

# Money in the Church

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Do you talk about money in your church?

I've heard this stat before, but recently it dawned on me how insufficient our teaching from the pulpit often is. The Scriptures talk about faith over seven hundred times throughout the entire Bible, while on the other hand, money is talked about over 2,100 times.



Let me take another angle. Jesus talked about money more than He talked about Heaven and Hell combined. Eleven of the thirty-nine parables are about money, and one out of every seven verses in the Gospel of Luke talk about money. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spends an entire half chapter on money (Matthew 6), while only spending a few verses on every other subject.

This is a lot of money talk, yet **along with sex, money is one of the least talked about subjects in the church.** Let me present a greater problem. If we are not teaching people how to use their money in Godly ways, who will? Money is always a matter of the heart, and if money can steal someone's heart, we should start talking about it! **You cannot pastor someone's heart without pastoring their pocketbook, because they are in the same place!**

I have struggled with talking about money in my ministry in the past. If you are like me, it was because of one of two (or both) reasons. One, you are silenced by the shame of not being a tither yourself, so you would rather ignore the subject than talk about it and be a hypocrite. Two, you are afraid of playing into the stereotype of "always talking about money," so you shy away from it rather than address the falsity.

**What if we thought of money as a discipleship or spiritual issue, not a financial issue?**

We live in a world where the cost of living is rising while salaries have remained stagnant for 80% of America. **Very few people have been trained by their family, schooling, or some other avenue on healthy money behaviors.** Our social culture influences us to "keep up with the Joneses," whether we like to admit it or not. As each year passes, we have less and less disposable income to give away. A healthy stewardship foundation is an area in which the church can truly lead people to know how to use, spend, save, and invest money in Godly ways.

If we do not talk about money in the church, where will people hear about healthy ways to interact with money? **The competing theology, which bombards people every day, is materialism or consumerism.**

Jesus says you cannot worship God *and* money; you are either worshiping the Creator or mammon (note that He does not give a third option). And if we have an improper relationship with our money, our heart will be misplaced. And if our heart is misplaced, this will lead to all sorts of evil.

Many people in the church are free theologically, but not socioeconomically or financially. By talking about money in our church, we can help people become free financially. And if we can help release them of their worship of money, then they will be free to worship God wholeheartedly.

**Once people join your church community, are they more likely to become more faithful or more foolish regarding matters of their money?** If you cannot answer that question, you need a plan.

**One, I would encourage you to study stewardship theology.** Unfortunately, seminaries do not teach about money, but you can begin your journey by contacting any of us at Horizons Stewardship for a list of our favorite resources to help you on your journey. Don't be afraid and intimidated. We can help you as you formulate a booklist to begin your studies.

**Two, work to get your own personal financial matters in order.** You've heard the old adage, "You can only take someone where you yourself have gone." If you are not tithing, you are likely to find it difficult to lead your church family to tithe. Remember this is a spiritual matter, not merely a financial matter. Begin the hard work of reconciling your finances so that you can lead your congregation. Your congregation is looking to you for leadership, and finances are often a painful topic that they feel alone in.

**Three, create a community where people can openly and eagerly talk about their struggles, fears, doubts, and successes.** Community is important. How important? Read this article on the connection between addictions and community. The take-away here is that a safe, embracing community can have a powerful influence in one's life. A safe community to talk and learn about money is a key ingredient to helping people cultivate better and healthier stewardship practices.

- See more at: <http://www.horizonsstewardship.com/blog/money-in-the-church/#sthash.WHEmkv8d.dpuf>