

God's Financial Plan for All People Part-I

Sermon by the late Pastor A. Clark—May 1922)

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Let us be very careful, and trust God by His Spirit to help us to know His plan, because God's financial plan (if rightly understood), brings us great blessing both spiritually and financially. However, just like any other Truth of the Bible if misunderstood or misapplied, will become a curse instead of a blessing. God's truth concerning anything in our life, will work both ways; if accepted it always proves a stepping stone to wonderful blessings in this life, and eventually lead to eternal life; .. if rejected and thrust aside, however, it becomes a curse, a harm, and a hindrance to further spiritual growth.

Perhaps we may have noticed that people who accept the Truth of the Bible have received a great blessing and prosperity; with those who have rejected it, sooner or later disaster and distress have overtaken them.

We have no apology to offer for taking up this most important subject of 'God's will' concerning our money, because money is the paramount (most sought after) issue in this entire world. Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, said, that the Gentiles sought after all these things; they were making money their paramount issue of life—that is, their financial supplies. They were seeking it continually, first and above everything else, what they should eat and drink, and wherewithal by which they were to be clothed. That is the condition of sinners and the large majority of 'professing Christians' today, as they are seeking after those same things. The whole object of men in all they say and do (in their natural state), is controlled by money. "I was visiting a family in another city not long ago (the late Pastor said), and there was a sister in that home, living with the ill sister whom I was visiting, and we could see that she was grieving over something. In the 'course of conversation' in relating her troubles, she said: 'My husband is going to break up the home; I am going one way, the little girl another, and he still another way.

When we asked him what his motive was for this move? He told us it was that he might learn a new trade and take up some studies As

we inquired of the reason for this, he told me that he was not making enough money. He would break up his home and grieve his wife! He was making all of that sacrifice in order to make 'more money'!.

The cry still everywhere these days is "more money", which is the cause of all the labor strikes which are so prevalent these days. All these situations and conditions reveal to us, that money is the most important (a paramount) issue of every life in this entire world; it is the 'god of this world' (as far as 'material things' go; in all nations, in cities, in families, and with individual lives. Money is the cause of many divorces, for very much of all 'family troubles' are over money. 'The husband thinks the wife is spending too much money,' and 'then they begin to have quarrels.'

However, this need not be the case in Christian homes; if the husband is unreasonable and thinks the wife is too extravagant, what she needs to do is to 'lay that matter before God', without getting angry at all, and if He cannot use the husband to give her the proper amount as needed, God will send it out of her great bank account in Heaven. (On the other hand) 'If the wife is at fault', 'the husband can also commit his cause to God', and 'God will straighten out that matter for him'; 'he need not complain to his wife at all. God can take the desires of the world and for worldly things, and for worldly show, out of the wife's heart.

We have noticed that people have risked their lives for money. When the 'gold craze' was so prevalent in America, people would leave their homes and go to the Klondike, to endure all sorts of hardships and privation for one purpose—'to accumulate money'.

Men were willing to break up their home and throw their wife aside (whom they had promised to love and cherish, and to care for and provide for her), and all for the sake of a little money. People will steal jewels and other things for the sake of getting money.

So, we all need to know more about God's 'financial plan' for each one of us, because many people are willing to sell their spirit, soul, and body to Satan, for the sake of a few dollars. We, As Christians, are to be directly opposite to the world in every part of life.

George Muller's book on the "Life of Trust", brings this out very clearly, saying: "The child of God has been bought with the 'precious Blood of Christ, and is altogether His property

with all that he possesses; his bodily strength, his mental strength, his ability of every kind, his trade, business, art, profession, his property, etc., for it is written (1 Cor. 6:19,20). "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

We are not to have money as the paramount principle in our lives. We would be surprised how far-reaching this 'principle of money' is in the average Christian life, when put to the test (the late Pastor said). You could take a stormy night when there is a service, the average, nominal professed Christian, who (and I am not speaking of our members now, as they know better, he said) will say: "we will not go out to-night; it is raining too much." "That is what they said where I used to attend."

