

THE LOVE OF MONEY

When you think of money, one of the first Scriptures that usually comes to mind is 1 Timothy 6:10: “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs (sorrows in KJV).”

Notice, money is not evil, but the love of money is. Why is the love of money such a stumbling block? You have to look at the study of money as you would any other subject, by examining it as children of God and members of God’s family. As Christians, our first and highest calling is to love God with everything in us. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30)

Anything that takes away or diminishes our devotion to Christ has to be reexamined. Jesus is our Lord. He is our Master. We can’t love or serve two masters, nor do we want to, for Jesus is loving, good, and caring.

“No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” (Luke 16:13)

Money has the potential, as few other things do, to replace God in our heart of hearts. It can easily become an idol. An idol is not restricted to a wooden figurine or a bronze statue. An idol is anything we trust or expect to supply what only God can provide.

Money can provide a sense of security. It can provide food, clothing, and shelter. Money can become a source of pride and acquiring more and more of it may become a lifelong passion. Working for money and seeing it as the source of all our needs is making money an idol. Left alone, this desire for money has the potential to become your master.

It is always a temptation to serve what we can see and touch. Throughout the history of God’s people in the Old Testament, there was an ongoing conflict between worshiping God who is invisible and worshiping idols of wood or bronze that were visible. The names of the idols may have changed, but the same tendencies are ever present in the human heart.

The Pharisees had this disease. “The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed Him.” (Luke 16:14)

I hope we will be free from the love of money. Let’s encourage each other to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. If money comes our way, we should be grateful for it. It is not to be feared; it is to be used for building the kingdom of God on this earth. May we hold it lightly, so if Jesus calls us to sell all we possess and give it to the poor, we can do so quickly and gladly. I hope we won’t have the same response as the young man in Matthew 19.

“Jesus said to him, ‘If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor,

and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." (Matthew 19:21–22)

Of course, as my brother is fond of saying, it is easier to lay all our possessions on the altar when we are young. After all, all we have is a used car, some clothes, maybe a computer, and a few books. It does get tougher the more things we acquire. I hope that no matter how many possessions we acquire, or how many blessings we receive, we will always remember these gifts are from Him and for Him, for He is God.

Money is not a bad thing, in and of itself. It has the potential for great good. It is like fire, which can destroy or provide heat. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with money any more than fire. It depends on our attitude towards it and how we use it. Money and possessions can be used for extending God's kingdom to the uttermost parts of the earth as well as for feeding the poor in our neighborhood. It is a tool to be used for His glory. Let us see money as a gift from Him and be good stewards of it.

Prayer

Lord of heaven and earth, help us to love You with all that is in us. Save us from the love of money. Purge the desire for money out of our hearts. Enable us to see the resources that You place at our disposal as gifts from You, and give us the wisdom to use them for Your glory. Amen.

TOPICAL STUDIES

I hope that you are enjoying the blessed journey of reading the Bible daily. In addition to your daily readings, I will be sharing a topical study each week. The Bible itself has many chapters which focus on one theme or one central thought.

1 Corinthians 13 is referred to as the “love” chapter. I have been to many Christian weddings where this whole chapter has been read to remind us of the nature of true biblical love. Hebrews 11 begins with a definition of faith, then the rest of the chapter rehearses the men and women of faith found in the Old Testament.

Psalms 1, 19, and 119 explore and describe the inspired and precious value of the words of God. Hebrews 9 and 10 describe the power of the death of Jesus and how His sacrifice is so much better than animal sacrifices.

I have found topical studies to be very beneficial to my growth as a believer. Reading the whole Bible every year has helped me to have a grasp of the whole counsel of God and be familiar with all the books of Scripture. A wonderful complement to reading all 1,189 chapters (929 in the OT and 260 in the NT) is to study subjects like faith, love, and the character qualities of God Himself.

In 2012, I went through a very difficult season of life. During this time, God met me and I began to comprehend in a new way that He does not only love the whole world, He loves me. And He doesn't simply love me in a general way; He really knows me and likes me for who I am as an individual.

This was a new thought, and it took many hours studying Scripture to overturn entrenched, incorrect patterns of thinking and replace them with new biblical ways of thinking. Three passages speak to this ongoing transformation of my mind:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” (Romans 12:2)

“Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’” (John 8:31–32)

“Be renewed in the spirit of your minds.” (Ephesians 4:23)

Transforming Studies

Each morning for many months, I would read my daily Bible reading, followed by my time of praying for others. Then I would embark on a new study. I have compiled over 100 studies to date and continue to read them, improve them, and do new studies. My mind is continually being transformed as I immerse myself in the truth.

Here is a portion of a topical study I put together on the goodness of God.

“God is good all the time. All the time, God is good.”

His essence and substance are good. God is completely and thoroughly good. Since His nature is sublimely good, everything He makes is good, for what is created is an extension of the Creator.

“God saw that it was good.”

Some form of this expression is used six times in the first thirty-one verses of the Bible (verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). Chapter one of Genesis concludes, “God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” (Genesis 1:31) The Spirit moved Paul to declare, “everything created by God is good.” (1 Timothy 4:4)

Only God is good.

“Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.’” (Mark 10:18)

His Word is good.

“The LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as we are this day.” (Deuteronomy 6:24)

God, the Spirit, being of the same nature and essence, is also good.

“You gave your good Spirit to instruct them.” (Nehemiah 9:20)

“Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!” (Psalm 143:10)

God the Son is good and does good.

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)

The Good News is an expression issuing from the heart of our good God.

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.” (Isaiah 61:1)

This knowledge is incredibly comforting. Our great and good God is over all and causes ALL THINGS to work together for our good. “We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28) Joseph found this to be true when speaking with his wayward brothers who had betrayed him. “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.” (Genesis 50:20)

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!” (Psalm 34:8)

List of Topics

If you read through the table of contents for these studies, you will see a list of topics which I hope will inspire and encourage you to begin doing your own research. I have been creating these studies for years and continue to reread them and add to them as I read through Scripture. I am being edified editing them for this course :-)

We are all unique with different needs and desires. Find out what encourages you and helps you follow Jesus. Learn from others but develop your own style. Paul puts it this way: “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12). There is only one way to be saved, and that is by believing in Jesus Christ. How we develop our relationship with the living God will be unique to each one of us.

We know that Daniel prayed three times each day. “When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.” (Daniel 6:10)

I have gone through various stages in my walk with God. Currently I spend time walking almost every day to spend time communing with my heavenly Dad. I also study the Scriptures. We all have the same objective: to love God and follow Jesus fully; but since we are all different, the way God leads us will be unique, but also somewhat similar.

Prayer

Father, thank You for making us all different and special. Talk to our hearts and transform our minds through the eternal words in these studies. Help us to be faithful to the unique calling You have for each of us and make us all more like Jesus. Amen.

