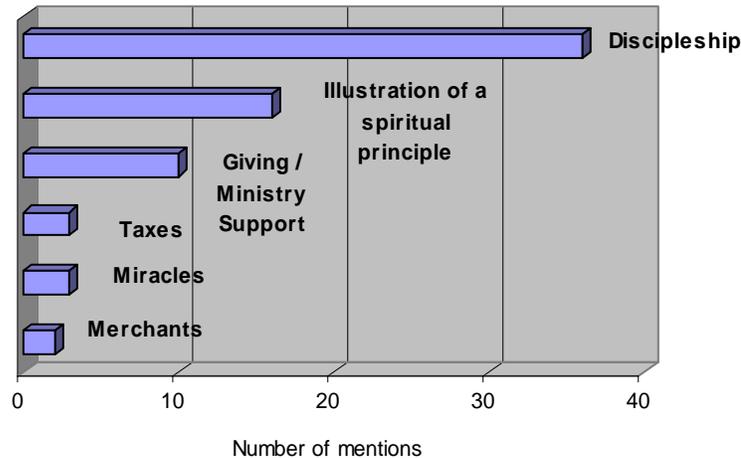


What did Jesus say about money?

Part III: Giving

Jesus' References to Money



In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught that true righteousness and happiness regarding money is to be so focused on the Lord, so absolutely trusting, that we do not worry about money even in our hearts, even for the most basic needs.

Then we studied all mentions by Jesus of money in the context of discipleship. We saw clearly that money, the love of money and/or concerns about money, was a test used by Jesus to reveal the readiness of a heart to be a true disciple of His.

Next, we studied all of the parables that used everyday situations involving money and financial matters to illustrate spiritual principles. These situations describing need and surplus, fear and greed, remind us that there really is “nothing new under the sun,” thus God’s Word on money matters is just as relevant today as it was then. While the teaching point of most of these parables had nothing to do with money per se, Jesus did make it clear in the parable of the shrewd manager that we should be at least as shrewd in our use of money for the Kingdom of God as the unrighteous are for their own interests.

The next topic, in order of mentions by Jesus personally in the gospels, is **giving**.

Matthew 5:20, 38-42

20 "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses [that] of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Read Matthew 5:20 from the left panel.

This is the verse of the Sermon on the Mount. This was a startling, shocking statement since the scribes and Pharisees were thought to be the epitome of righteousness because they externally kept the Law more dutifully than anyone else, or so it seemed. If they couldn’t measure up, then it was impossible for anyone to please God! The fact of the matter is, it is impossible for anyone to please

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'

39 "But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 "And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

41 "And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two.

42 "Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

God with external acts of righteousness, which is why we need the righteousness of Christ. And it is possible to live this way by the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit if we submit our will to the will of God.

Jesus went on to give six examples that illustrated the true intent of the Law, and true righteousness, by contrasting what the scribes and Pharisees taught and what God actually expected. (Matthew 5:21-48)

The first had to do with murder. The people were taught that they should not commit actual murder, but Jesus added that being angry with someone and thinking them worthless is also murder in God's eyes.

The second example had to do with adultery. The people were taught that they should not commit actual adultery, but Jesus added that lusting after a woman in your heart is also adultery in God's eyes.

The third example had to do with divorce. The people were taught that divorce was acceptable if they followed proper procedure, but Jesus said that God did not recognize these so-called "no fault" divorces.

The fourth example had to do with oaths. The people were taught not to break vows that they made to God, implying that secular vows were not binding, but Jesus added that the issue wasn't the manner in which the vow was made, but rather the fact that a vow was required in the first place to force integrity.

The sixth example (we'll come back to the fifth) had to do with enemies. The people were taught to love their neighbors, but of course it was expected that they would hate their enemies, but Jesus said they were to love their enemies too.

Now let's look at the fifth example which is our text on giving.

Read Matthew 5:38-42 from the left panel.

What comes to mind first when you hear the phrase "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth?"

Read Proverbs 17:15, Ecclesiastes 8:11 and Deuteronomy 19:15-21 from your Bible.

What can we infer from these passages about God's philosophy of civil law when it comes to punishment, and why?

