

Materialism Is Deceptive

Perhaps our currency should be printed with a label that reads: 'Warning, money may be hazardous to your spiritual health'

Love of money and not money itself is the problem. Certainly wealth can be used for good purposes. When this is the case, it becomes beneficial to one's spiritual health. "In Jesus' day, the Jews considered wealth a reward from God. They had great difficulty recognizing the subtle danger of materialism because they had come to identify it as a sign of God's favor. Coming out of that background, a rich young man approached Jesus with an important question... 'Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' (Luke 18:18).



"Although he asked a sincere question, when he heard the answer he was distressed. Jesus pointed out the main obstacle between him and eternal life—his money.... 'When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth' (Luke 18:23) He was deceived by believing that because he had great wealth he was blessed by God. In reality, his money separated him from God." [*Partners With God*, Bobby L. Edlund and Terry Austin]

At first glance, this Scripture seems to say we should give away all our money. The meaning is deeper than that. Jesus is saying that idolatry to money can disconnect us from the riches of God's Spirit.

That is one of several reasons why systematically giving money to God's causes is part of every church's teaching about personal spiritual growth. Giving money to God does not mean that God will insulate us from all of life's troubles. But not giving money to God guarantees that we are not likely to escape the small box of self-concern and connect with God's life-changing Spirit.