

Be able to say, 'It's only money'

I am glad that when I was growing up my mother and father were not preoccupied with money. We knew we weren't rich but we never felt we were poor either. I guess I learned the very good sentence, "It's only money" from my mother and father. It was their way of shifting our family's eyes to more important subjects.

I've been thinking about this sentence and some of its Biblical implications. Here are two that come to my mind.

"It's only money" is a good sentence to remember when times are hard and money is so scarce that we are tempted to measure our worth by how much money we don't have. But people are more important than money and we need to say that out loud. Our relationships, our health, our purpose for living and our generosity to others are not summed up in cash amounts.

When we know this, we refuse to let money become like a storybook witch that casts an evil spell over our lives. We should look money squarely in its presidential faces and recognize it for what it really is. Money is something "added on" to our daily life, but it is not what defines our life.

The same sentence helps when we happen to have more money than we need. "It's only money" keeps us from overrating its value, so that we are given protection from the temptation of wanting too much money. Some of the most



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is something very healthy about learning how to work, and then earning a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. Money handed out without our labor can be a hazardous "add on" to our lives, and we need to be very careful how that money is stewarded; the ordinary pattern throughout every Biblical parable and proverb about money is that wages are earned by sweat.

2) We should do good with money like buying food to eat,

unhappy people I meet are busy making sure they have enough money even after they have plenty.

What should our attitude be about money?

What should we do with it? The answers are simple since there are only three worthwhile things to do with money:

1) earn it, 2) do good with it and 3) enjoy it.

1) Money is earned payment for work. There

paying the rent, investing in the future, sharing with others in gratitude to God for His blessings. Money is an "add on" that has power in it, and what we do with it makes the difference as to whether its effect is good or bad for us. The Bible encourages us to tithe our money and tithe in such a way that we become partners with God in helping good things happen. In this way its power is stewarded to the glory of God.

3) The third thing to do with money is to enjoy it. Money should be used to have fun — like buying a bicycle or having coffee in a cafe, seeing a good show and, best of all, taking someone else along.

The key to it all is understanding that being blessed by God is not measured by the "add ons," which are always different person-by-person, but to be journeying on the right road. "Blessed is the man or woman who walks in the way of the Lord" (Psalm 1).

Happiness in the Bible is finding the right pathway, that right place where you and I are meant to be by God's grace; it is doing most what we do best and maybe earning some money doing it; it is enjoying the journey itself and the people more than the "add ons."

Happiness is being able to say on a special day when you earned a bonus or when the car broke down, but the kids are safe, "It's only money."