

MONEY: GOD'S WAY.



"Corruption, bribery, dishonesty...poverty?"

Previously we established (among others) the following principles:

1. God is the owner of all things – we are stewards.
2. We cannot serve God and Money (Mammon) – we can only have one master. That which brings peace or worry reveals who is in control of our lives.
3. Debt is discouraged by Scripture. "...owe no man anything."

When you pick up a newspaper it's not difficult to find an article on corruption, bribery, marital unfaithfulness and all kinds of dishonesty. All of us have to make daily decisions about whether or not to handle a situation honestly.

The same applies to our finances. Do we tell the cashier at the grocery store when we receive too much change? Have you ever been tempted to sell something and not tell the whole truth because you might lose the sale? These decisions are made more difficult because everyone around seems to be acting dishonestly.

Ask yourself this question:

"What effect does dishonesty have on my life and family?" (not only finances!)

It often requires faith to make honest decisions. Consequently, the commitment to be honest in even the smallest thing is one of the keys to growing **deeper in your intimacy with Christ**.

Having a **Kingdom perspective** in dealing truthfully with finances is vital – being honest is part of "God's way of doing things":

Romans 14:17

¹⁷ for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

1. God demands absolute honesty

Proverbs 20:23

Diverse weights are an abomination to the Lord, And dishonest scales are not good.

Proverbs 12:22

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight.

Leviticus 19:11

You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.

Why?

- **We cannot practice dishonesty and love God.**

Proverbs 14:2

He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord, But he who is perverse in his ways despises Him.

- **We cannot practice dishonesty and love our neighbour.**

Romans 13:9-10

For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbour..."

- **Honesty creates the credibility for evangelism.**

Philippians 2:15

"...that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

- **Even the smallest dishonesty is sin.**

Luke 16:10

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

2. Blessings for the honest

- **A more intimate relationship with the Lord.**

Proverbs 3:32

For the perverse person is an abomination to the Lord, But His secret counsel is with the upright.

- **Blessings on the family**

Proverbs 20:7

The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him.

- **Blessings of life**

Proverbs 12:19

The truthful lip shall be established forever, But a lying tongue is but for a moment.

3. Consequences for the dishonest

- **Alienation from God**

Proverbs 3:32

For the perverse person is an abomination to the Lord, But His secret counsel is with the upright.

- **Trouble for the family**

Proverbs 15:27

He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.

- **The pursuit of death**

Proverbs 21:6

Getting treasures by a lying tongue is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.

- **Lack of provision**

Proverbs 13:11

Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, But he who gathers by labour will increase.

4. What to do when dishonest?

- **Restore your fellowship with God.**

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- **Return dishonest gain to its rightful owner.**

Leviticus 6:4-5

"...then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs..."

- **Stay out of trouble!**

Maintain a healthy fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 16:6

In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil.

It is our prayer that you will have the boldness, faith and courage to eliminate dishonesty. May the result of that be a closer relationship with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and peace in your family as you seek God's Kingdom and stop worrying about the things that keep you awake at night – they will be 'added unto you!' (Matt.6:33)

GROUP NOTES

ICE BREAKERS

- Go around the room and each share a humorous story from their childhood (or recently!) when you were dishonest or disobedient with dramatic consequences!

WHAT'S THE WORD ON IT?

Leviticus 19:11

You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.

Proverbs 20:7

The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him.

Luke 16:10

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

Matt 25

²¹ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

1. What do you think the word integrity means?
2. How are children blessed because their parents walk in integrity?
3. Do you think a person can be faithful selectively, in other words only steal selectively from someone when they are not looking but not steal when they are entrusted with something at work for instance?
4. We discovered previously that the Lord has entrusted us with everything we have, he even sustains our lives, how honest would you rate yourself with the things the Lord has entrusted to you?
5. Why is it that dishonesty influences our relationships with people closest to us like our neighbour, employer, family, God, Money etc.? How does it influence our relationships?
6. If you had to be totally honest with yourself do you think the Lord should entrust you with more or are there things that you need to deal with first?
7. How will honesty influence your relationship with the Lord?

Personal time

- Currently you might be bearing the consequences of dishonest financial behaviour. Ask God's forgiveness, choose to serve and trust Him only, and start doing it the right way.