

God or Mammon?



God's Plan for Your Money (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious truths out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours. My theme this week is "God's Plan for Your Money." I'm dealing with a subject that is of vital practical importance for every one of us.

In my introductory talk yesterday, I explained, first of all, that God has a complete plan for your life, covering every area of your life. And that, in our perception of God's plan there are three successive phases. This is stated by Paul in Romans 12:1–2. First of all, we perceive God's plan as good, He never wants anything bad for any of His children. Second, we discover that it's pleasing or acceptable—the more clearly we perceive it, the more we desire it. And, thirdly, as we move on in the perception and obedience of God's will, we discover it's perfect or complete. It covers every area of our lives and that includes that very important area of finance.

Then I pointed out that there are two essentials for finding God's plan for your life: first, surrender yourself without reservation to God for His service; second, as a result of that, learn to think God's way. And I want to tell you right now that my teaching on "God's Plan for Your Money" will not do its work in you unless you meet those two conditions: you surrender yourself without reservation to God for His service; and you learn to think God's way, you cultivate understanding God's priorities, God's standards.

And then I said in the close of my message yesterday that God's plan for your life, including your finance, is summed up in one word "prosperity"—3 John 2

> "Beloved, I pray [or wish above everything, or] in all respects [that] you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers."

That one word "prosper" covers every area: your soul, your physical body, and your finance. And the will of God is the same in every area—prosperity or success.

Today I'm going to share with you why your attitude to money is so important because it actually reveals your attitude to God Himself. It's so important, I'm going to say it again: Your attitude to money actually reveals your attitude to God

Himself.

I want to quote to you the words of Jesus on this subject. In Matthew 6:24:

> "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

First of all, let's look for a moment at the meaning of the word "mammon." One of the modern translations says, "You cannot serve God and money," but that doesn't fully express it because "mammon" is more than money. "Mammon" is an evil, spiritual power that grips men and enslaves them through money. It's not money itself, it's the spiritual power that works in the world and in the lives of millions of people through their attitude to money and that power is called "mammon."

Now Jesus says, "You cannot serve God and mammon." And He says, "Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will hold to one and despise the other." Now in each case, Jesus naturally puts God first, mammon second. So He says, first of all, "Either you will hate God and love mammon or you will hold onto God and despise mammon." Isn't that a serious thought? That if you love mammon, you hate God. That's a very, very serious thought. On the other hand, if you hold onto God, if your life is committed to God, you will despise mammon. That's not despising money but that's despising that Satanic force that enslaves men and women through money. You will despise it; you will not let it dominate you. And you see, there is no neutrality. We must acknowledge in our lives the claim of one or the other. It's not a choice of whether we will serve, it's only a choice of whom we will serve—either God or mammon. And it's really a question of priorities.

A little further on in the same sixth chapter of Matthew, Jesus says:

> "But seek first [God's] kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."

So, Jesus doesn't say we have to be without the things but He says we must not put the things first. We have to put the kingdom of God and His righteousness first in our lives consistently—that's commitment to God and His kingdom and purposes. And Jesus says if we do that, if we do not run after mammon, if we do not make mammon our God, but if we serve the true God and the interests of His kingdom and seek after righteousness, then He says that God will see to it that all the material and financial things we need are added to us. You see, it's so blessed to let God add and such an awful strain and leads to so much frustration if you're pursuing money. Don't pursue money. That's what Jesus says. Let money pursue you. If you've followed the right course in your life then the money will be added to you. You don't have to lie awake at night, you don't have to spend hours hatching plans to get rich and I just want to say that, by the grace of God, I followed that principle for more than forty years and I can attest that God is faithful. Sometimes my faith has been tested; sometimes I've had to deny myself things that the world esteems very highly but as I look back, I have to say God has been totally faithful.

