

Discipleship 103

Stewardship & financial freedom

Lesson Twelve: Spending Money Wisely

Introduction

Imagine having everything your eyes desired. Everything! Don't leave anything out; include the wildest dreams you ever had. Now, try to imagine the despair that would come in realizing that, in spite of having everything you wanted, you were completely and utterly unhappy. That was Solomon's conclusion. The richest, wisest king of his time – of any time (see 2 Chronicles 1:12) – he gained everything his eyes desired. What was Solomon's conclusion? See Ecclesiastes 1:2.

That night God appeared to Solomon. God said, “What do you want from me? Ask.”

⁸⁻¹⁰ Solomon answered, “You were extravagantly generous with David my father, and now you have made me king in his place. Establish, GOD, the words you spoke to my father, for you've given me a staggering task, ruling this mob of people. Yes, give me wisdom and knowledge as I come and go among this people—for who on his own is capable of leading these, your glorious people?”

¹¹⁻¹² God answered Solomon, “This is what has come out of your heart: You didn't grasp for money, wealth, fame, and the doom of your enemies; you didn't even ask for a long life. You asked for wisdom and knowledge so you could govern well my people over whom I've made you king. Because of this, you get what you asked for—wisdom and knowledge. And I'm presenting you the rest as a bonus—money, wealth, and fame beyond anything the kings before or after you had or will have.”

Ecclesiastes 1:2

The author: Solomon of Jerusalem, King David's son, "The Preacher."

²In my opinion, nothing is worthwhile; everything is futile. ³⁻⁷For what does a man get for all his hard work?

1. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-7.

Do you want to be truly rich? You already are if you are happy and good. ⁷After all, we didn't bring any money with us when we came into the world, and we can't carry away a single penny when we die. ⁸So we should be well satisfied without money if we have enough food and clothing. ⁹But people who long to be rich soon begin to do all kinds of wrong things to get money, things that hurt them and make them evil-minded and finally send them to hell itself. ¹⁰For the love of money is the first step toward all kinds of sin. Some people have even turned away from God because of their love for it, and as a result have pierced themselves with many sorrows.

- **What are your thoughts on the meaning of these verses, considering Solomon's words from Ecclesiastes 1:2? Solomon teaches us that people will not find meaning through knowledge, money, pleasures, work or popularity.**

Certain paths in life leads to emptiness, therefore these words of wisdom helps us to discover true purpose in life

Such wisdom can spare us from the emptiness that results from a life apart from God.

True satisfaction comes from knowing that what we are doing is part of God's purpose for our life. Everything temporal must be seen in light of the eternal

- **What does it mean to be content?—in a state of peaceful happiness; satisfy; a state of satisfaction**

- **Contentment—limiting your requirements, desires, and actions—provides great gain because it reduces financial worry.**

2. Read Philippians 4:11-13 and discuss your thoughts about Paul's words.

Content Whatever the Circumstances

¹⁰⁻¹⁴ I'm glad in God, far happier than you would ever guess—happy that you're again showing such strong concern for me. Not that you ever quit praying and thinking about me. You just had no chance to show it. Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am. I don't mean that your help didn't mean a lot to me—it did. It was a beautiful thing that you came alongside me in my troubles.

Paul could get along happily/content because he could see life from God's point of view. He clearly focused on what he was supposed to do, not what he felt he should have. In other words his priorities were in order; he was grateful for everything God had given him

Detaching oneself from nonessentials so that we could concentrate on the eternal

Often times we desire for more possessions etc to fulfill the void and or emptiness in our lives.

What are we drawn to when we feel empty inside? How do we find true contentment?

Answer—lies in our perspective, priorities and our source of power. (example of what Pastor's sermon—plugged in to the power source of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The power of God's strength

3. Secret number three to reduce financial worry: Spend wisely your money, whatever the amount. This will help bring contentment to your life.