Those same people would go to work in a blizzard, or any other kind of inclement weather, to make five dollars a day. What does that signify? That a five-dollar note is of more importance to them than God's Truth! They would miss a meal to make a five-dollar note, but to miss God's Truth means absolutely nothing to them. However, the Christian is not to seek these things, for money is not the most important issue in their life. Money should not take its place, while we (as Christians) are to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness", and all temporal things shall be added.

All of God's dealings with His people have been to get them away from that condition of having money as the paramount issue, that of seeking first the material needs and the welfare of their bodies, .. but, to transfer their desire to seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

As we consider God's dealings with Israel, we discover that His whole plan was to teach them that obedience to His Word as their main object in life, was far more important than the importance of seeking what they were to eat and drink, and the wherewithal they should be clothed. The whole history of Israel from beginning to end, is based on the 'money question'. It was the greatest factor in God's dealings with them in their growth and development, and you and I are here because Israel's calling began with the financial question. (How was that? we

might ask). Well, 'they would never have called on God if they had not gotten into a 'tight place' financially'. They had hard task masters to contend with; they were compelled to work very hard and had long hours, without any pay, because they were slaves; so when their financial affairs became too desperate for them, then they 'called on God', and He delivered them.

Then God took them over the Red Sea into a wilderness, where they had to trust God for their 'financial support'; and He told them through Moses, that all His dealings with them was for one great purpose. He suffered them to hunger and to thirst. He suffered them to be bitten by fiery serpents, and to wander in the wilderness for forty years. He said that He chastened them as a father does a son, for one object, that they might learn that man doth not live by bread alone (as that was not to be their chief object in life, the material supplies, and what they could supply in human ways for their temporal needs) (as the Gentiles did), but to live 'by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'

(Deut. 8:3) "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna which thou knew not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

Jesus referred to this in speaking with the man who came to Him and desired that he divide his inheritance, and to intercede on his behalf. (Luke 12:13-15) "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man who made me a judge or a divider over you? And He said unto them, 'Take heed', and 'beware of covetousness': for a man's life 'consists not' on the abundance of the things which he possesses."

We all need to take heed that we do not put money ahead of the kingdom of God. We should not allow money to be the paramount issue in our life. Since a person's happiness does not consist in 'the abundance of possessions', money should not be the paramount issue of life, but instead the 'will of God' should be our chief object!

In the 16th chapter of Luke, we have wonderful teaching on what an important matter

the financial end of our salvation is. Money is the most important issue of everyone in their natural or carnal state, and until we are delivered from putting money first; until we get on Scriptural grounds financially, we will never have the spiritual life and power which belongs to us, nor will we receive 'eternal life'.

Jesus' teaching brings out in many places, that our 'eternal life' depends on how we handle our financial affairs. Some individuals may believe and practice it, but it is not 'taught' in this age, although it is clearly brought out in the Word of God. We need to and must notice what and how much emphasis Jesus placed on this matter (of 'God's financial plan'. "And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he has wasted his goods."(Luke 16:1).

That is, he had not handled the money entrusted to him in a right manner. This is a parable for each one of us, which represents 'God and His children'. We, as His children, are the stewards, and all that we possess belongs to Him, our spirits, souls, and bodies. All that we possess belongs to God ('ourselves and things that we have obtained', etc.). Therefore, this parable represents God and the Christian, and/or His children. And this man, the steward, had not 'handled the money right'.

"And he called him, and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, what shall I do: for my Lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of stewardship, they may receive me into their houses."(Luke 16:2-4).

We want to notice this plan of the steward, He probably received a month's notice (or maybe two weeks' notice), a certain time at least was set for his discharge from his position; so he made a plan of his own for when he would be out of the stewardship (where he would not be privileged to handle any more money), but that he would still be provided for; and so he would have a future home. Jesus said that all the Gentiles do that (the children of this world), and that they are wiser than 'the children of light' (meaning Christians). That worldly master commended the unjust steward.

