

The Economy of the Tithe God's Plan and Man's Plan

1 Timothy 6:17-19:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded; nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy;

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

God has an economy of His own that we can enter into with simple faith and simple obedience to Him. God wants us to put our faith and trust in Him and not in the world's economy around us.

By changing a few words around we can better understand the importance and power of these verses of Scripture. Verse 17 says "charge," which literally means to *command*. "*Command them that are rich in this world that they be not arrogant, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*"

Perhaps you're reading this and saying, "I'm not rich so this verse doesn't apply to me." Let me tell you who's rich according to the Word of God. If you have any disposable income after you pay your bills, you qualify for this verse of Scripture. You may think it's not much, but you can be arrogant with a little money or you can be arrogant with a lot of money. Whether you have a little bit of money or a lot of money left over from your paycheck, you can get your attention fixed on the power that's in that money and forget all about the power of God.

This verse says not to put our trust in uncertain riches. "*Command them that have money in this world that they be not arrogant nor trust in uncertain riches but in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*" How powerful that verse is. Finances in and of itself are uncertain. The world's economic system is uncertain. We've experienced a surging economy, a roaring economy, for so long in our country but if our confidence and our trust are in the economy, we are not trusting the living God.

The stock market may not be worth as much tomorrow as it is today. The dollar can lose value overnight. We as Christians should be out in the forefront telling them our trust is not in riches. Our trust is in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's in the Word of God which declares that He gives all things and every good gift, every perfect gift.

Where Do You Put Your Trust?

God is certain. The Word is certain. Many things in this world are uncertain, which is why we shouldn't take our eyes off of God and get them fixed on money.

Matthew 6:22 says we should not have double vision. We can't look at God and look at money at the same time. He said to let your eye be single; get your eye focused on the Lord Himself. You cannot serve God and money at the same time. You will cling to one and hate the other. He said you must find out which one you're going to serve.

No man can serve two masters. Folks, listen to me: *money makes a wicked master*. It makes a wonderful servant, but it makes a wicked master. God is our master. We should serve Him and we should be stewards over the money God has blessed us with. Picture this: on one side we have God and on the other side we have money. We should stand between the two and be a servant of God and money should be our servant. We need to be a wise steward of God's finances in this earth to see that it's used in the right direction. But the moment we start letting money be our master, everything gets turned upside down. It makes a horrible and a wicked master.

Therefore, this verse tells us to charge them that are rich in this world. *Command* them that they be not arrogant nor trust in uncertain riches but in the living God that gives to us all things to enjoy. God is called *living*. That means money is *not living*. Money can become an idol. An idol is dead. Idols are carved out of wood or stone. An idol is anything that enters into our life and has no life, but we somehow project life into it. Just because there seems to be

power in the financial system doesn't mean money is alive. We need to put our trust in the living God and realize that God is over all.

We need to come to a place in our life where money does not move us, only God's will moves us. To be honest with you, the money in your pocket is just green paper and metal. It's exchanged from one place to another. The value on it is *perceived* value, but it's nothing but a dead object. In fact, I can tell you how dead it is. Have you ever traveled to other countries and brought money back? It was worth something while you were in that foreign country, but the moment you got home you stuck it in a drawer somewhere because it's worth nothing in America.

Why can't we look at money that way? There's no power in it; the power is in God. What can I use money for? I can use it to affect your life, but the money itself is only a tool, a means. It's like a hammer or a saw. It has no life in itself but it can accomplish great things in this life when put to use correctly. Finances are a tool to accomplish something in this life for the eternal kingdom of God.

Our hope should be in God, not in our finances. No matter how much money we have, God will never change. God gives us everything. Money doesn't bring us anything. It's God that brings us something.

You say, "Yeah, but I bought this with my money."

That may be true, but God brought it into your life, and when God gives it, it's for our enjoyment. Notice the end of that verse tells us *He gives us richly all things to enjoy*. When you realize your *things* in life come from God, you can truly enjoy them. If you think your money got it, then you think since you're the one that brought it into your life, you're the one who has to take care of it. Suddenly, worry and frustration begin to surface. But when I keep in mind that God brought it into my life, I also know He'll take care of it. This is all part of trusting the *living* God.

Prioritizing True Riches

Verse 18 says, "(Command them) *that they do good, that they be rich in good deeds, generous to distribute, willing to share.*"

True riches can be classified in two areas: trust in God, and good works toward people. Faith in God and good deeds towards men help us to be generous, willing to share what we have. True riches in life come from the value we place on other people and our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I don't care how much money you have in your pocket, it stays in this earth. The power and security of your life are not found in your 401K. The security of your life is not found in your IRA. It's not found in your savings account, your checking account, or in your CDs. The security you have in life is the worth that God has to you and the value you place on the people around you. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and mind and your neighbor as yourself. I should use my finances to enhance my relationship with God and to enhance my relationship with people around me. Throughout the Word of God we find that good deeds done toward people are what will last forever. I can't take my 401K to heaven, but I can take people I've won to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 19 says, "*Laying up in store for themselves a firm foundation against the future that they may lay hold on the life which is truly life.*"

This verse is telling us that when we have good works toward people and a love toward God, and we're generous to distribute and willing to share with other people, we are laying up for ourselves a foundation for the future. This is what life is really all about. My faith and trust are not in the stock market; my faith and trust are in the Lord Jesus Christ. With the ups and downs of life it's so wonderful to have my trust in the Lord who never fails. *He never fails.*

The Apostle Paul said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content."