4. There are three steps to spending money wisely.

- **Have the proper respect for money.**
- **A dollar spent today can never be spent again. That makes every spending decision we make an eternal decision.**
- **Since our money does not belong to us but to God, each of our spending is a heavenly decision.**
- **Spending money is not a casual matter; spending money is both an eternal and a heavenly matter**

- **Understand needs, wants and desires. Page 66**
Needs—essentials to living; food, clothing and shelter (transportation, healthcare etc.)

Wants—are choices about the quality of needs. Car, house (one that compliments your lifestyle, not the lifestyle of the “Jones”)

Desires—are everything else; some God-given however many are the result of coveting things we don’t have but feel that its necessary to own

- **With your spending, focus on fulfilling those things that matter most. Accumulating heavenly treasure by sacrificially giving to extend God’s kingdom is one thing that matters.**

Earthly treasures have their place too because God gives us wealth and possessions that enables us to enjoy them, to accept our lot and be content/happy with this God’s work; God’s gift to us.

Ecclesiastes 5:10-20

He who loves money shall never have enough. The foolishness of thinking that wealth brings happiness! ¹¹ The more you have, the more you spend, right up to the limits of your income. So what is the advantage of wealth—except perhaps to watch it as it runs through your fingers! ¹² The man who works hard sleeps well whether he eats little or much, but the rich must worry and suffer insomnia.

¹³⁻¹⁴ There is another serious problem I have seen everywhere—savings are put into risky investments that turn sour, and soon there is nothing left to pass on to one’s son. ¹⁵ The man who speculates is soon back to where he began—with nothing. ¹⁶ This, as I said, is a very serious problem, for all his hard work has been for nothing; he has been

working for the wind. It is all swept away. ¹⁷ All the rest of his life he is under a cloud—gloomy, discouraged, frustrated, and angry.

¹⁸ Well, one thing, at least, is good: It is for a man to eat well, drink a good glass of wine, accept his position in life, and enjoy his work whatever his job may be, for however long the Lord may let him live. ¹⁹⁻²⁰ And, of course, it is very good if a man has received wealth from the Lord and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and to accept your lot in life—that is indeed a gift from God. The person who does that will not need to look back with sorrow on his past, for God gives him joy.

5. Develop and maintain a monthly spending plan (a.k.a. budget). A good spending plan will have three parts.

- **Overall mission – a broad set of personal objectives that your spending is supposed to accomplish.**
- **Setting priorities – determining which yes/no choices to make and when to make them.**
- **Track progress – John Maxwell once said that having a budget means telling your money what to do instead of wondering where it went. Tell your money what to do as oppose to your money telling you what to do.**

6. Components of the spending plan itself should be:

- **Pay God first**
- **Pay your bills and other financial obligations**
- **Save for the future**
- **Reduce (eliminate) debt**
- **Spend the rest on things that matter**
- **Track progress**

Note: A spending plan is personal to you and your family and is designed to express your values and achieve your goals. Ultimately, God should be glorified as you freely express your appreciation for his creation in ways that reflect the uniqueness put into you by the Creator.

7. **Lastly, read Proverbs 14:29--** A wise man controls his temper. He knows that anger causes mistakes.

Message Bible—Slowness to anger makes for deep understanding;
a quick-tempered person stockpiles stupidity.

Slow to anger—reflects the character of and the fear of the Lord; meaning that we must realize that contentment is found not in our external circumstances but in a life governed by the fear of the Lord!

Consider the following strategies for wise buying decisions recommended by Dave Ramsey.

- **Wait overnight before making a purchase. Haste makes waste—might change your mind or price might be lowered**
- **Carefully consider your buying motives. Why—needs, wants and desires**
- **No amount of “stuff” equals contentment or fulfillment.**
- **Never buy anything that you do not understand.**
- **Consider the “opportunity cost” of your money; i.e., what other opportunities are you missing out on as you make spending decisions? Eternal and heavenly decisions**
- **Seek the counsel of your spouse or “accountability partner” if you are single.**