

RIGHT ON THE MONEY ; JOHN KIRKPATRICK

We can be right on doctrine, teaching, serving, but are we right on the money?

Jesus had a lot to say about money. 19 of his parables are about money/possessions.

Bringing offerings to God goes right back to Genesis (3.4-5) – remember Cain and Abel’s attempts to do the right thing. Noah, after the flood, sacrificed an offering to God – what was God’s response? Genesis 8.20-22.

Read Psalm 96.4-8. Why should God be revered? What is the glory due to his name?

When we worship God, we bring him something in appreciation and love for all he has done for us. How can we show our appreciation?

Quote from Amy Carmichael: ‘You can’t give without loving, but you can love without giving.’ Is this true?

10 Stewardship Guidelines

1. Remember who the owner is. Psalm 24.1. Does God own everything you have, or only some of it? If we acknowledged that he does own everything we have, how would this affect our lives?

1 Timothy 6.10. What is the root of all evil? How?

2. Embrace your work gratefully. Proverbs 22.29
Be thankful for your job. Why? What does having or not having a job mean to you?

3. Avoid unnecessary debt. Proverbs 22.7
Many people become trapped by their debt. Probably almost everyone has a credit card, and it’s responsible for much debt because it’s so easy to possess and use, There is a \$5 billion dollar credit card debt in NZ. CAP helps people to deal with debt. Do you know of people who lose everything because of debts?

4. Teach your children about money.
It is a parent’s responsibility to teach their children how to use money wisely. How can we do this? 2Corinthians 9,7 shows us what our attitude towards giving should be.

How can we give joyfully, cheerfully? What is the result when we do so?
How can we best teach our children to give cheerfully? (By example?)

5. Form a stewardship plan. 1 Corinthians 16.2
How do we give? On impulse? Or by regularly setting an amount aside in proportion to what we earn?

Robert Laidlaw, the founder of Farmers Trading Co, began to set aside 10% when he was young, then increased it to 20%, then 25% then 50%. For 30 years he gave money, cars, assets for missionaries etc. as God increased his income he increased his outgoing for God. He wrote 'The Reason Why', a tract explaining why he was a Christian. 40 million copies went out, most of them given away. He had a plan and God blessed him.

6. Know when to say 'enough'. Proverbs 30.15. A leech is a blood-sucker. When we continually want more, we will never be satisfied. Can you think of a Biblical example of someone who wasn't satisfied with what God gave? What happened to that person?

7. Avoid the comparison trap. James 4.1-3. Why should we not look at what others have and desire it? Do we look at our motives when we ask God for things? Is the motive 'I want what he/she has'. What other motive should we have?

8. Learn to look around. Proverbs 19.17

When we see the needs of others and give unconditionally out of compassion, it's like lending to God. And he will pay back more. Notice the motives here – not 'I want' but 'Can I help...?'

One of the seven deadly sins is greed, but most of us deny that we are greedy. Greed hides itself, and we can be deceived. What sort of actions show greed?

9. Follow the example of wise givers. Proverbs 11.14, Hebrews 13.7.

Look for people who have given generously. Some will not appear to be rich, though we are told the blessing of the Lord makes us rich. The Bible tells us over and over how God richly blesses us. Does his blessing always include money? What are his richest blessings?

10. Look forward to the final audit. Luke 12.48- the second part of the verse. Sow the seed and trust God for the fruit.

We have so much, how much of it do we give to God? To others?

Mark 12.41-44. Jesus saw the widow give all she had to God, while the rich proudly put in their large sums. She received Jesus' commendation, they didn't.

In the Old Testament the law required 10%. In the New Testament we aren't under the law, but under grace. Should we then give less?

2 Corinthians 9.6-7. We saw the need to give cheerfully, but here we are told the result of giving sparingly. What is it? What do you think the difference will be in the lives of the sparing giver and the generous, cheerful giver? Again, it might not be the amount of money each one has

So we give, because we want to, because we love to do so. Read again Psalm 96.4-8. How does this worship of God apply to how we give?