

JESUS, MONEY AND MARRIAGE

“No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” (Matt 6:24)

It is both interesting and significant that Jesus reduced the complexities of life to only two decisions - God and money. You cannot serve both. Somehow all of the many decisions we will ever make fall into one of these two categories. Man, as you know, is incapable of giving total attention to two different things. We can only focus on one thing at a time. Take, for example, a family photograph. You can see all the faces at the same time but you can only focus on one at a time. The theological implications of this truth are profound. God is a jealous God and will not relinquish His priority in our life for anyone or anything. This is why “greed” is called idolatry (Col. 3:5). In order to focus on money we have to take our concentration off of Christ.

In the verses following our text Jesus warned us not to worry about life, food, body, or clothes. He said: **“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matt 6:33)** When we focus on God everything else falls into place.

This same truth is repeated many times in Scripture. God is a jealous God and wants to be the focus of all activity. This, includes of course, our families. If we love our family more than we love God we are not worthy of Him (Matt. 10:37). When we love God as we should, however, our families are filled with wonderful peace and harmony. Note that wives are to submit to their own husbands as “unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:22). Husbands are to love their wives in the same way that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25). Children are to obey their parents “in the Lord” (Eph. 6:1) Slaves are encouraged to do their work as if they were serving the Lord and not men (Eph. 6:7). Masters are also to make their decisions considering their own Master who is in heaven (Eph. 6:9). In fact, everyone is instructed: **“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Col 3:23)**

Now let us apply this lesson to the home and to finances. Obviously, something is wrong! According to the Center for Disease Control's National Vital Statistics Report of 2002, 50% of first marriages ended in divorce and 60% of remarriages end in divorce. But, the Center for Disease Control also found that 96% of Americans express a personal desire for marriage, and almost three-quarters of Americans believe marriage is a life long commitment. We are trying to have happy homes that stand up under the stress of modern living, but we are failing.

If we put God first, however, our homes can be transformed by His power. God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33). Since debt induced financial stress is the #1 reported cause of divorce, let us Jesus help us with our finances!

According to a Federal Reserve Study over 40 % of families spend more than they earn. Often these purchases fall into the category of “impulse buying”. The availability of credit cards and computers offer instant gratification. For a fee you can name a star after someone you love or purchase an acre of land on the moon. Others may feel the “need” of a new car or big screen TV. Still others buy new clothes or “invest” in cosmetic surgery. Many things we buy on impulse involve things we do not need and may be better off without.

Wouldn't it be wise to involve Jesus in our finances? Please consider:

1. Jesus is called the “Wonderful Counselor” (Is. 9:6). Please consult Him before purchasing anything!
2. Whether it is like the widow's barrel (1 Ki. 17:16) or the little boy's lunch (Jn. 6:5 - 14) the blessing of God can always make what you have go further and do more.
3. One accident or illness can cancel out many years of hard work and saving. Please seek God's guidance and protection before going anywhere or doing anything.
4. We need to learn to be content with something to eat and something to wear (1 Tim. 6:8).
5. We need to lay up treasure where moth and rust cannot destroy them (Matt. 6:19).

PLEASE LET JESUS HELP YOU MANAGE THE MONEY IN YOUR MARRIAGE!