

11. Simple Commands to trust God with giving

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The biggest reason why Calvary Chapels stick with expository study which means we study the Word of God from verse to verse, chapter to chapter and book to book is we get to learn the whole counsel of God, not just pet subjects of the pastors. The study we are about to do is one of those subjects some pastors would love to teach every week if they can, or some pastors will do anything to avoid. I don't have a problem teaching it. Because God is my witness, I don't abuse my position to bombard you guys with this kind of study for my own benefit.

Teaching about giving is not God's way to raise funds to run this universe. If that is the case, God would have filed bankruptcy a long time ago. It is His way to raise His children.

Money makes a wonderful servant, but it makes a terrible master. Money is to be used to honor God. But nowadays, we honor money, and we use God.

In chapter 6:3-4, Jesus taught us about giving secretly with pure motive that comes from complete obedience to our God. You might ask me what the giving have got to do with obedience to God? Throughout the Bible, God teaches us with His own example about giving freely and generously. Giving is act of faith in God. Giving is our obedience to the Father.

As a matter of fact, 16 out of 38 of Jesus' parables deal with money; more is said in the NT about money than heaven and hell combined; five times more is said about money than prayer; and while there are 500 plus verses on both prayer and faith, there are over 2000 verses dealing with money and possessions.

Throughout the Bible, God told us not to test Him, except one area, money. He knows how tight we get when it comes with money.

Mal. 3:10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.

A. LAYING UP TREASURE IN HEAVEN

Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Christ states several reasons why living for material things is foolish. For one thing, material things do not last. Fabrics were treasured by Jews, yet moths ruin them. Rust ruins metal; thieves steal riches. But treasure used for God's glory is invested in heaven where it lasts eternally.

In church, the average percentage of the people who tithe regularly is less than 10% of the congregation. The 90% just come to church, listen to the sermons of pastors and leave. They don't get involved with the work of God spiritually, financially and physically. And they wonder why their spiritual condition is not enriched. No Duh!!!

You might say, "You are preaching about money, so that you can get paid." No, a thousand times no! It is my obligation to inform you and teach you about God's way.

I don't want you to miss out the blessings from God by trusting Him with your finances, too. I have two jobs to support myself.

Every time I give my money to the work of God, I give away my stinginess, greed, distrust, but exercise my faith in God. According to God's Word, I need to give consistently and generously.

Do some of you go through financial problems? There are two main reasons why we go through this difficult time. Let me guess. First, some of us don't give or tithe to God's kingdom. Second, some of us don't use wise stewardship of the money God entrusts us to have.

One time I had a stock option from the company that was given to me. I was allowed to cash it. Boy, did I ever watch how the stock market were doing even though I had no idea and still don't know anything about it. In my dumb opinion, the stock market is like a schizophrenic person, up and down when Bill Gates blows his nose, or Alan Greenspan sneeze it hits the rock bottom. Because I was going to cash those stocks, I was very interested in how it goes in the stock market. Then I realized, that is all I was doing. If we have interest in stock market, bond market or real estate investment and that matters to us so much, then we are going to put a lot of efforts into them. Nothing wrong with investment, nothing wrong with the stock market, but if they become the dominating thoughts in our lives, it is a problem. In the same token, if we have interest in people's souls and the kingdom of God, we will put a lot of efforts into them. That is what Jesus is talking about.

So where are our treasures? In heaven or investments?

I am willing to measure the maturity of individual Christian with their giving and serving. If you disagree with me, show me someone who is mature in the Lord and not giving and not serving. You won't find anyone. If he or she really trust God, he or she not only trust Him with their lives, but also with their finances. Let's say you need \$2000 to make living per month. But if you give \$200 to God's kingdom per month, you only have \$1800 each month to pay all the bills, mortgage, and groceries. That means God has to come up with the difference of \$200 per month, because He promised that He will meet all of your needs. That is where the bottom line faith kicks in. In other words, we cannot really say, "We trust God," until we start to give to God's kingdom.

Please listen carefully now. If you are fed by this church and God is leading to support the ministries of this fellowship, then obey Him. If God tells you to support other worthy Christian ministries, obey Him. Some pastors teach that all the tithes and offerings should come to their churches. I don't agree with them. Because the giving should be between God and individual. Just obey God with your finance.

B. WHICH MASTER ARE YOU SERVING?

Matthew 6:22-24 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! "No one can serve two masters; for either he will

hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

It seems that Jesus all of sudden changed the direction of His teaching, yet when we look at it carefully, we realize that He is still teaching us the same subject. Through our eyes, we see and feel jealous, we see and covet, we see and get greedy for more. We see the other side of the fence and think that their yard is greener. Oh yes, it is greener all right. Especially, around the septic tank.

