

Doctrine of Money

In the Old Testament

1. In the Old Testament money is portrayed in a very positive manner.
 - *Genesis 13:2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.*
 - *Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. 2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. 3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*
 - *1 Kings 3:13 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; 12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. 13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honor: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.*
 - *Proverbs 10:22 The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.*
2. Hard work produces wealth.
 - *Proverbs 10:4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. Note.*
3. Caution should be taken not to boast of one's wealth.
 - *Proverbs 27:24 For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?*
4. Wealth brings obligations to care for the needy.
 - *Proverbs 19:17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.*

Money in the New Testament

5. In the New Testament the emphasis changes. The negative side of money is warned against.
 - *Luke 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. 22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. 23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.*

A person can be mentally rich but poor spiritually before the Lord.
6. Money must not be allowed to become one's God, for money is a creation of God and so must not be allowed to rule our lives.
 - *Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*
7. The acquisition of wealth can tempt the heart to not seek first the kingdom of God.
 - Riches can choke out the word. *Matthew 13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*
 - Riches can make it difficult to have a vital living faith. *Matthew 19:23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*
8. The heart of Christ went out to the poor in spirit because they were not able to rely upon their own resources and so were more susceptible to submit to His Lordship.
 - *Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
9. For the apostle Paul, the opposite of covetousness was contentment.
 - *Philippians 4:12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*
10. Paul warns that the love of money is the root of all forms of evil.
 - *1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

11. True riches include salvation and a life of sanctification and service.

- *James 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*
- *2 Corinthians 6:10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

12. In summary, money is a gift of God, and a sign of His blessings. But money is not to be a god in itself.

Money in Church History: The Early Church

13. The people in the early church were generally poor.

14. A stoic indifference to the things of this world was encouraged in part due to an eschatological expectation of an imminent coming of Christ.

15. But the early church was not communistic, despite Acts 2:44 and 4:32.

- *Acts 2:44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;*
- *Acts 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.*

16. Private property was permitted with the admonition to do good to others.

“When it is in your power to do good,
withhold it not, because alms
deliver from death.”

17. The early church fathers understood that it is not the quantity of wealth that the Bible condemns, but the quality of the heart.

18. Generally the church fathers considered individual money matters without addressing more general economic problems of society that produced poverty.

19. One notable exception was that of usury. Athanasius taught that usury was a great sin. If persisted, in the soul would be lost.

“If anyone commits usury,
he commits robbery and no longer has life.”

20. By prohibiting usury, the attempt was made to stop exploiting the poor who were inclined to borrow at a high rate of interest.

21. The medieval church crystallized the Christian thinking on money in a philosophy of asceticism.
22. The undergirding belief, promoted by Thomas Aquinas, was that money was fundamentally flawed being a product of the fall. Therefore, any wealth beyond the minimum was unnecessary and therefor sinful.
23. Wealth was pitted against the spiritual. (To live simply vrs. to live more simply?).
24. As the wealth of the corporate church began to grow due to an unpaid clergy and donations, the practice of alms giving was encouraged, and then demanded—up to 1/10 of income was to be given to the bishop.