

# God loves me, even my finances

As a child the two things I was never allowed to ask an adult, how much money they made or their age! Actually I could ask my Great Aunty Jean how old she was! Got the same answer every time....."I'm as old as my tongue and a little older than my teeth." But money? Never talk about money, how much a person made, how much anything cost them....No, no, no, NO!

Jesus on the other hand loved to talk about money! 50% of the parables are about riches. And Jesus came down hard on rich guys! Probably like you, I've always breathed a sigh of relief over this, being that I don't think I'm wealthy! Yeah! Jesus is talking about "Those" people over there, with a private jet and a huge Yacht, sipping cocktails cruising around the mediterranean!

I skimmed over parables about rich people giving to the poor. I couldn't understand exactly how to bring those principals into my life. It sort of scared me. The stories seemed extreme! If I sell everything I own and give all the money away don't I then become poor? Is that good stewardship?

Is that what following God should look like? I was left feeling guilty if I had money and anxious when I didn't! I stuck with the advice my mother gave me about money. Don't spend what you don't have, only borrow money for a house, there's no shame in going without, and only lend money if you don't need it back! Her wisdom didn't exactly go against what the bible said so I felt I was good to go!

Conversations about money seemed few and far between as an adult. Preachers only mentioned money occasionally when the church needed more of it. I always felt somewhat sorry for the pastor who had to ask the congregation to be generous with their giving, he was after all appealing for them to pay his salary. It seemed like a bit of a guilt trip at times too! I was left feeling I owed God more money!!! God, money, church, money, Jesus, the Bible....things seem complicated around money!

The one fact I know above all else is God loves us. This fact is found in so many verses of the bible, but here's one of my favourites;

**Romans 8 verses 38 & 39**

**For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither the present or the future, nor any powers, neither**

**height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, (*Money, finances, riches, or lack of riches*) will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Being totally confident in God's love for us; if Jesus wants to talk to us about money it's for our good, for our growth. God has absolutely NO evil intent towards us. Could it be that God wants something for us, not from us? Rather than looking at money through the lens of fear, of not having enough, or losing what we do have, the picture changes radically when we view money through the lens of God's radical love for us! Jesus calls us to faith and trust in our loving Heavenly Father, rather than trusting in laws to earn our way to Heaven. We are invited into relationship with God, invited to bring our whole selves to Him, our good, bad, and ugly, insecurities, fears, quirks, and our daily struggles, of earning money and paying bills! He welcomes us. We can trust Him with this awkward conversation of money. God is good.

The Greek word for "Good," is Agathos. This word means good, righteous as we understand it in English however Agathos also means generous, or plentiful. In Genesis, when God created the earth, He looked upon what He had made and declared it was good, it was generous. Creation reflects

God's generosity. We live in His generosity. Imagine for a moment a world that isn't generous, where there is only one type of tree, one choice of vegetable, no variety in bird life, animals all the same, people all looking the same. We live in a world of vibrant generosity, of plenty. God himself is GOOD, He is generous. God loves us and is generous. Two wonderful reasons we can trust Him. We can afford to go all in with God.

An unseen God providing for your needs can appear like foolishness to those who haven't been transformed by His presence. The world pulls us into a very different reality. 1 Timothy 6v10 warns us about the LOVE of money. Money is powerful. It can lead us into greed, like all addictions the desire for money and what it gives us becomes insatiable. We want more! There is never enough. Millionaires, the super rich, describe wanting just 10% more. Wanting more becomes all consuming; More clothes, more shoes, more toys, more, entertainment, .....more! Bigger house, the latest car. People have things hanging in their closets with labels attached, items never worn, bedrooms are turned into closets. Garages house more cars than owners have time to drive, toys often hide in storage sheds pulled out once a year to impress a friend or neighbour. With more stuff comes more responsibility. Insurance, maintenance, housing, and deciding when to replace that stuff, up grade to a fancier model, ever better, bigger, newer.

Contentment never enters the equation. Peace is a value that's squeezed out of the way. To many people, all the stuff looks like success. Those who don't have, are jealous, dissatisfied with their lot. Capitalism promises happiness and prestige for those who have the most stuff.

It's easier to trust a fat bank account than an unseen God. Right? Faith in money to meet my needs seems more logical than faith in God, whom I can't see! Jesus and Paul are telling us to beware, loving money, wanting more money, never being content with what we have, can cause us to lose our love for God. If we love money, if that's where our passion is, we fool ourselves if we think we still trust and love God. Such warnings, or instructions are in place because God loves us. God wants the best for us. He doesn't want money to own us, or enslave us. God doesn't want spoilt kids! Entitled Brats!

We can't just let go of money and walk away swearing off never touching it again, it's not realistic. However bringing our finances to God, allowing Him to enter the conversation opens us up to enormous blessing. God doesn't want us to worry about money, he wants to give us joy, peace, goodness, fulfilment and contentment. He wants us to live rich fulfilling lives. And I believe the key to this is generosity.

Let's look at **2 Corinthians chapter 9 verses 6 to 11.**

**Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a joyful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound in you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.**

**As it is written; "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever."**

**Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.**

God's kingdom is often described as being upside down and here is a beautiful example. The world encourages you to hold on to all you have so you can acquire more but this scripture is welcoming us into God's way of giving so you can receive. Sow sparingly you will reap sparingly but if you

sow generously you will reap generously. Doesn't matter how much you have or don't have if you are stingy with it you won't receive much. Did you notice how much we are to give? Decide according to what's in your heart, not your bank account, it's your decision. God doesn't have His hand in your pocket grabbing all your money, He isn't demanding you empty your bank account, no it's your decision, but don't give your money out of guilt or manipulation give it with joy!

According to this scripture the more you exercise generosity to the poor God will increase how much seed, or resources, you have, you will be made rich in every way; so that you can be generous on every occasion. We become righteous when we give generously with a joyful heart.

Righteous is an old fashioned word that means, genuine, virtuous, decent, upright or good, in other words we can feel good about our self when we give generously, it builds our self esteem. When we are righteous it aligns us with God's standards, we bless Him. How we use our money puts a smile on His face.

Do you see the difference between God's way and the world's way?

Everything belongs to God, and He lovingly shares His bounty with us.

When my husband, Rodney, and I were first married we were poor. My husband was going into second year university and that summer he started his own painting company. Finishing a job that day, he had no work for the morning. Sitting down to dinner that night, we thanked God for the food and asked Him to provide work. No sooner had we finished dinner, the phone rang asking if Rodney could start tomorrow. God has been utterly faithful to us financially. Leading us through highs and lows.

If we hold on to our money we can become fearful, afraid there will not be enough, so we hoard, sharing is difficult, and greed blossoms. We are either anxious we don't have enough, or anxious we will lose what we have. **But**, and it's a wonderfully exciting but, when we allow Jesus to be in charge of our money we will be blessed by God. It's a road of freedom! An outcome that gives us joy, calms anxiety and draws us into a closer walk with our Heavenly Father!

Money! That awkward taboo subject!88

Your finances!

Giving all you own to God, because He wants to bless you.

Are you feeling the joy yet???

