

God Money & Me by Paul De Jong

THE BIBLE TALKS ABOUT MONEY MORE THAN FAITH

Proverbs 11:10-11 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish, there is jubilation. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

Either you direct money or money will direct you

The enemy has a goal and that is to restrict our ability to break through in this area so he can suppress the purposes of God. As we have already seen in Proverbs 11, even a city is better off when things go well for the righteous. When we realize that God has called us to live a blessed life and we live out that blessing, even the city we live in is elevated. Proverbs continues to teach us, however, that limitations result when we accept the intimidation of a lying enemy.

When you look at the phrase 'the blessing of the upright' in Proverbs 11, the word 'blessing' in the original means the 'prosperity' or the 'liberal pool' of the upright. In other words, if God could take your life and my life and create a liberal pool, we would become part of the answer, not part of the problem.

We will examine how money in itself is neither good nor bad, but it does have a righteous or corrupted power attached to it. And by God's grace we're going to construct a financial foundation that will provide for the purposes of God in and through our lives.

80 to 90 % of Christians are bound by a lack of money or distracted by the un-surrendered power of it.

Genesis 1:27-28 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'

So, a key principle when we think about God Money & Me is to grasp this foundational truth. It will require the reprogramming of our souls and minds until it becomes a revelation.

BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY

I was created to be fruitful, to multiply and to have dominion.

True New Testament underscores this view in Matthew 25, with the Parable of the Talents. Three servants are highlighted. One had five talents, one had two, one had one. The one who was rebuked by the master was the one who didn't multiply what he had. He was loyal, but didn't multiply. True faithfulness, according to this passage, is the combination of loyalty and fruitfulness.

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We had embraced the law of sowing, but never understood the law of reaping **DOMINATED BY DEBT**

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you...

2 Corinthians continues: '... that you, always having all sufficiency in all things...'

The Bible says we need sufficiency in all things: not just in our day-to-day needs but also in all things. Enough to provide an answer to the needs of the community we're in and have the ability to feed the poor, fund God's purpose, and do a list of other things that could fill this entire book. Do you have sufficiency for that? If you have a problem with that, let's go on with the verse: '... [that you] may have an abundance for every good work.'

How many of us are in a place where, no matter where we went in the world, no matter who came across our path, no matter who knocked on our door, we would have an abundance available to help?

This word 'grace' means God is able to make all favor, all liberality come towards us, that we may have all sufficiency – literally a perfect condition of life, in which we need no aid or external benefit. As Christians, we should be living at a level most of us haven't experienced yet. A place where we are in the driver's seat over every decision that once was determined by money.

Ultimately God's plan is to have money serve us, not us serve money. God's plan is to have money serve us, not us serve money. When Christians fail to actually understand what God has said and allow wrong thinking to stifle their expectations, the purposes of God are limited. But 2 Corinthians 9:8 promises that, as believers, we should have an abundance, we should have an excess in quality and quantity, that we will excel, and that we will live over and above financial restriction.

You were and are created to be fruitful, to multiply and to have dominion. That is the challenge we are given. Where are you at in light of this today?

New York Times best-selling author and influential financial coach Robert G. Allen has said, 'Money is one of the most important subjects to study in your entire life. Some of life's greatest enjoyments and most of life's greatest disappointments stem from the decisions you make about money. Whether you experience great peace of mind or constant anxiety will depend on whether you get your finances under control.'

MONEY'S MISUNDERSTOOD AUTHORITY

I think you'd have to agree that money in our earthly existence is one of life's most powerful forces. Ask yourself: 'How much of my daily, weekly and annual activities are influenced by money?'

As Charles Caldwell Ryrie says in *Balancing the Christian Life*, 'How we use money demonstrates the reality of our love for God. In some ways it proves our love more conclusively than depth of knowledge, length of prayers or prominence of service. The use of our possessions shows us up for

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what we actually are.' The Bible is not ambiguous on the importance money plays in our lives. From as far back as King Solomon we are reminded in

Ecclesiastes 10:19: 'A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes merry; but money answers everything.'

