

Commandment 8 "You shall not steal" (Exod. 20:15)**VII. What to do with money? Spending, saving (investing), giving (and inheritance)****A. Spending**

1. Spending is one good use of the money we receive
 - a. Spending turns money into goods & services that we can use with thankfulness to God (1 Tim 4:1-5; 6:7; Matt 11:19)
 - i. We must spend to provide for ourselves food, clothing, shelter, and (for some) to provide for our families
 - ii. 1 Thess 4:11; 1 Tim 5:8
 - b. God intends us to enjoy the good resources he has put in the earth for us to develop & use (Gen 1:28; 2 Tim 6:17)
 - i. (see earlier outline IV above on producing goods and services)
2. But it is possible to spend too much or too little
 - a. Spending too much: foolish, wasteful spending on self, giving little or nothing to others, saving little or nothing for future
 - i. Luke 15:11-13 (Prodigal Son); James 5:5
 - b. Spending too little: miserly, stingy, fearful hoarding of wealth, failing to use it for purposes God intended, failing to use it with thanksgiving to God (Eccl 6:1-2; 1 Tim 4:1)
 - c. Then how much should you spend?
 - i. That depends on how much you decide to save and how much you decide to give away.

Total income	100%	100%	100%	100%
- giving	-10%	-10%	-15%	-30%
- <u>saving (incl invest)</u>	- 0%	-10%	-20%	-60%
= spending	=90%	=80%	=65%	=10%
 - ii. Don't spend more than you have! (accumulating debt - a serious & generally unnecessary problem in the US)
 - iii. This is often not a question of "right" vs. "wrong" choices, but of "good" vs. "better" vs. "best" choices
 - a. God gives us much freedom here, does not command a certain amount
 - b. But all these choices have consequences, and bring more or less reward both in this life and in heaven
--> see material below on blessings of generous giving

B. Saving

1. Saving for the future is another good use of the money we receive
 - a. Imitates God's attributes of wisdom, independence, knowledge of time and awareness of future, love for others.
 - b. It is right to save for a time when we cannot work (due to age, weakness, sickness, loss of job)
 - i. Only a few people die while they are still working. Therefore, not saving and assuming that we will need no savings in the future is basically deciding to impose a burden on our children or relatives.
(it is not trusting God for anything that Scripture gives us warrant to trust him for)
Insisting that "I will always be able to work" is wrongly "forcing a test" on God (Matt 4:7; 1 Thess 4:12)
 - c. It is right to save in order to be able to provide for unforeseen emergencies (illness, injury, loss of home or car, theft, lawsuit, etc.) - James 4:13-17
 - i. From the earliest years when people earn an income, they should have some plan and pattern of regular saving that will accumulate over time.
 - ii. We don't know the future, & because there is still suffering and evil in the world, purchasing insurance (life, home, car) is a wise way to guard against large/catastrophic expenses (this is in addition to saving for unforeseen emergencies)
 - d. It is right to save to purchase things that are more expensive than our current assets
 - i. Child saving for bike, going to camp; adults saving (for house/college/wedding for children, vacation, business)
 - e. Some kinds of savings (bank deposits/stocks/bonds) have added benefit of doing good for others by allowing them partial use of what we have saved
 - i. Banks loan our money to others, & companies use our money to grow (money we used to buy their stock)
 - ii. Thus, when we save, several other people gain use of our money at the same time as it belongs to us!
2. But saving also provides temptations to sin
 - a. Savings can increasingly tie our hearts to earth, not to heaven and to God (Ps 62:10; Matt 6:19,24; Luke 12:15-21; Deut 8:11-14; Eccl 5:10; Heb 13:5)
 - b. It is possible to save too much or too little
 - i. Too much: hoarding, trusting in riches rather than God, lack of faith → see verses in previous section
 - ii. Too little: being foolish, not being reasonably prepared for future, in many cases resulting in having to depend

