we GIVE, materialism LOSES its GRIP, GENEROSITY takes hold in our hearts & Jesus becomes LORD of our finances.

If God truly has your TREASURE, He truly has your HEART, which means He truly has YOU, and that opens the door to the fulness of His FAVOUR & BLESSING (Proverbs 3:9-10, 11:24, Matthew 6:33).

→ *"Give God your best, prepare your nest & live off the rest." Do you agree?*