8 Money Myths

MYTH ONE – 'MONEY IS NOT SOMETHING WE SHOULD FOCUS ON'

Proverbs 22:7 The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

In other words, if you're in a place where you're in debt that is unsustainable, you are no longer in a place of freedom. Money can release so much but, equally, when we find ourselves under its power, we end up living in a place of restriction and at times overwhelming domination. Jesus constantly warned about wrong lordship, and once again Satan uses money to seek to control us. I am fully convinced that God has a way for each one of us to regain the place of financial freedom.

Here is a challenging question: What percentage of Christians do you think are living under the domination of money? Believe it or not, I would say in excess of 80 percent. By saying domination, I am implying that they are not in a place of release from the restrictions that money places over them. Even those who have money often fall into the trap of living distractedly, allowing it to hinder them from making kingdom-centered decisions.

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So, just for the record, there are **215** pertaining to faith, **218** to salvation, and **2,058** dealing with stewardship and accountability with regard to money.

Don't get me wrong – the importance of our faith is number one, but it is time for us to uncover the keys to financial freedom through His word.

We must take care that we don't become settled and satisfied with just meeting our own needs when it comes to our finances. I have discovered that this kind of thinking reflects a very me-centered world view. Jesus taught that we were to be His answer to a world in need and if we embrace that mission and mandate, then our thinking must come into line with living out of abundance. It's a Money Myth that we don't need to talk about money.

MYTH TWO – 'GOD'S BLESSINGS ARE NOT MATERIAL'

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

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The original word for 'life' is 'zōē'. It's Greek, and stands for the perfect state of living, where you have need of nothing. Again, another WOW.

God is effectively telling us: 'When I created you, I blessed you. And I called you to embrace a thinking that says you're fruitful, you're going to multiply, you're going to have dominion.' The word 'abundantly' in John 10:10 translates as 'to be exceeding beyond measure, superior and extraordinary, remarkable, eminent, more excellent'.

This is not some self-focused, me-first prosperity preacher speaking but an eternal, everlasting, all-able God promising that, in everything, we were born to overcome and become more than conquerors. Why, then, do we restrict our expectations? Knowing we have the God of limitless ability living within and stirring our hearts, we can't help but be challenged to think differently. Ask God to renew your mind, because you were created to be fruitful: to multiply and have dominion.

3 John 2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

Prosperity is not a dirty word but a Biblical concept that frees us to be able to free others.

When you develop a prosperous heart, everything about your life becomes prosperous. And yet God doesn't want to make you prosperous beyond the size of your heart's ability to understand and to use your prosperity in His way. And so, prosperity is not just about being blessed for blessing's sake – if that's our motive, we'll trip over ourselves and fall into the trap that un-surrendered money can create.

Biblical blessing lives between the two extremes of lack and un-surrendered excess of liberalism.

Prosperity is not a case of, 'If you do this, you'll be blessed and have whatever you want whenever you want it.' Instead, it is when your heart becomes enlarged with truth and commits to activate the will and purposes of God in material things.

Proverbs 10:22 The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.

The original word for 'rich' translates as rich in every sphere of living, including money and material things.

John D. Rockefeller, who during his lifetime was one of the world's wealthiest men and a major philanthropist, said: 'God gave me my money. I believe the power to make money is a gift from God. It is to be developed and used to the best of our ability, for the good of mankind. Having been endowed with the gift I possess, I believe it is my duty to make money and still more money, and to use the money I make for the good of my fellow man according to the dictates of my conscience.' (Rockefeller's faith was the guiding force of his life and he believed it to be the source of his success.)

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MYTH THREE – 'BUT THE BIBLE TEACHES MONEY IS EVIL'

You can't change the world without the resources needed

Have you ever realized that a fire is wonderfully useful when it is positioned in a fireplace? What does it do? It warms the home. It contributes to an inviting atmosphere in the home. But if you set that fire outside the fireplace, it will destroy your home. This is also true with money. It does have the power to destroy us, but when understood and handled correctly, it can release God's purpose through us.

FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY

Money is not evil. The verse that is most often misquoted on this is found in the book of 1 Timothy.