- on others to care for you (the extreme form of this is not saving but accumulating greater and greater debt, which is spending your future life before it happens)
- iii. a very common pattern in the U.S. today: too much spending, too little saving and too little giving
- c. How much to save? It will vary widely according to your situation in life, earning capacity, expenses.
- i. Good financial counseling programs (Crown Ministries, Ron Blue & Company, Dave Ramsey, SBC programs)
- d. There is a benefit in savings and also a cost – an opportunity lost (“opportunity cost” - the benefit of what other use you could have made of this money).
- i. All that we save now (or spend now) is an amount not given to some ministry that builds up the church, advances the work of Christ’s kingdom
- ii. It is not a matter of “right” and “wrong” or “you have to give X %” but rather: “Here are opportunities to help some amazingly good ministries, if you would like to help. And it carries great eternal reward!”
- iii. 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:10-15; Phil 4:15-18
3. There are various ways to save
- a. Put money in mattress (Matt 25:24-28)
- i. Rate of return: 0% .
- ii. Present benefit to others: 0
- iii. Buying and storing gold has same effect on others (rate of return uncertain)
- b. Put money in bank:
- i. Rate of return: 1% - 5% (depending on length of time)
- ii. Present benefit to others: significant because banks loan money to others, & this multiplies several times over.
- iii. Risk: very small (U.S. government guarantee up to \$100,000)
- c. Buy bonds (= loaning money to a business or some government, but money remains yours)
- i. Rate of return: fixed % (perhaps 4% - 6%, but varies acc. to interest rates in economy generally)
- ii. Present benefit to others: helps business or government function
- iii. Risk: small (if business or government loses money they still owe you your money back)
- d. Buy stocks (= buying part of a company)
- i. Rate of return: unknown, no guarantees
- a. But 50 year average of publicly traded stocks: appx. 8% per year increase (over long term, with much variation)
- i. This reflects increasing wealth in the earth, increasing progress in subduing the earth (Gen 1:28) as God intends us to do
- b. For some years, and some investments, the rate of return is much higher
- c. But some years – people lose money, can lose a lot
- ii. Present benefit to others: probably the greatest from all of these options, because it helps companies to function, and companies provide jobs for people and produce goods and services (= produce wealth) on the earth
- iii. Risk: larger (if company fails, your \$30 share of stock might be worth 3¢: you lose all you invested!)
- a. This should still not be called “gambling” because the risk is significantly different:
- i. Probability of losing your entire investment in a Lottery ticket is (I think) over 99%.
- ii. Probability of losing entire investment in diversified group of stocks: far less than 1%
- b. But in the short term (3 years or less) your return on stocks is unpredictable – some wise financial advisors say: don’t invest in stocks the money that you will likely need in that period of time
- i. Some people make foolish decisions, thinking they can make “quick money” in the stock market
- ii. The best way to make “quick money” is to work and earn wages at a normal job!
- iv. If you buy stocks, be careful how much time you spend managing investments (can consume your life/heart)
- v. Two ways to minimize risk and daily worry, with good rate of return:
- a. Index fund (buying some of every stock on the market)
- b. Professional manager whose philosophy you agree with, have confidence in
- vi. “Ethical investing”?
- a. You may decide not to invest in some companies whose products you disagree with (ex:tobacco)
- b. But some so-called “ethical investment” funds have philosophies contrary to Biblical teachings
- i. Anti-military, anti-Israel, anti-tree cutting, pro-turtle
- vii. Even in ancient world, people would buy shares in some large projects
- Example: shipbuilding and shipping: huge expense, large risk

C. Giving

1. Giving money to others, or to the Lord’s work, is a third good use of the money we receive
- a. God expected his people to give throughout the history of the Bible (Lev 27:30-32; 1 Cor 16:1-2)
- b. This also is a uniquely human activity (not found in animal kingdom).

