

Money Matters January 14, 2018

If you had to describe your absolute worst moment of financial devastation, what would it be? For me it was when I was a single mom of two high school daughters, running a music studio out of my home with no idea how I was going to pay the mortgage that month. I come home from a weekend away to discover my dining room ceiling had collapsed because my mom had left the water running in the bathtub. Many of us have experienced the worst of times. Maybe for you it's right now!

How many of you have worried about something related to money this week? Have you worried if you'll have enough to pay the bills? Has the anxious thought crossed your mind that an unexpected crisis could leave you financially devastated?

And you do know it's not only the poor who worry about money. Sometimes those we call rich worry even more – there's more to lose. Have you worried your retirement funds might not be enough? Worried that you'll run out of money before you run out of time?

Let's take it a step further. Has anyone *lost sleep* worrying about finances? Or, has anyone had an argument with family member as to how money should be spent – or not spent on something?

If you've had any of these anxious moments, you're not alone. According to the American Psychological Association, money has been the top cause of stress since 2007. And it's not getting any better for the next generation. One half of millennials say financial anxiety has caused them depression, and 1/4 of them say financial anxiety has made them physically ill.

Welcome to the 21st century. Money, or the lack of it, is a big deal, no matter if you have a lot or a little.

Rockefeller was at one point the world's richest man—the first ever American billionaire. When a reporter asked him, “How much money is enough?” He responded, “Just a little bit more.”

So that's what Rockefeller had to say about money. What about God? Actually, God has a LOT to say about money.

Did you know that 16 of Jesus' 38 parables are about managing money and possessions? Did you know that 1 out of 10 verses in the Gospels deal directly with the money?

How about the Bible as a whole? Well, the Bible has 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 verses on faith, but 2,350 verses on money and possessions. I should have been preaching about money a long time ago! But when's the second-best time? Now!

So, what if I told you that you could live completely WORRY FREE because you knew you would *always* have financial sufficiency? Would you believe me? (You shouldn't.) But, would you believe *Jesus*?

Living WORRY FREE is *exactly* what Jesus tells us that our Father want for us, individually and as a church family." Listen to the words of Jesus from Matthew 6:25-34. I want someone to count the number of times they hear the word worry.

"Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So, do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

How many times did you hear the word worry? Six. Not much has changed in 2000 years!

Jesus has told his disciples the Father desires that they LIVE COMPLETELY WORRY FREE with absolutely NO financial anxiety.

Now, I know most of you have heard this “don’t worry” part before, but to get to the “no worry” part, you have to read the fine print, because there are two conditions for living WORRY FREE.

Let’s read the fine print. Jesus says, you’re running around saying, “[What shall we eat, drink, wear . . .](#)” And then he adds: “[Your heavenly Father knows that you *need* these things.](#)”

What things? Food, water, clothes. What do those things represent? The basic necessities of life. What we’re promised is everything we *NEED*, not everything we *want*. This is not the health and wealth gospel, where God promises to make you wealthy beyond your wildest dreams. He may do that for some, but that’s not the promise here.

God’s promise is for *sufficiency*. If you can be content with *sufficiency*, having your basic needs met, then you are on your way to living WORRY FREE.

But there’s a second condition. [But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things \(all your basic needs\) will be given to you as well.](#)

The promise of sufficiency is for those who are putting God’s kingdom and his righteousness first. Those aren’t two different things, they are two ways of saying the same thing.

There is a way of doing life in the Kingdom that Jesus both taught and lived. This way of doing life in the Kingdom sometimes lines up with conventional financial wisdom, and sometimes it flies in the face of conventional wisdom. I wouldn’t want us to just assume that our common sense can get us to the place of promise.

Let me give you an example of how conventional financial wisdom and Kingdom wisdom can go in opposite directions.

Conventional wisdom says:

If I have \$1000 and give away \$900, how much do I have left? \$100

Mathematically true, but not in the Kingdom? Here’s how Kingdom mathematics works.

Ecclesiastes 1:1

Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.

When I, in a moment of spontaneous generosity, give away my money (or time or resources) to a friend in need (or an enemy in need) in obedience to the Father, it doesn't mean there will be less for me. God says it will come back to me after many days.

In Kingdom mathematics: $\$1000 - \$900 = \$1000$

If you like that kingdom mathematics, you'll love this one.

Proverbs 11:24

One person gives freely, yet gains even more;
another withholds unduly but comes to poverty.

That's like saying:

$\$1000 - \$900 = \$1500$

BUT the opposite is true as well:

$\$1000 - 0 = \100

Kingdom math is SO much fun.