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

It's the 'love' of money, not money itself, that produces evil. When you have to have money, your life is all about you – you have succumbed to loving money. I've seen people over the years bury themselves in the security they think provisions can bring. Ultimately they almost always end up stranded. They may love God and want to fulfill His purposes, yet they become controlled by money when they are seduced to make it the source of their focus, love and eventually worship. They wouldn't identify it as the love of money, but it's their decision-maker and ultimately their security.

If we live for money, we will end up straying from God's purposes.

1 Timothy 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

People argue that this statement means we shouldn't be believing for more and the gain is non-material. Never isolate a scripture outside of the tenor of God's word on the whole picture. No, money is not evil. The love of money is evil. Some may say, 'but all we need is contentment, and with contentment is great gain.' True, but the verse reads godliness with contentment. Godliness is God in His fullness, His purposes living fully formed in and through me. Money doesn't so much change you as unmask the real you

'But money changes you,' you say. 'Does it?' I'd contend that money doesn't so much change you as unmask the real you. If your heart isn't fully surrendered and submitted to God at its core, money can cause great damage, but it's not evil. Money is simply a provision, to be used for good.

MONEY IS A GOOD SERVANT BUT A BAD MASTER

I love this quote from French author Alexandre Dumas: 'Do not value money for any more nor any less than it's worth; it is a good servant but a bad master.' That's worth remembering: money is a good servant but a bad master.

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It's the love of money that's evil. Take a moment to remind yourself: I was created to be fruitful, I was created to multiply, and I was created by God to have dominion. Microsoft founder Bill Gates made a lot of money from being co-founder of the world's biggest computer software company. But I love the day I heard he had donated more than \$28 billion to charity (and so, I am sure, do those who were the beneficiaries).

Remember, it's the **LOVE OF MONEY** that is evil.

1 Timothy 6:17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. (NASB)

MYTH FOUR – 'JESUS MODELED SCARCITY'

Didn't Jesus live a very meager kind of life, and wasn't the gospel He represented one of frugal living?

There's no doubt that God has special missions for some people, and who can argue that the call over Mother Teresa's life was powerful and full of supernatural breakthrough?

But this doesn't mean that all of us are meant to live with nothing, because if we were all like Mother Teresa, no one would have had the financial resources to fund her work and help meet the vast needs she found herself surrounded by. Money provides an answer for need.

Mother Teresa was never shy in validating the need for money to alleviate suffering. Among the many dozens of missions she founded globally was a small one in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, one of the world's most desperately poor places. A day after Mother Teresa visited there, the daughter-in-law of the hated Haitian dictator Jean-Claude 'Baby Doc' Duvalier, who was accused of murdering thousands of his political opponents, went to Mother Teresa's mission and donated \$1,000. But why did she accept it, the accusers asked. It was blood money, dirty money.

Her answer was concise. In charity, she said, everyone has a right to give. 'I have no right to judge them. God alone has that right. . . I do not ask for money. But people have a right to give.' Once again, money provides an answer for need.

Jesus modeled a life of having few human possessions. The question is, was there a reason for that? I think we find the answer below.

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

It's so important that you get a hold of this verse because it unlocks a lot of incorrect mind-sets around living a blessed life. 'Though He was rich.' The original denotes not just spiritual riches but so much more. It simply means, 'Though He had all of heaven at His disposal, He left it all to create a way that we could experience blessing in every part of our lives – spirit, soul and body.'

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'Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor...' for you, for me, right now. 'He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.' I have no doubt this includes natural resources. That word 'rich' means 'abounding in material sources' – abundantly supplied.

Match this verse back to the following one:

2 Corinthians 9:8 God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

This is a defining point, because if we don't accept that God has created us to live materially blessed, our thinking will ultimately limit us.

God says it is fine for you to have stuff; just don't let that stuff have you.