Circumstances can be up, circumstances can be down, but I can be content in the midst of all of that because of what I have learned from God and from His Word. We lay up treasures for the future, for uncertain times. A giving heart is the true foundation for life and riches that will carry us through any storm. True life is not found in our money, but in our relationship with God and with people.

Once your relationship with God and your relationship toward people are secured, God promises He will send the finances to you. God does bring finances, but even in the midst of the desert God supplied for the children of Israel. Aren't you glad that you've never seen the righteous forsaken nor His seed begging bread? God hasn't lost the recipe for manna. He can make it if He needs to. The hedge we have for the future is not our financial plan or our retirement. Our hedge for the future and our salvation for the future is our personal relationship with God and the seeds we are sowing in this earth into other people's lives. Since our foundation will never change, we can truly live life without fear. Oh, glory to God! I'm going to say that again. Since our foundation will never change, we can truly live our life without fear. Jesus commanded the disciples *'fear not.'* Those are my two words to you — *Fear not!*

Obedience in Giving

Ecclesiastes 11:1-2:

Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.

Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

The bread represents your material wealth. It's not a physical loaf of bread. If you cast a loaf of bread upon the waters, it would sink. This verse is talking about your finances, the physical things in life, and the waters you cast it onto represent humanity. Throughout the Word of God, especially in prophetic verses of Scripture, the oceans and the seas in this world are compared to nations around the world. He's telling us to take our finances and spread it to people all around. This is why God has left us in this earth. Do you realize that God left us in this earth to witness to people around us? We are to take our finances and use them for witnessing to those around us.

The greatest use of finances is not to buy yourself a home, a car, or to pay your bills. The greatest use of finances is to give into people's lives so they can find Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, to sponsor missionaries, to sponsor evangelists, to sponsor your church, and to give tithes and offerings into the kingdom of God for generations to come. Through your giving, your finances are out there working in people's lives. You may not be able to travel to different nations, preaching the Good News, but you can send your finances. People in foreign lands can be saved through your giving. This is the bread we cast out on the waters around us.

The *portion* in verse two represents a part of our income designated toward the Lord. The first portion is the tithe God has told us about — to give ten percent of our increase unto God.

I get this question quite often, "Why ten percent?"

I have a very spiritual answer. "I don't know."

I don't know why God said ten percent, but I'll tell you what I believe — it simply means *obedience*. If God were to say five percent or 15 percent, it still wouldn't matter. Just do what He says. If I searched it out long enough I would probably find a deep, spiritual reason why ten percent, but no matter what spiritual reason we find, what difference does it make if we're not doing it? It's the act of obedience that brings great rewards into our life. Instead of arguing about it, just be obedient to God. Do what He asks you to do.

One person is not responsible for the whole world. Each person is responsible for *their* world. If everyone would take care of their world, together we could see to it the world heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So give a portion to seven and also to eight.

The next phrase says, "*For thou knowest not what evil (disaster) shall be (come) upon the (land) earth.*" I love that. For you don't know what disaster will come upon the land. What you're giving to the Gospel today will spare you in the time of disaster that is to come. We will never forget when two planes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001, and another one crashed into the Pentagon. That basically disrupted our economy and our way of life. It changed us forever as a nation from that day on. That's the disaster I'm talking about right now. This verse says you don't know what disasters are going to come on the earth.

Those who have been faithful to give and support the Gospel and give their portions to seven and also to eight, to cast their bread out there on the waters, to be generous to others, to give to those who have need, that is your hedge and you're guaranteed when disaster strikes, He'll take care of you and He will bring you through. Simple obedience to God. Our trust is not in Wall Street, our trust is in the *living* God.

The warnings throughout the Word of God have always been the same. Don't get puffed up in arrogance as if money belongs to you and you're responsible to bring it in. The finances our God's and He's responsible to bring it in. We're to be obedient to Him. We're told in Deuteronomy that before they entered into the Promised Land, God gave a warning through Moses to the children of Israel, that once they entered the Promised Land and were eating corn they did not grow, living in houses they did not build, digging brass and gold and copper and silver out of the mountains, not to sit back and say, "*My* strength and the power of *my* might has gotten me this, but you shall remember the Lord your God for it is He that gives you the power to get wealth."

Perhaps you have put your trust in your finances, in your retirement, in your ability to invest, or in your ability to perceive what's coming in the future, and suddenly everything has been disrupted. Perhaps that's a good thing so you can come back to the foundation that your life is in Jesus Christ. Your trust is in Him.

There's only one thing unshakeable in this world — the kingdom of God. My feet are firmly entrenched there and though all hell breaks loose and the economy falls apart, my God declares I've never seen the righteous forsaken nor His seed begging bread. God will supply for me according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Amen!

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If you like this article, check out [The Economy of the Tithe](#) and his book, [Unlimited Partnership: God and the Businessman](#), at the [BYM Store](#).

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