Read Exodus 21:12-36 from your Bible, saying aloud the phrase "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth."

In this context then, what did God mean when He prescribed "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" in His civil law book?

Going back to the Sermon on the Mount, what is Jesus saying in verses 38-42 about true righteousness in response to people who transgress against us or impose upon us?

Is this just hyperbole to make a point? Is this the only time this hard-to-accept idea is mentioned in the Bible? Read Mathew 6:9-15, Romans 12:19, 1 Thessalonians 5:14-24, 1 Peter 3:8-4:2, 1 Corinthians 6:1-7, James 2:12-13. What do you observe from these passages about our response to unfair transgressions and impositions thrust upon us?

Matthew 6:1-4

1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

2 "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

3 "But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing

4 that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Why did Jesus include the statement about giving with these unfair transgressions? Is it because it is, in fact, unfair for someone to ask us for money, or is it that the people wrongly perceived that it is unfair to be asked to help someone in need?

Read the following passages and answer the question, noting what you learn below.

- Deuteronomy 15:7-11
- Acts 2:41-47
- 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Define, in your own words, what true righteousness regarding giving is?

Jesus' next mention of giving in Matthew's gospel is further along in His sermon on the mount.

Read Matthew 6:1-4 from the left panel.

"Alms" was giving directed to the poor. What do we learn about **how** to give from this passage, and why?

By the way, what does Jesus assume in this passage?

Read Matthew 10:1-16 from your Bible.

What does this passage have to do with giving?

What does this passage teach about ministry support, both to God's ministers and those being ministered to?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:1-19 and 2 Corinthians 12:11-21 from your Bible.

What is Paul's main point about financial support for ministry?

With this clear teaching, how then is it possible that here in the wealthiest nation in the world there are faithful men and women of God laboring for the sake of the gospel without sufficient provision?

Read Matthew 23:23-24 from your Bible.

Jesus, in His strongest public rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees, proclaims "woe to you" eight times. What is wrong with their meticulous tithing that would bring such a strong rebuke?

Read Mark 12:38-44 from your Bible.

How did Jesus evaluate the giving at the temple treasury? What impressed Him about the poor widow's giving?

As Jesus observes the passing of the offering basket in each of our churches every Sunday morning, is He impressed with your giving?

In contrast to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, Jesus gives 16 commands to those with ears to hear in Luke 6:27-38. Get a running start by reading Luke 6:12-26, then read this passage and list the 16 commands.

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#2

#3

#4

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#16

What do we learn about giving from this passage?

Read Luke 12:16-34 from your Bible.

Over and over again throughout the Word of God the Lord pleads with us not to worry about money and material needs. Why aren't we to worry?

What do you think He means in verse 33? Are we to literally sell everything and take a vow of poverty?

Read Matthew 19:16-30, Acts 2:44-45, and 1 Timothy 6:17-19. What principle connects these teachings?

Based on Jesus' words, all the mentions we have considered in this study, what is His doctrine of giving?

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES DISCOVERED

We discovered the following principles from our study of what Jesus said about giving money during His earthly ministry.

- True righteousness in giving is a willingness to give to him who asks without fear of loss or hardship.
- "Give and it will be given to you ... for by your standard of measure it will be given to you in return." There is a principle of reciprocity, for God is a debtor to no man.
- Do not give to be praised by men, but give in secret so our heavenly Father can reward us.
- Tithing is expected, but tithing alone does not justify a man before God.
- God measures our giving by what we have left after giving, not by the amount of our giving.
- If material wealth is a hindrance to spiritual wealth, give it all away.
- We have a moral responsibility to financially support those who minister to us and for us.

BUSINESS APPLICATION

1. What is your response when someone asks you for money?
2. Do you give publicly or privately? Would your giving change if no one but God would know about it, or if there was no longer a tax deduction for charitable giving?
3. Do you tithe?
4. Is Jesus impressed when he observes your giving and compares it to what you keep for yourself?
5. Do you financially support those ministries that have ministered to you? Have you ever been the Lord's means to keep His Word regarding provision to those who have been called into service for Him?

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Prayer Requests

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