

Part 2

Written by

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Stand for your Finances

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Is wealth then a requirement for Christianity and is wealth very important to Christians?
Definitely not!

Wealth without an intimate relationship with our Heavenly Father is in fact very dangerous, and there are many warnings concerning wealth in the hands of a fool. For God it is all about balance. He wants to see that it is going well with us on both spiritual and material levels. We see this in John's letter.

3 John 1:2 "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

There are a few ways in which a wrong image, concerning finances in the church, is established:

Through wrong perceptions.

Use of nice, spiritually sounding proverbs or sayings, which seem to be true for some situations, but usually for other reasons. E.g. "When wealth enters the front door, happiness leaves by the backdoor." or "God knows who He can entrust money to or not" or "God knows when He must provide, and is never late." They all sound so good and fitting, yet very unscriptural and cause more damage than good.

The Bible is used incorrectly or negatively when it comes to wealth.

There are always the warnings or judgments concerning wealth, which are acceptable and necessary, but they are usually out of balance with the promises of God's will and intention to

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bless. Many people are taught that, for Christians, it is noble and saintly to be poor and live in poverty. Have a look at the next few verses as example:

Matthew 19:24 "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Interpretation: Beware to become rich. The chance is slim that you will land up in heaven one day.

Truth: Your wealth can cause you to lose focus on Jesus, and that can prevent you from entering the Kingdom.

Philippians 4:11 "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

Interpretation: You are not allowed to desire more than what you already have, because that what you already have, God has decided is your portion.

Truth: I don't build my happiness on wealth, but only on Jesus, irrespective of the circumstances. By faith, I focus not on the positive or negative circumstances, but only on God's promises. We must never build our contentment on wealth or possessions, but only on Jesus.

When it is not going well with us financially, we can still praise the Lord and can tap peace from Him, just like Habakkuk did.

Hab 3:17 "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

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18: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Habakkuk's focus was on the Lord the Provider, and not on the provision.

Jesus is used as an example that we too should not own anything.

We must remember that Jesus operated in another kind of dimension and way. He was in complete control of His Heavenly Father's wealth, and earthly possessions and wealth were things He didn't have to pay any attention to. With a single miracle He could sort out any monetary need.

Jesus and His disciples had a bag in which they kept their money, and a thief was in control of it. Did Jesus know what was going on? Of course! Did the others who gave up their professions, i.e. their fixed incomes, know about it? No! They would have been concerned about money, as they also had dependants whom they needed to care for. Jesus never just went and found twelve tramps in a bush somewhere to be His disciples. They were from all levels of society. The money bag must have had enough money in it, in order that Judas could enrich his life at the same time as Jesus and His disciples lived from it. Further-more, they supplied to the widows and orphans, and all this without them realizing Judas was stealing from them!

Remember God's command to care for the widows and orphans? Jesus and His disciples did this. How then today can God give us this order to fulfill, but we have not, or may not, have money? When Jesus had pity on the thousands of people which came to listen to Him preach, He sent His disciples to buy them food. They never said they didn't have money, as there was enough in the bag.

Mark 6:37 "He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?"

From the parable of the workers in the vineyard in Matt 20:2, we know that a penny was enough to maintain a family for a day. In our current monetary terms, a penny would be around R100, and therefore two hundred in the money bag was roughly about R20 000-00. It is no wonder

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they never noticed that a thief was in control of the bag!

The image of Jesus as a poor baby is also often presented. His parents are also presented as poor, because He was born in a stable and lay in a manger. The truth is, however, that His parents were on their way to Bethlehem for the census. They had money to stay in the inn, but were too late and the inn was full. Therefore, they had to make do with what was available, as Mary was almost in labour.

Luke 2:7 "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."

When this Baby was born, treasures were brought to Him from afar. These visitors knew that a king was born and so brought gifts that were worthy for a king.

Matthew 2:2 "Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

Matthew 2:11 "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh"

The Bible not only refers to gold, but to treasures too. The gifts were part of their treasures. This gold, probably not little either, was available to Joseph, and so Jesus never grew up in poverty. Jesus understood the Father heart of God, and therefore finances were never an issue in His life. He never ever landed up in a situation where He had a shortage. He walked in His Father's provision and knew that there was no limitation on His providing. God's provision is so wonderful that it almost sounds too good to be true. Look at the incident where the temple taxes had to be paid.

Matthew 17:24 "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?"

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25: He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

26: Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

27: Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

Therefore it was worth enough to pay for both Jesus and Peter. Isn't that wonderful! Do you know, He can still provide for your needs like that today. Do you really believe it?