

Jesus first in our finances.

Lesson for Sunday, January 12, 2025

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ One of the greatest concerns to a majority of Americans is the national debt.
 - This past November, the national debt surpassed \$36 trillion!
 - That number is hard to comprehend!
 - For example: One billion seconds equals almost 32 years. One trillion seconds equals approximately 31,709 years!
 - Another example: If you had \$1 trillion and spent \$1000 a day, it would take you about 2,740,000 years to spend it all!
- ⇒ We may not have any control over the national debt, but we can & should get **our** financial house in order.
- ⇒ God has lovingly provided clear teaching in His Word about how to manage our money. Today we will be looking at the stewardship basics. When we understand the basics, proper stewardship is easy to understand and practice.
- ⇒ Here's the bottom line: Our theme for the year is: Jesus first. Always.
 - "Always" means all the time and in all things.
 - If Jesus is truly first always in your life, He will be first in your finances.

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Three Biblical Truths for Stewardship
 - a. To understand the Christians' responsibility to God in money matters 3 facts must be remembered:
 1. God owns it all (see Psalm 24:1).
 - a. The Christian acknowledges and submits to God's rule over the earth.
 - b. He is Lord, Master...of ALL!
 - c. The strength to get out of bed. The opportunity to be educated. The ability to perform tasks that contribute to my employer and are a help to others all come from God.
 2. We are His managers (see Deuteronomy 8:18).
 - a. My home is not mine; it is the Lord's. When I have this biblical perspective, I must wrestle with the question, "How am I to care for the Lord's House?"
 - b. Facts about managers:
 - i. What they manage is not their own property.
 - ii. Managers will give an accounting of what they have been doing.
 - iii. Managers must be faithful.
 - c. Apply to this every area of our lives...
 - d. How does the perspective of being a manager line up with how most Americans think about their money and possessions?
 - e. Consider Hebrews 11:13 in light of stewardship. The idea is that as "pilgrims" we are just passing through this life. We are simply to manage – not really own what we have knowing we are God's manager.
 3. The tithe is the Lord's (see Leviticus 27:30).
 - a. Definition of "tithe" is "a tenth - 10%"
 - b. The command to tithe is clearly seen in Malachi 3:10.
 - c. Christ endorsed the tithe (see Matthew 23:23).

- b. These three principles are the foundation of a biblical view on stewardship.
2. 9 Biblical Motives for Stewardship
- a. Stewardship is commanded by God (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
 - b. Stewardship begins by giving ourselves to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5).
 - c. Stewardship proves the sincerity of my love for God (2 Corinthians 8:8).
 - d. The Bible challenges us to grow in our stewardship (2 Cor. 8:7).
 - e. Stewardship keeps us from covetousness (Luke 12:15).
 - f. Stewardship establishes the ownership of God in my life (Psalm 24:1).
 - g. The act of faithful stewardship reflects the example of the Lord who gave first (Romans 8:32; John 3:16).
 - h. Stewardship costs me something of tangible value (2 Samuel 24:24).
 - i. Stewardship opens me to the opportunity to receive God's blessings (Malachi 3:10; 2 Corinthians 9:6, 8).

APPLICATION:

- ⇒ When I obey God with the tithe, what am I showing Him? What am I demonstrating by my actions? *Allow for the class to contribute at first...*
 - 1. Jesus is really first!
 - 2. I believe God's Word.
 - 3. I believe God's promises of provision.
 - 4. It is God that has given me that ability to perform my job.
 - 5. It proves that I love the Lord.
 - 6. It demonstrates that I am interested in seeing His work on earth advanced.
 - 7. It is a testimony that I believe that everything I have comes from the Lord, so I willingly give back to Him what already belongs to Him.
- ⇒ Explain Chest of Joash Day which will be January 26 in the morning service. Here are some key thoughts about the FBT Commitment card to communicate. Teacher note: *Don't assume everyone knows this.*
 - Based on 2 Chronicles 24:1-14 – God's designated place of worship had been neglected for years. King Joash led the people in an effort to fund the repair of the temple & ministry by asking the people to place their offering in a chest. We follow this model by asking people to place their commitment card indicating their tithe in the chest as an act of worship to God.
 - The commitment card – The card is totally anonymous! Why?...
 - Forced obedience is no obedience at all.
 - This is a commitment to tithe between a believer and his Lord.
 - This is NOT a pledge. No one from the church will ever call you or send you an "amount due" statement.
 - Weekly giving – regardless of how you give, on the card, break it down to a weekly amount.
 - This is an opportunity for each member to be obedient in this area of their Christian life.
 - What we don't do to raise money: fundraisers – bake sales, pumpkin sales, car washes, etc.
 - We only practice God's plan – the church members tithe to support the work so the Great Commission can be carried out!