(Luke 16:5-8) "So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my: Lord? And he said to him, 'a hundred measures of oil'. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And, how much 'owest thou? And he said, a hundred measures of wheat, And, he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward."

We do not want to think that that employer commended the steward's dishonesty, rather, he commended his far-sightedness, his shrewdness, for looking ahead to the future, for looking for his future supplies which were only for this life (which Gentiles and other sinners do all the time). All the slaving and working that people do is for them to come to the place in life where they can sit down and say: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. (Luke 12:19)

But Jesus clinched that, saying, "And the lord (meaning a 'house-lord') commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the 'children of light'."(Luke 16:8)

What did he mean? That is the children of the world (sinners) handle money in such a way that they shall be looked after (taken care of) when they do not handle money any longer, when they are unable to work, etc., but the children of God do not handle their money so as to have a home in Heaven, nor to have a future home when they are thru handling money. That is the thought Jesus was bringing out there. "And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitation."

Money continually tempts people to be unscriptural. The "mammon of unrighteousness" is a very serious and subtle temptation. We are to make friends through Scriptural use of the money which God allows to pass thru our hands (as that worldly steward made friends to provide him a future home when he was no longer handling his worldly lord's money. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail".

When you leave this world of actions and handling of money; when you go to the place where there is no more money to be handled

"they may receive you into everlasting habitations."(Vs.9) (In other words) 'Let us so handle Scripturally the money which passes thru our hands while we live on this earth, that when we die (or Jesus comes first), we will have a home in Heaven.' [That is the plain English.]

"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much": "and he that is unjust in the least is unjust in much."

We all need to catch that point (and see and understand it). That the money-end in God's sight, is the least-end of our Salvation; money is the easiest for God to provide, and it should be the easiest for us to trust Him for. Jesus practically said there that if a person is Scriptural financially, which is the smallest, or least end, they will be faithful, or Scriptural in their spiritual life, which is the greatest. (Luke 16:11-13) "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?"

And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."(meaning; 'a worldly pursuit of money, instead of pursuing the riches of God's Kingdom and righteousness'.)

[We all need to recognize and understand the significance of these verses of Scripture that Jesus gave to us.] If we have not become Scriptural, or if we are not willing to become Scriptural in our finances, and God does not ask us to be willing on the first day we become a Christian, or the day that we make our consecration, but we can take the attitude of willingness to obey God's will in all things, as the Spirit makes it plain to us.

The Spirit leads us step by step, and all God asks of us is to be willing to yield to His leading. If a person is unwilling to allow God's will to prevail in their money matters (as the Bible tells us), God will not give them the spirituality that Jesus died to give them, (which is real power of the Holy Ghost as people had in Bible times.)

(Vs.11 again) "If therefore ye have not been faithful in 'the unrighteous mammon', who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

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(Lord willing, we will consider a part II on this most important subject of our being Scriptural with the handling and use of money, which is an Eternal Life issue.)

(SOME MAIN POINTS); 1. We must trust God by His Spirit to help us to know His plan, because God's financial plan (if rightly understood), brings us great blessing both spiritually and financially.

2. God's truth concerning anything in our life (if accepted) it always proves a stepping-stone to wonderful blessings in this life and will lead to eternal life; . but if rejected, it can become a curse and a hindrance to further 'spiritual growth' (if not repented).

3 All of God's dealings with His people have been to get them away from that condition of having money as their most important and paramount issue in life, that of seeking first the material needs and other things, but, to transfer their desire to that of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

4 The 16th chapter of Luke gives us clear teaching on what an important matter the financial end of our salvation is. Money is the most important issue of everyone in their natural carnal state, and until we are delivered from putting money first; until we get on Scriptural grounds financially, we will never have the spiritual life and power which belongs to us, nor will we receive 'eternal life'.

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