- i. The ability to choose to give to the needs of other is a noble human virtue. It allows us to imitate God's attributes in several ways (which?).
 - c. Giving reminds us that we are not God, and life is not just about us!
- 2. Comment on SBC helpful approach to visitors on this topic: not asking for money!
 - a. But at some point a church must teach on this topic from the Bible
- 3. The basis of giving should be a trust in God growing out of a personal relationship with Christ
 - a. You don't give money to get right with God, but give after you are right with God & begin to trust him
 - b. Giving flows out of trust in God, and giving also demonstrates trust in God
- 4. God blesses regular, generous giving in several ways
 - a. God will provide for our needs
 - i. In OT, resulted in abundant provision when they gave what God commanded, but economic hardship when people did not give what God had told them to give (Prov 3:9; Mal 3:8-11; Deut 26:12-13; Hag 1:2-11; 2:15-19)
 - ii. Jesus also promised abundant blessing for generous giving (Luke 6:38; Phil 4:19; 2 Cor 9:8)
 - b. God will give blessing and good results from your giving (2 Cor 9:6-10)
 - c. God will be pleased with your giving & will grant you his favor in this life (at least regarding this aspect of your life)
 - i. Phil 4:17-18; 2 Cor 9:7,11
 - d. But the New Testament does not teach the "prosperity gospel"
 - False idea: if you have enough faith, God will make you rich in this life." (answer: Jesus, Paul, Job)
 - Many strong Christians in poor countries, under oppressive governments.
 - e. Still, God will grant you greater heavenly reward (Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:18-19)
 - f. You will have the joy of caring for the needs of others and seeing good results in their lives (Acts 20:35)
 - i. Through evangelism, some will come to personal forgiveness of sins, relationship with Christ
 - ii. Many will have their physical needs met, their lives changed (1 John 3:17)
- 5. How should we give?
 - a. Willingly, cheerfully (2 Cor 8:8; 9:7)
 - b. Regularly - have a plan (1 Cor 16:1-2)
 - c. Proportionately: give from what you have earned (1 Cor 16:12; 2 Cor 8:12)
 - d. Generously (2 Cor 8:1-5; 9:6; 1 Tim 6:16-19)
 - e. I think that sacrificial giving brings special blessing from God (2 Cor 8:1-3; Mark 12:42-44; Acts 4:32-33)
- 6. How much shall we give?
 - a. God expects us to give something, and I think 10% is a good guideline at least to start
 - b. Giving more will do more good for others, and will advance the work of the kingdom of God more
 - c. It is not a matter of "you have to give X %" but rather, "How much good would you like to do in the world with the resources you have?" → God gives you a choice, and also a great opportunity
- 7. Where should we give?
 - a. Church, parachurch, others in need: many good choices
 - i. I think it is healthy for us to donate most of what we give to places where we don't control the expenses
 - ii. NT emphasis is on giving to other Christians in need, & giving to others who come to our attention (Gal 6:10)
- 8. Temptations regarding giving
 - a. Giving too little (stinginess), giving too much (irresponsibility), pride, control

D. Inheritance

- 1. Giving property & possessions to children as inheritance was the normal practice in Israel (Num 27:6-11; Luke 12:13)
- 2. Giving an inheritance to children was seen as a good thing (Prov 13:22; 19:14; contrast Eccl 5:13-15)
- 3. Passing down a family's property through generations had economic and political benefits:
 - a. Guaranteed widespread ownership of private property (land and other wealth), which is necessary for sustained economic prosperity in a nation (see Landes study of history)
 - b. This prevented excessive concentration of power in the hands of a few wealthy families, or in the hands of the government (which leads to political corruption and economic stagnation)
 - c. Fundamental problem: people accumulate wealth, then they die. This goes on in every generation.
 - i. The question: what to do with that increasing wealth? Options:
 - a. people can will it to whomever they choose (usually their children & other relatives)
 - b. government can confiscate it ("death tax")
 - i. but this gives government too much power (people, not government, should own most of the property in a society)
 - ii. Jesus refused to be the one to decide how a family's inheritance would be divided (Luke 12:13-14)
 - iii. So option (a) seems the wisest solution: it should be yours to give away as you wish
- 4. In OT, the gov't did not have the right to confiscate property owned by individual families (1 Kings 21:1-3; Ezek 46:18)
- 5. What will you inherit (personally)?