When the purposes of the King are at the base of who we are, we become recipients of His kingdom. Why would we cause His life and what Jesus did for us to be of no effect in this area because of a wrong understanding? The fact is, according to scripture, that we will all be in awe once we see the wonder of heaven (what some would call opulence). Creation gives us a foretaste. Also remember that Jesus always showed that when God became involved, there was an abundance through His ministry. Whenever Jesus performed a miracle, He never did just enough: He always brought abundant supply (like feeding the 5,000, with 12 basketfuls remaining).

WHAT ABOUT THE DISCIPLES

Jesus sent the disciples out with nothing, very true. Many times God will allow us, and indeed require us, to have seasons of complete reliance on Him. His blessing plan is not a blanket guarantee that we will have material provision in every season.

In Matthew 10:8-10, for example, when Jesus sent the 12 disciples out to 'heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons' (NIV), He told them:

Matthew 10:8-10 Freely you have received; freely give. Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts – no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. (NIV)

Jesus was preparing them for the beginning of their ministry life. Effective ministry – and, in fact, every day Christianity – requires that we learn how to trust God and live by faith. There will be times in our lives when we're asking God where the blessing is and God will be saying, 'You've got to trust Me. You've got to have faith in My word.' These seasons always create a greater depth of relationship and dependence.

However, we'd be wrong to argue that everyone who is truly living a committed ministry life should go with nothing and never see a breakthrough in the area of provision.

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Compare these two passages below:

Luke 22:35-36 'When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?' 'Nothing,' they answered. He said to them, 'But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one'. (NIV)

Mark 10:29-30

Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life.

Jesus did not preach a gospel of scarcity. He modeled a life of going without, so that you and I could step up into the promise of abundance, providing an answer for the world in which we live.

And it doesn't matter where we find ourselves right now: when it comes to money, we don't have to stay there; but change begins on a foundation of right biblical understanding mixed with an obedient response. We've got to go into this week, our next month, and the rest of this year with the revelation that we were created to be fruitful; we were created to multiply. If we're not multiplying, there's something wrong. And we were created to have dominion.

So, even if we've lived under the curse of debt, it's time for us to realize we have dominion over debt. Allow the truth of this to penetrate deep into your soul.

Righteous living is not about living small does lead us to go without for a greater purpose, but righteous living is not about living small. Surrendered, yes, but limited, no.

GOD'S PROVISION IS MAGNANIMOUS

Perhaps you are starting to get some inkling of how great God's purpose for provision truly is. He is not the God of limited supply and He can never give too much or ever run out. No! He is an endless river. His bounty is shown throughout His creation.

Some people, when talking of some church property, say, 'It's too opulent.' If that is the case, we are going to feel very uncomfortable when we get to heaven, where, we are told, there is silver, gold and precious stones. God doesn't see it as opulence. He's the God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills; He's the God who speaks things into existence.

Misdirected thinking produces misdirected results.

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18th-century British theologian John Wesley said: *'You need to earn all you can. You need to save all you can. You need to give all you can.'* It's not just one paradigm: it's earning, saving, giving. It's building a future.

We're here to set up a platform for the generations to come.

We are called to be salt and light, fulfilling our purpose to affect those around us with good. How we release and manage our resources has a lot to do with impacting those around us.

You and I were designed in the image of God; therefore, let's never park at where we find ourselves today. God created us to live His promised reflection: 'Our future is filled with so much more.'

Look at the prayer King David offered up when he was leading the people in presenting their offerings at the temple of God:

1 Chronicles 29:12 Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

Many of us drift in our walk of faith. Because of setbacks, hurts and disappointments in life, we look at what has been or what's gone wrong and we settle, simply hoping to survive. We can so easily end up living by a gospel of 'just enough'.

But God is saying, 'Don't be like that. Realize I'm the God who can bring any breakthrough, as long as you're prepared to carry it in a kingdom way. I'm committed to preparing and offering a depth of understanding so you don't get sidelined when the goodness of God comes to you.'

MYTH FIVE – 'GOD'S KINGDOM DOESN'T NEED MONEY'

We need to understand that money isn't the thing that should rule us; however, we can release the kingdom by the correct use of it. In the Lord's prayer, we declare, 'Your kingdom come'. Come where? On earth? How's that going to happen? How will that take place if we continue with a lack of supply?