Eve fell into the temptation of the serpent in the Garden of Eden, because she saw the fruit of the forbidden tree and realized that it looked good in her eyes. Samson saw a prostitute and she looked good in his eyes and he went into her. King David saw Bathsheba on one lazy evening and took her as one night fling. Should I remind ourselves how many men and women walked right into sins against God because they could not control what they see and how that images effect. How many families are suffering because their adventure of "following the Jones"? What they choose to see and what they have in mind are in a direct link to each other.

Mammon is an entity with little 'g'god. It takes a tremendous faith to run this monetary system. If everybody around the world have to settle their debts once and for all, there are only 10% cash available around the world to pay off all the debts people and companies and countries owe. If I use a charge card at a restaurant, the restaurant owner believes that the credit card company will pay him their money on behalf of me first with the faith in me that I will pay them later. So far, no actual money was exchanged. That is faith in this monetary system. If we take that faith over our faith in God, there is where our trouble starts.

Proverbs 28:22 A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, And does not consider that poverty will come upon him.

An old rich man with a cranky and greedy attitude visited a rabbi who live a simple life. They weren't together very long before the rabbi got a wonderful idea on how to illustrate to the man that his cranky attitude was wrong. He took him by the hand and led him over to his window and he said, "Now, look out the window and tell me what you see." As the man stood there, he said, "Well, I see some men and some women and I see a few children." "Fine." The rabbi then took him by the hand and led him across the room to a mirror. "Now, look and tell me what you see." The man frowned and said, "Well, obviously I see myself." "Interesting," the rabbi replied. "In the window there is glass, in the mirror there is glass, but the glass of the mirror is covered with a little bit of silver. And no sooner is the silver added than you cease to see others, only yourself."

C. ARE YOU A WORRY WART?

Matthew 6:25-26 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

My mother is a worry wart. If there is nothing to worry about, she will look for something to worry about. If she cannot find anything to worry about, she worries that she cannot find anything to worry. I say she has a way too much time.

Our English word 'worry' comes from the same root word of 'strangle.' When we worry for everything around us, it strangles us. The fog that can cover seven city blocks can fill up a glass and a half. But that fog is big enough to shut down the airport, slow down the traffic in the city. But in reality, it is nothing more than a glass and a half full of water in the air. Worry is like that. Worry doesn't do us any good.

All the worries in the world can be summarized in two words, "What if." God's answer for our worry can be also summed up in two words "But God." Worry and faith in God cannot coexist, they are mutually exclusive. If you put your interests and efforts in mammon and not trusting God with your tithe and offerings, you will worry for tomorrow, period. And you'd better worry for tomorrow, since you don't trust God enough.

God doesn't need our money, but He wants our heart of obedience, so that He can show Himself mighty in our spiritual and financial situations.

D. WORRY CANCELS OUR HOPE AND FAITH IN GOD

Matthew 6:27-32 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Some people worry about getting old. I have found the fountain of youth. I will reveal you that top secret that will keep you from getting ever old. Eat a lot of hot dogs. If you don't think I am telling the truth, listen to this: You throw a pack of hot dogs in the landfill and go back there five years later, dig it out. It is still fresh, because of so much preservative inside of hot dogs. You will never get old.

Worry is not just another thing we do. It is a big sin against God. It is unbelief, it is doubting God's faithfulness, it is not trusting what God promises.

Remember the Y2K shenanigans? What did happen to all those Y2K consultants? What about all that hypes about saving foods and supplies? Didn't many Christian leaders jump on that band wagon and make other people to believe that the world was going to fall apart? My wife Karen once asked what I thought of Y2K before year 2000. I told her that it is nothing more than a hyped-up media fringe and a few smart marketing people cashing in. What do you know? I was right. So many people worried about Y2K and stocked up dry foods, batteries and generators. Wonder they still are eating those dry foods?

Worry is for something that might happen in future. What does God say about this?

Php 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

E. APPLICATIONS

Jesus does not leave a room for some half wit Bible teachers like me to come up with applications for this money matter. He Himself is giving us the applications to use.

1) Matthew 6:33 *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

You and I really cannot say we trust God until we trust Him with our finance. To do that, we must give our portion of finance to His Kingdom work. He will meet our needs, sometimes even desires.

2) Matthew 6:34 *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

As I mentioned it before, worry is sin of not trusting God's faithfulness. You and I are a few of many people around the world in human history who came to God. So far, He has not failed anyone of us. He will take care of His children. That is His promise.