- a. NT warns against setting heart on earthly inheritances rather than God (do we need this reminder?) - Lk 12:13-15
 - b. Great heavenly inheritance that the NT repeatedly emphasizes (Matt 5:5; 25:34; Eph 1:14,18; Col 3:24; 1 Pet 1:3)
 - c. OT gave indications of this future heavenly inheritance (Heb 11:8; Num 18:20,24; Deut 10:8-9; Ps 16:5; 73:26)
6. The Bible also reminds us that God's providence will eventually allocate good inheritances to those who are obedient to him, not to those who continually disobey him (Ps 37:9,11,22,29,34; Prov 11:29; 13:22; 1 Cor 6:9-10)
7. When should an inheritance be given to children?
- a. Warnings against giving it too soon (Prov 20:21; Luke 15:11-16)
 - b. Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko, *The Millionaire Next Door* (New York: Pocket Books, 1996) have many warnings (pp. 141-174) against wealthy parents giving children too much, too soon, so that the children become not "welfare dependent" but "daddy dependent"
 - i. "In general, the more dollars adult children receive, the fewer they accumulate, while those who are given fewer dollars accumulate more" (p. 143)
 - ii. "Paying for an education is the equivalent to teaching your children how to fish Conversely, what is the effect of cash gifts that are knowingly earmarked for consumption and the propping up of a certain lifestyle? We find that the giving of such gifts is the single most significant factor that explains lack of productivity among the adult children of the affluent Cash gifts earmarked for consumption dampen one's initiative and productivity. They become habit forming. These gifts must then be extended throughout most of the recipient's life" (pp. 148-149).
 - iii. They also say that earmarking gifts to start or enhance a business do not have this negative effect but are like paying for an education, (p. 148).
 - iv. "If you are wealthy and want your children to become happy and independent adults, minimize discussions and behavior that center on the topic of receiving other people's money" (p. 195).
 - v. See also significant advice on pp. 203-209.
 - vi. James Dobson quote (*Rich Kids*): "large trust funds are usually destructive to those who inherit them"
 - c. An "inheritance" will normally be inherited at the time of the death of the second parent
 - i. Perhaps some can be given before that, but with caution, and only after the children have demonstrated financial independence and wisdom themselves (Eccl 7:11)
 - ii. One question is whether they are as wise or wiser stewards than you are at any given point in life.
8. How much should be given to children, other heirs?
- a. If you don't have a will, government will require that your possessions will be distributed according to a standard formula for people who die "intestate" (that is, without a will). In certain cases your estate will also pay more taxes.
 - i. This is not exercising wise stewardship before God – can't you decide better than a fixed, one-size-fits-all formula?
 - b. Should you give all your assets to your family members? This may not be the best plan! There is wisdom in deciding to give X amount (a specific amount, of whatever size) to your children and then giving all the rest to various ministries before you die, or at the time of death (rather than leaving it all to your children).
 - i. On the other hand, some families own a family business and there is nothing wrong with passing that on to children down through several generations. – esp. if they demonstrate wisdom and good stewardship, and if they are gradually trained for it.
 - c. That way, you can use your best judgment in maximizing kingdom effectiveness for your possessions
 - d. In some cases (with a larger estate) a charitable foundation such as
 - i. Arizona Community Foundation (www.azfoundation.org)
 - ii National Christian Foundation (www.nationalchristian.com)
 - iii. Arizona Christian Foundation (www.arizonachristianfoundation.org)
 - iv. Similar foundations in other states,can save substantial amounts of taxes and can be a good "parking place" for money before you decide where to give it
 - a. Note that it does not actually reach any kingdom ministry until you move it out into a ministry!
 - b. "Heavenly credit" in the Phil. 4:17 sense comes primarily when the money reaches a ministry, and that is when the ministry can be advanced through your giving as well

Audio recording of classes and these handouts are available on the class website: <http://www.christianessentialsbc.com>.

See also www.waynegrudem.com