You see, this principle of putting God first runs all through the Bible. There's two beautiful verses in the 3rd chapter of Proverbs which say the same thing:

> "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

The "barns and the vats" are all of your material needs—they will be abundantly supplied, they will overflow. When you do what? When you honor God with your wealth. How do you honor God with your wealth? By giving Him the firstfruits, the best—by setting aside the first portion for God. And I have to point out to you that with our money we either honor or dishonor God, but there's no neutrality.

Let me say, lovingly, God doesn't want your tips. When you go to church and the offering plate comes around, don't drop a quarter in—that's insulting God. As a matter of fact for most people today to give a dollar is an insult to God. That's what you would give to the young man in the parking lot at the restaurant who valet parks your car. You'd slip a dollar in his hand. Don't treat God like that because you're insulting Him, you're dishonoring Him.

In line with what I've been saying, the Scripture points out that putting money before God is idolatry. Colossians 3:5:

> "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

Notice what Paul says about covetousness—it's idolatry. When you are seeking money first you're making money your God. And making money your God is rightly called idolatry. The Lord said to Israel, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me or beside Me." But I think I would have to say that

in our contemporary culture far more people make money their god than the true God and they are guilty of idolatry. Notice covetousness is put with a lot of other unpleasant things: fornication, uncleanness and so on.

Most churches wouldn't accept people who live in fornication, in sexual immorality. But frankly, our churches are full of people who are guilty of covetousness—they're idolaters.

There's another Scripture that I want to pass on to you in this connection: 1 Timothy 6:9–11—a warning against making money your God, against desiring to be rich.

> "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. [Notice the end: destruction and perdition.] For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, [It's not money which is evil—it's the love of money.] ...for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness [or covetousness], and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. [Now what's the remedy, what's the alternative?] But you, O man of God, flee these things ['These things' is covetousness, the love of money, materialism] ...and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness."

You see, there's no vacuum in our lives. If we are to be clear of the love of money, we have to pursue something else. Something else has to take its place. Paul says, "...pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness."

I want to say, in closing, something very important. It takes faith to break with the control of mammon in your life. At some point or other, you're going to have to do something to release yourself from that control of mammon. I can look back on a point in my life when I gave to the Lord's work everything I owned financially and materially when I gave up a very prestigious and well-paying job with a tremendous future and I stepped out in naked faith with nothing to uphold me but the promises of God. But when I did that, I broke the control of mammon over my life. I refused to be a slave of mammon.

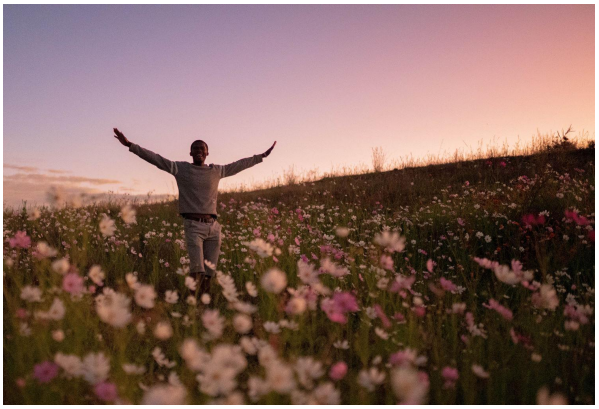
Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing how offering to God is an essential part of true worship.

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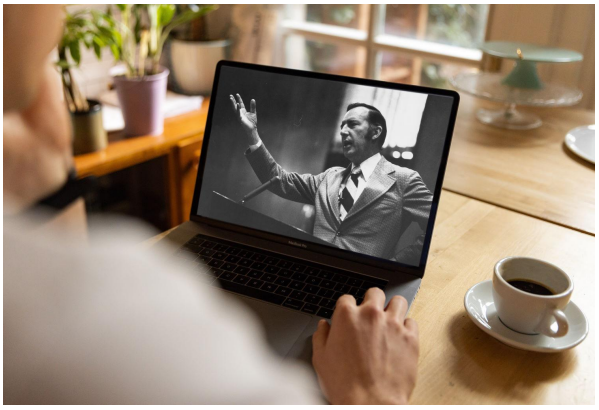
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