

Ministry & Money

Background:

- Worship – everyone created to be a worshipper
 - major difference – who or what do we worship

Paul on Worship – Romans 11:36-12:1

- glory – that object of love, affection – supreme importance to you.
- dedication – commitment of ourselves to that thing or cause, passionate about this
- sacrifice – spend our money, give our time, investigate and invest in, willing to pursue

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Idolatry – worshipping someone or something over God

* Worship the Creator – Steward the Creation *

- Rom. 1 – important that created things never take the place of creator God!

Big Question – How can know – Heart Issue!

* Gauges on the Dashboard *

- Bible Reading, Prayer Life, Fruit of Spirit, **Resources**

* Money a key gauge to the condition of the heart! *

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- Jesus speaks of (wealth, possessions, money) over 25% of the time in the Gospels

- There are 80 times in four Gospels

- Find it over 800 times in the Old & New Testament

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! "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."

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Two Simple Observations

1. Money Follows Your Heart (passions – place of glory)
 - tell what matters by where you invest, give, spend
 - resources are important gauges on your heart
2. Can't Worship Both God & Money
 - one is Creator – other is part of creation
 - Paul – Love of Money – root of all Evil

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Nehemiah 10:28-39 - "The rest of the people—priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants and all who separated themselves from the neighboring peoples for the sake of the Law of God, together with their wives and all their sons and daughters who are able to understand- all these now join their brothers the nobles, and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the LORD our Lord. "We promise not to give our daughters in marriage to the peoples around us or take their daughters for our sons. "When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day. Every seventh year we will forgo working the land and will cancel all debts. "We assume the responsibility for carrying out the commands to give a third of a shekel each year for the service of the house of our God: for the bread set out on the table; for the regular grain offerings and burnt offerings; for the offerings on the

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Sabbaths, New Moon festivals and appointed feasts; for the holy offerings; for sin offerings to make atonement for Israel; and for all the duties of the house of our God. "We—the priests, the Levites and the people—have cast lots to determine when each of our families is to bring to the house of our God at set times each year a contribution of wood to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the Law. "We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the LORD each year the firstfruits of our crops and of every fruit tree. "As it is also written in the Law, we will bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, of our herds and of our flocks to the house of our God, to the priests ministering there. "Moreover, we will bring to the storerooms of the house of our God, to the priests, the first of our ground meal, of our grain offerings, of the fruit of all our trees and of our new wine and oil. And we will bring a tithe of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work. A priest descended from Aaron is to accompany the Levites when they receive the tithes, and the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our God, to the storerooms of the treasury. The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of grain, new wine and oil to the storerooms where the articles for the sanctuary are kept and where the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the singers stay. "We will not neglect the house of our God."

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1. Clear on Conditions for Relationship

- God has revealed what Honors Him
- If Glory is to belong to Him – here is how
- Spelled out with clarity – no gray issues

2. Clear Acceptance of These Conditions

- we will, we will not – pledge their obligation
- followed the dedication of leaders – signing on the line

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“Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests. But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense. I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone

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back to their own fields. So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts. All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms. I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because these men were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their brothers. Remember me for this, O my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services."

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3. Clear Breaking of the Pledge

- Tobiah not to be in the temple
- Priests not keeping the rules
- People not keeping their promise with finances

4. Clear Anger and Action

- vs.6 – I wasn't there
- vs. 7,8 – I heard and was greatly displeased
- vs. 8-9 – I tossed him out

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5. Clear Call To Return

- vs.10 – Levites working in the field
- vs. 11 – reprimand – why is the house of God forsaken?
 - note – even when Eliashib the priest acted wrongly, there was no excuse to forsake the giving.
- vs. 12-14 – tithes restored, duties discharged – that which gives God glory – worship enabled.

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So What

1. How You See and Handle Money is A Heart Gauge
 - what matters to me, where am I ascribing glory
2. God has Clear Conditions for Relationship
 - He spells it out – decides, not us
 - We have agreed to be Christ Followers
3. When Covenant is Broken – Anger and Action
 - Not OK or simple – slow to anger but jealous
 - easily repent and return

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4. Call To Return

- explore the gauge on your dashboard
- repent of wrong behavior and attitudes
- make your money match your worship
- explore what God asks – not what you decide