

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Ephesians 4:28

Lesson #27

Managing our Stuff

02/04/2018

1. Do you see Jesus as a chaplain for the American dream?
2. Are creature comforts more important to you than Christian character?
3. Is your sense of significance and security measured by your material net worth?
4. Do you think you can serve both God and mammon?

**If you answer "YES" to any of these questions -
fasten your seat belt.**

1

Ephesians

Our wealth in Christ
ch. 1-3

Our walk in Christ
ch. 4-6

"walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called."

Christians are reconciled to God and called to reflect the image of God through His indwelling Spirit.

1. Managing our **TONGUE.**
2. Managing our **TEMPER.**
3. Managing our **TREASURE.**

2

Ephesians 4:28

"Let him who steals **steal** no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to **share** with him who has need."

**Don't just stop stealing
but also start sharing.**

Paraphrase

"In keeping with the call to "put off the old self" and "put on the new self" in Christ - those who are taking from others must stop it and start working to support themselves in order to share with others who are in need." 3

"Performing with his own hands"

- The passage is not about how one works but rather **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

"in order that he may have something to share"

- The passage is not about giving away what we have but about **SHARING** our blessing with others.

"with him who has need."

- **NEED** can take many forms - material, social, civil, cultural, spiritual.

4

Ephesians 4:28

"Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need."

This may apply in a number of areas.

1. The **cheating subculture** - who cut corners.
2. The **welfare subculture** - where people depend on the care of others when they could care for themselves.
3. The **well off subculture** - where people fail to see that they don't work just for themselves but in order to share with those in need.

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The criminal subculture

Those who commit larceny and rob others unlawfully.



"I commit the crime."



"I do the time."

6

The cheating subculture

Those who cut corners in their favor whenever they can.



"I take every advantage I can get away with."



"I tutor those who need help."

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Ask yourself these questions.

1. Do you cheat at games - cards, sports, etc.?
2. Are you a stingy tipper for service?
3. Do you cut corners on applications, tax reports, recommendations, etc.?
4. Do you exaggerate your accomplishments to gain an advantage?
5. Do you take the initiative to return lost valuables that you have found?
6. Do you cover up mistakes you made that cost someone else to correct?

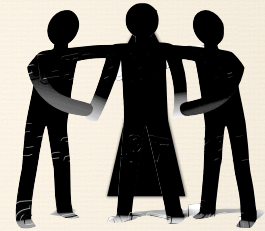
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The welfare subculture

Those who feel they have a right to live off the labor of others.



"I am not responsible for my welfare."



The "widows indeed" are the widows in need." 1 Tim.5

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Ask yourself these questions.

1. Do you often see yourself as a victim?
2. Do you take advantage of legal technicalities that may not be ethical but profitable for you?
3. Do you feel that it is OK to take advantage of others when "they owe you" something?
4. Do you work the legal system in your favor when you find a loophole?
5. Are you quick to take legal action against believers when you have been wronged?
6. Do you take free service from a church but don't support it financially or in ministry?

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2 Thessalonians 3

"10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies (**active but not responsible for themselves**). 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread (**not the bread of others**). 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. 14 And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. 15 And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

- These people were not necessarily beggars but were not taking responsibility to care for their own needs **when they could**.

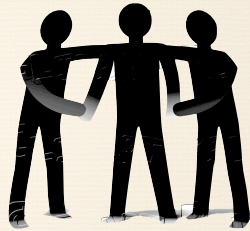
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The well off subculture

Those who see the fruit of their labor as for their consumption only.



"I earned it and it's ALL MINE."



"I AM A STEWARD of God's blessings."

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What does the Bible say about wealth?



As a blessing from God be thankful.



Proverbs 10:22

"It is the blessing of the Lord that makes rich,"

Three great misconceptions

1. Material wealth, creature comforts, and social power are a **sign of God's approval**.

- This was a common understanding in Israel under the **Old Covenant**.

Gen.1:28, 9:1, 24:1, 2 Sam.5:10, 7:13, Prov. 3:9-10, 12:27, 13:22, 112:1-3

- Paul** made it clear that material wealth was not a reward for godliness.

1 Timothy 6

"⁵ (Some) suppose that godliness is a means of gain. ⁶ But godliness actually is a means of great gain **when accompanied by contentment.**"

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2. Material wealth, creature comforts, and social power are in themselves **evil**.

- It is not a **virtue** to be materially poor, physically uncomfortable, and socially outcast.
- God **favors** all who are left out, looked over, and forgotten because they are so (by the world).
- Paul** was not opposed to material prosperity but he was also addicted to it.
- Jesus / Apostles** did not resist the rich for being rich but rather for their disrespect for the poor.

