

What The Bible Says About Money

by Glen Davis

- God gives us the ability to earn money: Deuteronomy 8.17-18
 - We work to earn money to provide for ourselves and our family members (1st Tim 5.8).
 - Work is not a curse in and of itself—we worked before the fall (Gen 1.17-28) and we will work in heaven (Mat 19.28, 1st Cor 6.3)—but there is a curse that lies upon our work now due to the Fall (Gen 3.17-19).
 - Although cursed, work can still be enjoyable and worshipful: Ps 128.1-2, Col 3.22-4.1
 - Whether or not we experience God’s redeeming power in our work will be largely determined by our attitude about money. If acquiring wealth is our motivating force for working, our work will become a barrier between us and God (Luke 16.13).
- How we treat money reveals important things about our character: Luke 16.10-12
 - We cannot allow money to become a controlling force in our lives (1st Tim 6.10).
 - The Christian’s ambition is not to be rich or to be poor, but to be content (Phil 4.12-13, Prov 30.7-9). Neither poverty nor wealth is a sign of God’s blessing, nor is either position intrinsically moral (James 1.9-10). You can love money whether you have it or not. That being said, it is harder for rich people to avoid trusting in their wealth (Mark 10.25).
 - The best antidote to greed is generosity (Mark 10.21, Eph 4.28).
- God expects us to be both disciplined and spontaneous in our generosity:
 - The best example of disciplined giving in the bible is tithing—giving ten percent of our income to God. The word *tithe* literally means “a tenth.”
 - This was required of the nation of Israel: Lev 27.30-32, Deut 26.12-13
 - The purpose of tithing is to teach us to put God first: Deuteronomy 14.23
 - Tithes are not required of Christians, but ten percent is a good rule of thumb for measuring your disciplined giving.
 - Spontaneous giving is called an offering. For example, in 2 Corinthians 8-9. Paul invites the Corinthians to support a worthy cause, and he asks them to give without feeling any pressure.¹
- Christians give for two main purposes: to facilitate ministry and to help the poor.
 - We have a Biblical obligation to support ministers and ministry (1st Cor 9.3-14, Phil 4.10-19, Gal 6.6). When we fund a ministry we become partners in that ministry—God views us as part of the team: 3rd John 8.
 - We are called to help the poor (Deut 26.12-13, Matt 25.31-46). When helping the poor, our first obligation is to help poor Christians: Gal 6.10, 1st John 3.16-20.
- What funding ministry and helping the poor have in common is that they are both advancing the Kingdom of God. Anything that helps to make the world more like God wants it to be is a legitimate thing for Christians to support. We need to be as creative in using our wealth for good as nonbelievers are at using their wealth for wickedness: Luke 16.1-13.
- And this brings us to the motive for our work in general—we seek to bring the world and its resources into alignment with God’s purposes. We are still working to subdue the earth, and any work we do (medicine, politics, journalism, research, art, education, etc) that makes the world more the way God wants it to be is Kingdom work.

¹ The worthy cause Paul invited them to support was helping to alleviate suffering brought about by a famine in Jerusalem. This famine and Paul’s response to it is one of the key background events in New Testament history—you can see references to it in Acts 11.27-30, 1st Corinthians 16.1-4, 2nd Corinthians 8-9, Romans 15.25-28, and Acts 24.17.

Selected Financial Management Passages²

Deut 8:17-18	1 Chron 29:12-17	Ps 24:1
Ps 37:21	Prov 1:13-15	Prov 6:1-5
Prov 6:6-11	Prov 10:2-4	Prov 11:4
Prov 11:15	Prov 11:24-25	Prov 11:28
Prov 12:11-12	Prov 13:4-7	Prov 13:11-18
Prov 13:22	Prov 14:23	Prov 15:6
Prov 15:16-17	Prov 16:16	Prov 19:6
Prov 19:22	Prov 21:5	Prov 21:17
Prov 21:20	Prov 22:7	Prov 23:4-5
Prov 23:20-21	Prov 24:27	Prov 27:23-27
Prov 28:19-22	Prov 30:8-9	Prov 30:24-25
Haggai 2:8	Matt 22:17-21	Matt 25:14-30
Luke 12:13-21	Luke 16:1-13	Rom 13:8
1 Thess 4:11-12	1 Tim 5:8	1 Tim 6:6-19
Heb 13:5		

Selected Passages About Being Generous to the Poor

Ex 22:25	Lev 19:9-10	Deut 15:7-8
Deut 24:19-22	Ps 41:1-3	Prov 3:27-28
Prov 14:31	Prov 17:5	Prov 19:17
Prov 23:10	Prov 28:27	Isa 10:1-2
Isa 58:1-11	Matt 5:42	Matt 6:1-4
Matt 25:31-40	Acts 2:42-47	Acts 6:1-7
Acts 11:27-30	Acts 20:33-35	Gal 2:7-10
Eph 4:28	James 5:1-6	1 John 3:16-18

Selected Passages About Funding Christian Ministry

Ex 16:13-17	Ex 25:31, 35-40	Num 8:14
Num 18:21-24	Deut 14:27	Deut 16:17
1 Sam 9:7-8	1 Kings 17:1-16	2 Chron 31:3-19
Neh 2:1-8	Neh 13:10-14	Prov 3:9-10
Matt 10:5-15	Matt 11:18-19	Luke 8:1-3
Luke 10:1-7	Luke 16:1-13	Luke 21:1-4
Luke 22:35-38	John 12:1-8	Acts 4:32-5:11
Acts 11:27-30	Acts 18:1-5	Rom 15:20-28
1 Cor 16:1-6,11	2 Cor 1:16	2 Cor 8-9
2 Cor 12:13-18	Gal 6:6	Phil 4:10-20
Col 4:10	1 Thess 2:9	2 Thess 3:7-9
1 Tim 5:17-18	Titus 3:13	3 John 5-8

² These lists of scriptures were adapted from Scott Morton's book *Funding Your Ministry Whether You're Gifted or Not!*