Let me give you another example how conventional wisdom and kingdom wisdom march to two different drummers. This one even caught me by surprise this week.

Conventional wisdom is like Robinhood wisdom. It assumes that God will always give to the one who has less. So, if you're going to redistribute wealth, you should take from the rich and give to the poor. That's what Jesus would do, right?

Now yes, Jesus and the whole of Scripture tell us to make provision for the poor, but then one day Jesus tells this story. A master went on a trip and entrusted his wealth to his servants. He gave one servant 5 talents (1 talent = 20 years wages for the common worker) That's like winning the lottery! That's 100 years of income! WOW! You could put up your umbrella and chill out in the Bahamas.

To another servant he gave 2; and to another servant he gave 1.

When he returned, the man with 5 talents apparently hadn't retired to the Bahamas, but had earned another 5. The one that was given 2 earned another 2.

To both he said, “Well done you good and faithful servant! You’ve been faithful in little, I’ll give you much more!”

The one with only one was afraid he’d lose the money. He was haunted by the ‘What if . . . What if . . . I don’t have enough to spare or lose!’ So he closed his fist and guarded his MONEY closely. When the owner came back he at *least* had what he started with. But the master was *not* happy.

At this point in our story, one servant now has 10 talents; one servant has 4 talents; and one servant has just 1. If you were told that the master (aka Jesus) was going to do some redistribution of the wealth, what would you expect him to do? You’d expect he’s give it to the one with the least. You know, take from the rich and give it to the poor. But no! He takes away the one talent from the poorest servant, and who does he give it to? The one with 10! What? That seems so unfair! I’m sure Jesus was going for the shock value here because he’s was about to make a point.

Apparently, being the have-not was not sufficient to qualify for a handout. So who did qualify? The one who had managed what he was given well.

Kingdom principle: Who does the Father entrust his wealth to?
The one who manages well what he has, whether a little or a lot.

Well, if that’s the case, I’d better learn to manage my money well according to Kingdom principles, and I don’t want to assume my good common sense is enough to make that happen.

If we are really serious about wanting to live completely WORRY FREE because our Father promises to provide complete financial sufficiency, then we’d better get our head into the BOOK and learn Kingdom living.

I found a great online resource that has collected everything God has said in the Scriptures about money and possession and divided it up by topic. I’m going to post it on our website and on our Facebook page. I hope you’ll take advantage of it.
<https://www.biblemoneymatters.com/bible-verses-about-money-what-does-the-bible-have-to-say-about-our-financial-lives/#bible-verses-about-money>

But there’s one more counter-intuitive principle of money in Kingdom living to jolt you out of conventional thinking about money and get you to start thinking like Kingdom people.

Conventional wisdom says, money's the bottom line. Just do the math. The numbers don't lie. And then Kingdom principles come along and say, "Sometimes money problems have nothing to do with money." If you're living financially responsibly and the numbers just won't add up, you may not have a money problem.

Case in point:

During David's reign, there is a famine in the land. A famine translates for us into a long-term financial downturn. A definite lack of that promised sufficiency.

David is puzzled. So what does he do? [David sought the Lord](#). Smart man.

Lord, what's wrong? Where is your promised sufficiency?

God says, **I'm glad you asked.**

Actually, there's a reason I am withholding your promised sufficiency. I'm very displeased because of an injustice that happened before you were King.

David, Really, God? Why are you withholding from me (and us) for something someone *else* did?

God, Because, I needed to get your attention. You're the one I've chosen to fix the injustice.

You see, Saul had unjustly slaughtered the Gibeonites in violation of a treaty that had been made with them. And God wanted David to go back and make it right.

And David did just that. It's not a pretty story, but you can read about it in 2 Samuel 21. Then the Scriptures say, [After that, God answered prayer on behalf of the land](#).

I think I'd better ask, "Lord, is there anything that is blocking your blessing in my life?"

You see, I believe that where the Lord guides, the Lord provides. If he's not providing, then somewhere I'm missing his guiding. I don't want to just keep doing the same thing and expecting a different result.

Lord, what's the problem? Move me beyond my conventional assumptions and give me kingdom eyes, because I want to live completely **WORRY FREE** knowing my Father promises to provide complete financial sufficiency.

Money matters to God. Money matters to me too. Will you with me, study to become a Kingdom person who lives by kingdom principles? Imagine how much emotional energy would become available to us if we really stopped worrying about

money. Imagine how much more energy we'd be able to invest in meaningful pursuits.

Lord, show us your ways!