

Most of us are unaware of the verses preceding Phil 4:13- "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

In what situations was Paul content? Living in need didn't leave him bitter and living in abundance didn't make him greedy for more. To what did Paul attribute his ability to be content in any situation?

Matthew 6:31-33 NLT - 31 "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' 32 These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. 33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

In the above passage Jesus contrasts the priorities of the world with those of believers. What dominates unbelievers thoughts and hence their spending? What should the believer be focused on instead? How will the needs of believers be met?

Here are 3 practical steps you can take in living out Mat 6:33.

- Determine what to give- Seek God, decide ahead, don't wait

Start with a Percentage

- The tithe is a spiritual practice of giving 10%- attaining this goal is possible as you invite God to help you exercise the fruit of the Spirit; Self-control

Be Consistent

- Even a small gift becomes a big gift when it is given consistently

WRAP-UP

Money will contend for prominence in your life. But it is a harsh taskmaster. Contentment doesn't come from a big bank account or the things that can be bought, contentment comes from God, and He is the one who provides abundantly for all of your needs.

MEMORY VERSE.

Ephesians 6:16 NLT - 16 In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.

PRAYER (20 MIN) Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life

Challenge.- Continue to memorize Ephesians 6:10-17

"Mastering the Battle Over Money"

Every Day Holy- #6

INTRODUCTION

In the battle for primacy in our lives, Jesus' chief rival is often money. We all need money to survive, but if we aren't careful, our focus will shift away from us using money to serve God's purposes, to us being a servant of money. Maybe we can't avoid the headlines that warn us of an economic disaster, but how do we let that impact the way we live out our faith? Do we stop trusting God's provision when our savings accounts dwindle? Is our generosity towards others the first place where we cut back our expenses? If you read the Gospels, you will find that Jesus had much to say about money, and for good reason. We need to defend our hearts against the cruel taskmaster of money.

Ice Breaker

If you were given a million dollars right now, what would you do with it?

Key Passage

Luke 16:13 NLT - 13 "No one 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."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Money- It's All His

Let's start with a little assessment of our perspective on money and who it belongs to.

Psalm 50:9-10 NLT - 9 But I do not need the bulls from your barns or the goats from your pens. 10 For all the animals of the forest are mine, and I own the cattle on a thousand hills.

Your wealth probably isn't tied up in livestock, but you can still understand what is being said in Psalm 50. God doesn't need your money, because all that wealth you thought was yours actually belongs to Him. It may offend you to think that everything you worked so hard for really doesn't belong to you. But let's consider what God says in Deuteronomy 8:17-18.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 NLT - 17 He did all this so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth with my own strength and energy.' 18 Remember the LORD your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath.

What's the false belief the Israelites were warned against in Deu 8:17? Do you think this idea still challenges us today? Who did God tell the Israelites was the source of their ability to achieve wealth?

God gave the Israelites success because he had a plan and an agreement with them to fulfill that plan (a covenant). God has a plan for each of us as well and enables us to be successful. As His plan in our lives unfolds, God can use our success in earning money (or lack of success) as a means of revealing and developing a Godly character.

2. Temporary versus Eternal Wealth

Luke 16:1, 10-12 NLT - 1 Jesus told this story to his disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a manager handling his affairs. One day a report came that the manager was wasting his employer's money. ... 10 "If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. 11 And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? 12 And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?"

Jesus uses a parable to reveal the truth about how money can grip us too tightly. What aspects of this man's character were revealed in how he used the money entrusted to him to benefit himself rather than the owner of the money?

Once we recognize that our wealth belongs to God, we then realize we are not the owners, but the stewards of God's wealth while we are on this earth.

In Jesus' comparison of faithfulness in little and large things, what would be considered the little things and what are the large things (v 11)? Now look at how Jesus contrasts what we can store on earth versus treasures we have in heaven. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Matthew 6:19-21 NLT - 19 "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. 21 Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

In what ways have your earthly treasures deteriorated or disappointed you? In verse 20 Jesus encourages storing treasures in heaven. What would you consider treasure that you can store in heaven?

The desires of our heart are revealed by what we treasure most highly. In concluding the parable of the shrewd manager Jesus tells us plainly we can't have it both ways- either we serve Him and give Him our hearts, or we devote ourselves to money. Money is an incredible servant but an awful master. Paul's letter to Timothy gives us the sad ending of allowing our hearts to be captured by money.

Luke 16:13 NLT - 13 "No one 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."

1 Timothy 6:10 NLT - 10 For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

In what ways have you seen a quest for wealth end in sorrow or lost faith?

3. Strategy for Winning the Money Battle

Philippians 4:11-13 NLT - 11 Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.