James 2

"⁶ But you have **dishonored the poor man**. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? ⁷ Do they not **blaspheme** the fair name by which you have been called?"¹⁶

3. Material wealth is the **possession** of those who "earn" it with all rights to its use.

- No one creates wealth without **gifts** to do so and the **cooperation** of the environment.
- Christians understand that they bear the image of God and are **stewards** of all that is given them.
- They are responsible for the way they (**not others**) conduct their stewardship responsibilities.

Romans 14

"¹² So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. ¹³ Therefore **let us not judge one another** anymore,"

1 Thessalonians 4:11

"make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and **attend to your own business** . . ."

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Luke 19:13

"And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, **occupy till I come.**"

- Jesus is asking the same of us - we are **stewards** with assets to serve His purposes.

Luke 16:11

"If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous Mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you?"

- Material wealth is a **test** of our faith, hope, and love.

Deuteronomy 8:18

"But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is **He who is giving you power to make wealth,**

- Our material wealth is not **self-made**.

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As a blessing
from God be
thankful.

As an opportunity
for ministry be
responsible.



Proverbs 3

"9 Honor the Lord from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce; 10 so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine."

A summary of 2 Cor. 8-9

- Stewardship starts with offering **ourselves** to God by showing respect for those He loves. 8:5

NOTE: Financial generosity is just one aspect of this.

- Jesus is our **example**. 8:9
- Sharing is a powerful **witness** to love. 8:24
- Sharing is to be **voluntary**, motivated by love and grace not command. 8:8, 9:7
- The rule of thumb is not the tithe but **equality**. 8:13-14

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- Tithes were required by Law in the O.T.

10% management
(Levites)

(Num.18:21,24)

10% charity
(the poor)

every 3rd year

(Deut.14:28,29)

10% temple
(sacrifices)

(Deut.14:22-27)

25-30%



The Old Covenant tithe system
was comparable to a flat tax.

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"In addition to the two tithes which I have already directed you to pay each year, the one for the Levites and the other for the banquets, ye should devote a third every third year to the distribution of such things as are lacking to widowed women and orphan children."—



Flavius
Josephus

Antiquities iv. 240; Loeb ed.

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If you seek to apply the O.T.
Law to American culture -

10% management
(civil
service)

10% charity
(social
service)

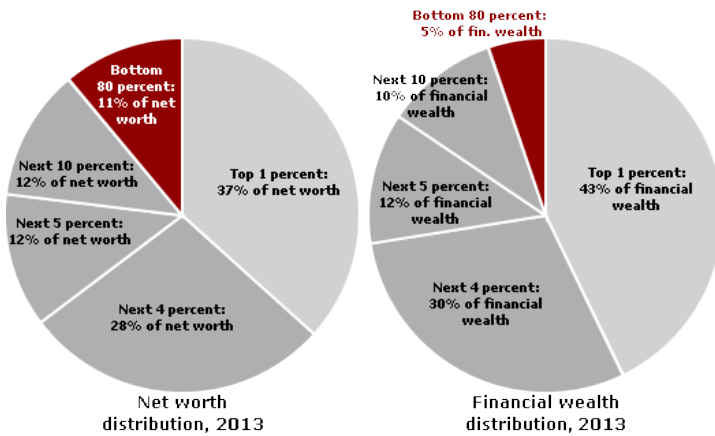
10% temple
(religious
service)

25-30%



- you are looking at a church
tithe and a 20% flat tax.

23



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“A 2010 Princeton study, found that at the national level, households making more than **\$75,000 per year won’t significantly improve day-to-day happiness with more income.”**

*by Daniel Kahneman and Angus Deaton
Kevin Short (Huffington Post)*

Giving Levels by Income

2014 IRS statistics

Those with AGI under \$25,000 gave 12.3%

Those with AGI over \$75,000 gave 3%

Those with AGI over \$2,000,000 gave 5.6%

25

“If a man is proud of his wealth, he should not be praised until it is known how he employs it.”

Socrates

“If a man is proud of his wealth, he should not be praised until it is known how he employs it.”

R.G. LeTourneau

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What should we take home:

- Make peace with **whose** stuff we are talking about.
- View every socio / economic decision as a **test** of our stewardship.
- Remember that our **actions** speak louder than our words.
- Cultivate an **empathetic** heart for the needs of others.
- We are asked to **share**, not deprive ourselves.

27

Witness is a **SHOW and tell expression of faith, hope, and love.**

- Speak the truth lovingly.
- Suffer offenses graciously.
- Share material possessions gladly.

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