

Strengthening Your Marriage Seminar Finances (Session # 5)

Our Western culture has adopted for the most part a false dichotomy, separating the sacred from the secular (e.g., separation of church and state). This worldview has infiltrated the church as well, including the area of finances. However, the Bible teaches that finances are a spiritual issue.

A Biblical worldview begins with God our Creator. All good things come from Him *Jms.* 1:17). Our money and our possessions are derived from Him (Deut. 8:18; Provo 10:22; 1Cor. 4:7). We have been redeemed and bought with the price of God's own Son (Col. 1:12-14). We are not our own (1Cor. 6:19-20). We must be good stewards of all that the Master has entrusted to our care (Matt. 24:45-51). The parable of the talents (a sum of money) is an example of God's good design for money (Matt. 25:14-30).

Our money and our possessions are amoral, simply tools and things to be used to bring glory to God (1Cor. 10:31). All evil has its' root in the evil one (fun. 8:44). The world system lies in his realm (IJhn. 5:19). The love of money, not money itself, is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10). Satan wishes us to serve him rather than God and the misuse of money (the power, prestige it represents and what it can buy) can focus attention away from our first love (Matt. 22:37-38; Rev. 2:4). To put anything before God is a form of idolatry (Ex. 20:3-5). "No man can serve two masters," Jesus said (Matt. 6:24). Covetousness is a longing or desire to possess something, especially something that belongs to another (the store!). Jesus said to beware of covetousness (Lk. 12:13-21), and Paul calls it idolatry (Col. 3:5)!

A husband and wife must be united (one flesh) in regard to their use of money. We live in the richest country in the history of the world. We are very materialistic and hedonistic (pleasure driven). A great temptation in our culture is the allure from the enormity of the "stuff" available to us. But a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions (Lk. 12:15). Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21). Ask these questions before a purchase. Do we really need it (do you both agree?). Will it help us to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31)?

The temptation of sudden riches can even shipwreck one's faith (1 Tim. 6:9-10). Paul wrote that he had learned to be content in whatever state he was in (Phil. 4:11). We must deny ourselves (Matt. 16:24-26).