



January 7 & 8: God

Series Overview

Wealth is usually associated with someone who has lots of money, owns a big house or drives a luxury car. Others are rich in good deeds ... they generously lend a helping hand and provide clothes to those in need. And a person who knows lots of other people and their heart is full of joy is said to be rich in life. The truth is, there are lots of ways to be rich, but there is only one place to invest it—with God! The Bible tells us that He owns it all; we just manage it. We'll explore how following God's guidance for money management can bring rewards that reach beyond your wallet.



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Sermon Highlights

We look to money as a source of success or significance. We look to money as a source of security. And before we know it, we're living our lives for money instead of God. And money becomes an idol. It becomes the purpose of our lives. It replaces God.

Jesus said in *Matthew 6:24*, *No man can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. (NLT)*

Matthew 25 contains the longest parable in Matthew's Gospel. It's known as the Parable of the Talents. There are three parts to the story. In part 1, the Master hands out his money to the servants. Next, we see how the servants used the resources. And finally, we see how they are held accountable when the Master returns.

Matthew 25:14, 15, ¹⁴*Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. ¹⁵He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip. (NLT)*

The key to this passage is this one word: **His**. The Master wants them to know it is *his* property. It's the Master's wealth.

Before we talk about how we should spend our money and save it and share it, we need to understand that it's all built on this foundation. Anything we have is really His. When we see our money and possessions from this perspective, it is much easier to handle money the way God wants us to.

Deuteronomy 10:14, Psalm 24:1, Job 41:11

You might say, "I know it's God's, but..."

- **If it is God's ... why don't we lend?**
- **If it is God's ... why do we worry?**
- **If it is God's ... why do we hoard?**
- **If it is God's ... why don't we manage?**
- **If it is God's ... why do we hate money sermons?**

1. Since God is the Owner ... we should be grateful.

If everything you have belongs to God, then whatever you have is a blessing from Him. *Ecclesiastes 5:15*, *We all come to the end of our lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day we were born. We can't take our riches with us. (NLT)*

Acknowledge that it all belongs to Him ... and it will put your heart in the right place. Instead of focusing on what you don't have, appreciate what you do have.

2. Since God is the Owner ... we should be content.

A lack of contentment ends up driving our lives to where we're consumed with money or possessions and how much we've accumulated. We measure our self-worth by our net worth. When we understand that Jesus is the Owner of all things, it takes a lot of pressure off. He gives His resources as He sees fit. We can be grateful for what He's blessed us with. Our role is to work hard and be responsible managers of what He's entrusted to us.

3. Since God is the Owner ... we should be obedient.

It all belongs to God. He's entrusted it to us because it belongs to Him. He has the right to direct it however He chooses. So ... the responsible servant would ask only one question:

How does the Master want His money to be managed?

It's not a question of how I want to use it or how you want to use it, but how does the Master want His money to be used?

1 Timothy 6:17, 18

Matthew 25:19 says, *After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. (NLT)* The way we use it reflects what we really believe about Him.



Take it to the source ... Bible Study

Introductory question: What item jumps out as climbing the most in cost during the past five years? How has it impacted you?

Read *Matthew 6:24*.

1. On a scale from 1 to 10, how secure do you feel about the present global economic situation? Why?
2. If you are completely honest, what is the biggest source of security in your life right now? Why?
3. Why is it difficult to trust in God, who we cannot see, when money and possessions, which we can see, are all around us and often easy to obtain? How can you learn to trust God more?
4. Why did Jesus say it is difficult to trust in heavenly things and earthly things at the same time? Why will there always be a conflict?

Read *Matthew 25:14,15, Deuteronomy 10:14, Psalm 24:1 and Job 41:11*.

1. Can you think of three blessings that you experienced in 2011? What were they? Did you immediately attribute those blessings to God's goodness and grace? Why or why not?
2. If the key to understanding finances is realizing that they are all ultimately God's, what changes need to occur in your perspective of God's place in your material possessions? Do you regularly think of how you are managing the resources that God has given you? How might that affect the financial decisions you make?
3. What is your first thought after reading the last three verses in this section? How does this line up with the way you practically live in the world? How might it change the way you live in the world?

Read *1 Timothy 6:17, 18*.

1. Does the Bible ever say that it is wrong to be rich? How do these verses balance wealth with compassion toward others?
2. Would you say that you live each day with your hope in God? How would you describe that to someone who is not a follower of Christ?
3. Why does wealth seem to create an attitude of arrogance in so many people? How can trusting in God instead of money help develop an attitude of humility?
4. What practical things can you do to live out *1 Timothy 6:18* this year? What can your small group do to be rich in good works and generous to those in need?



Take it home ... Practical Applications

Take some time to think over your finances and the blessings God has already given you. Have you humbly placed God in charge of your finances and possessions? If you haven't already, make a point of somehow signing your wealth and resources over to God.

Prayerfully ask God to help you discover new ways you can manage your money more effectively for Him and His purposes in 2012.

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All Bible references are from the NIV unless otherwise stated.

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