

Money Talks

by Bryan Gibson

It sure does, and this time it has some heavenly wisdom to impart. Listen carefully, because it may be speaking to you.

I'm not evil, as some suppose. To the contrary, I can actually be quite useful. Use me properly, and you'll enjoy this life more (Ecclesiastes 5:18-19; 1 Timothy 6:17), make this life better for others (1 Timothy 6:18), advance the cause of the gospel (Philippians 1:5; 4:14-16), and in so doing better prepare yourself and others for the life to come (1 Timothy 6:19). So work hard to obtain me (Ephesians 4:28); be wise with your investments (Matthew 25:26-27); and put some of me aside (2 Corinthians 12:14)—for the needs of others, for the Lord's work, and for the future needs of you and your family.

Understand, though, that I do have limitations. I don't last (Psalms 49:10-11; Proverbs 23:4-5), so I'm a poor substitute for the things that do—things the Bible calls “enduring riches” (Proverbs 8:18), or “true riches” (Luke 16:11). You can have a lot of me, but still have “nothing” (Proverbs 13:7)—if you're not “rich toward God” (Luke 12:21), if you don't have the things that matter most, things like a good name and loving favor (Proverbs 22:1); a generous heart (Proverbs 11:24-25); a peaceful, godly home (Proverbs 15:16-17); righteousness and integrity, and all the other qualities that characterize a “man of God” (Proverbs 16:8; 19:1; 28:6; 1 Timothy 6:11). If you have these things—the things I can't buy—you are rich, no matter what your bank statement says (Proverbs 13:7; James 2:5; Revelation 2:9).

So use me, but don't fall in love with me or put your trust in me (1 Timothy 6:9-10; Mark 10:24; Psalms 49:7-9; 52:7). I'm a pretty good servant, but I make a lousy master. Here's what typically happens to those who get greedy for me, or who “overwork” (Proverbs 23:4-5) to get more and more of me. The word of God can't produce fruit in them, because it's been choked by this pursuit (Matthew 13:21-22); they forget God, the very source of everything they have (Deuteronomy 8:11-18; Proverbs 30:9); I become their security blanket, or “strong city” (Proverbs 10:15; 18:11); they do just about anything to get me, no matter how sinful or illegal (Proverbs 13:11; 20:17; 22:16; 28:8); they become increasingly ungrateful (Proverbs 27:7); they neglect the needs of those around them, including their family (Proverbs 14:31; Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 16:19-31; James 5:1-6); their anxiety (and maybe their blood pressure with it) increases (Ecclesiastes 5:12); and a whole bunch of other bad things (1 Timothy 6:9-10). Put your trust in me, and I'm warning you, it would be “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle” than for you to go to heaven (Mark 10:24-25).

So please, make God your master, and me your servant (Matthew 6:24). Use me to serve Him; that way, you'll always have a place you can call home (Luke 16:9).