

MONEY ANSWERS EVERYTHING ...

By John Gagliardi



In the book of Ecclesiastes, in the nineteenth verse of the tenth chapter, there is a very strange little Scripture that says: “...**Money answers everything**”. It is generally thought that the book of Ecclesiastes was written by an aging King Solomon, the man whom the Bible says was “wiser than all men”, and to whom is attributed most of the Book of Proverbs.

So when we read something as seemingly odd as “money answers everything”, and realize it was most likely written by the wisest man who ever lived, then we need to give it more than passing consideration.

On the face of it, those three words seem crass and materialistic, suggesting that money is the most important thing in life (something some people I know would heartily agree with). But I believe there is another, deeper implication hidden in those words.

First, we need to establish that there is nothing wrong with money *per se* – money is a means of exchange, and it is value-neutral. Money can pay for wars and immorality, and money can pay for mission outreaches and feeding the hungry. Both Hitler and Mother Teresa used money, and lots of it.

Christians need money to obey the Great Commission – poverty is not a blessing, it is a curse if you want to obey God and “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Timothy 4: 5). Our poverty may not keep us out of heaven, but it will certainly limit the number of people we can help find the way to heaven.

Jesus spent time watching people putting money into the treasury in the temple (Mark 12: 41) – and traveled with a treasurer among His disciples to look after His money. So can we agree that there is nothing wrong with money in and of itself.

A lot of the discomfort Christians have felt with money over the centuries has stemmed from a simple misunderstanding – and misquoting – of the well known tenth verse from the sixth chapter of 1 Timothy, that money is the “root of all evil”. Of course, the full verse reads: “*The*

LOVE of money causes all kinds of evil". It is not money that is evil, but making an idol out of money, and loving it more than God.

God is happy for us to own money – He just doesn't want money to own us. God wants us to trust in Him, not money: *"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy"* (1 Timothy 6: 17).

With a correct understanding of money in God's Kingdom, how then are we to interpret those vexing three words: "Money answers everything"? I believe the answer lies in two complementary principles in God:

1. God will test us: *"I, the Lord, search the mind, I try the heart, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doing"* (Jeremiah 17: 10);
2. God gives us freewill, so we can seek out and strive for whatever our heart desires.

The combined effect of these principles is that God will use what we strive for and attain, to then test us!

If we want money, he may well let us have it, and then see how we handle it, and what it does to us. "Money answers everything". It answers the test as to what our character is when we become rich.

God wants His people rich – many Scriptures tell us that. But when we get rich, how do we react? Unfortunately, the dismal truth is that wealth has destroyed many more Christians than poverty.

The Christian faith historically has blossomed under persecution and hardship – but in times of prosperity and comfort, it has grown fat and corrupt. As for Christendom as a whole, so for the individual Christian. I have seen many young Christians stay strong in faith and power while they are struggling up the ladder of success, but fall away when they reach the top.

God wants us wealthy, and gives us the Biblical principles such as multiplication and sowing and reaping to allow us to generate and store wealth. But He also wants us holy and pure, acting with absolute integrity in all our business and other dealings.

The test comes not during the battle, but after the victory – when we sit back and say, "I've done it! I'm rich!" That is when Satan starts to take a real interest in us and our affairs.

Did you promise you would tithe your profits? Did you promise to give a large offering to a missionary outreach? Now you can do it – you're rich! But will you? Suddenly there are so many things to do with all that hard-earned money! So many demands on it – perhaps we can start tithing and giving out of profits next year. There are company accountants to justify your decision – after all, it would be irresponsible to give money away, just when we need it for a corporate jet!

"Money answers everything" – and money is answering that this person is not rooted in the love of God, but in the love of money. We have failed the money test!

Money can be dangerous in the wrong hands. Every so often, newspapers write stories about what happens to lottery winners. More often than not, a few years down the track, the millions are gone, and their lives are a disaster. The money was a curse, not a blessing.

Money is a major test of character, as are fame and sex. I am sure we have all heard about the siren-like allure of “the gold, the glory and the girls” and the disastrous impact they have had on some major world ministries. The Bible spells it out for us in 1 John 2: 16 – *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification], and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride of life [assurance of one’s own resources or in the stability of earthly things] – these do not come from the Father, but from the world [itself].”*

God could have made us praising, worshipping, holy and righteous robots – but He did not want that. He made us in His own image, for fellowship – and in the process, God gave us the ability to make our own choices in life. We have the freedom to make Godly choices, as disciples of Jesus Christ, and we have the freedom to follow the world and the devil. Free will – the power of choice!

God gives us good advice in His Word: *“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days...”* (Deuteronomy 30: 19 and 20).

God says: “Choose life!” But so many around us choose death, in this culture of instant gratification, rampant immorality and death for convenience. Our culture says if a baby is going to be a nuisance and a financial burden, kill it – abortion is just a “surgical procedure” after all, at the free “choice” of the mother.

“Money answers everything” – for the sake of money, an innocent life is snuffed out before a child of God ever has a chance to take a breath of air or see the sunshine. For the sake of money, a child is sold into a life of sexual slavery. For the sake of money, a businessman defrauds his customers and evades his taxes.

For the sake of money – indeed, “**Money answers everything**”. What will your answer be when God brings wealth and fame? Will it be compromise and corruption, shame and disrepute? Or, like Joshua of old, will you choose life?

“Now respect the Lord, and serve Him fully and sincerely ... But if you don’t want to serve the Lord, you must choose today whom you will serve ... As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24: 14 and 15).

*(Scripture references from **the New King James Version, the Amplified Bible, and the New Century Version***