The Bible says God has given you and me His word. We believe His word, we stand on the authority of His word and we walk with His word, and expect in faith to see Him move powerfully. Our Christianity is a partnership of God and us. The church auditoriums we sit in today are here because someone gave money, time and expertise to build what God wanted. As a result, many lives have been impacted by God and a big part of the answer was the provision of finance that was required to build them.

Again, without God we have nothing, but – unapologetically – it is money that allows the hungry to be fed and those without it to experience first-hand the tangible love of God. Never allow a resistance to money as an agent for the kingdom to enter your thinking. The enemy is continually seeking to keep the work of Christ weak through a lack of supply.

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Ecclesiastes 10:18 Because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks.

The kingdom of heaven is built with both spiritual and material things.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 Those who are rich in this present age [are] not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

As author Randy Alcorn notes in *The Treasure Principle*, 'Jesus spent more time teaching on money than on heaven and hell combined.

Why? Because there's a fundamental connection between our spiritual lives and how we think about and handle money.

Evangelist Billy Graham once said, 'You can tell where somebody's We may try and divorce our faith and our finances, but God sees them as inseparable life is at by taking time to look at their checkbook.' Or, in today's terms, at their bank statements.

The enemy wants to distract us or dissolve our sense of responsibility when it comes to money. He works very hard at preventing us from reaching a place where we are completely open for God to bring kingdom blessing.

Could you stand and have your money management revealed in full transparency before the courts of your King?

MYTH SIX – 'MY MONEY RESPONSE IS A PRIVATE AFFAIR'

Matthew 6:1-4 Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

If you stop and think about it, you will see that this scripture is all to do with motive. If we're giving so we receive the applause of men, Jesus says we are acting like the Pharisees. Their motive was impure. They just wanted to show everybody that they were doing the right thing externally, when the truth was they were empty white sepulchres devoid of God's spirit within them. That's not the way to do it. We give because it's right. And our Father who sees in secret will bring it out into the open.

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So, what is the connection between that and the privacy of our finances?

MONEY IS OUR TESTING GROUND

Money is one of God's main testing grounds.

Luke 16:11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

In other words, if you are not faithful in the material things you've been given, why would God entrust to you a ministry responsibility that has a bearing into eternity?

I think this scripture suggests that money is our testing ground. If I really wanted to turn up the heat right now, I would say: if you want to do something for God, God says, 'Well, let's first check out the way you deal with money. I want to observe where your faith is when it comes to finance, where your trust is, where the priority of your security is, to determine whether or not you are ready to be entrusted with more.'

1 Timothy 3:8 says that if you want to appoint a deacon in the church, one key qualification is that they must be wise with money. How do you know if they're wise with money? Because there's an openness about what's happening with their finances. I would say that in all areas of our lives, if we fail to have the right levels of accountability, we will experience limited breakthrough.

Let's go a step further. In Mark 12:41-44, Jesus is sitting in a church meeting, watching people give to the treasury. (Imagine the reaction if we did that today!) I like to try and picture the occasion in my mind's eye. When the offering is taking place, Jesus sits opposite where the money is being collected in big copper containers. He sees people who are rich, and people who are not so rich. And then He says to His disciples (my paraphrasing): 'It's an amazing thing. Many think they've given much, but they have just given little, as it has come out of their overflow.'

It's a myth that things pertaining to money should be hidden. Accountability is needed in all areas of our lives. Why? Because if we need growth in that area, we need to open our hearts in the right kind of healthy environments filled with the wisdom we need.

MYTH SEVEN – 'IT WOULD BE DIFFERENT IF I HAD MORE'

Our answer is founded in the seed we possess today rather than the miracle we need tomorrow.

There's no better time than right now and no better place than right here to establish the fact that it is today's responses that determine tomorrow's outcomes. I hope you are beginning to believe in a far more prosperous future. It begins with God's help by confronting every myth that stands in our way.

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Every farmer believes in the authority of a sown seed to produce a harvest, and we, too, need to stop looking at our lack and start activating our current seed potential.

A recent Reader's Digest article reported that the 'big winners' in lotteries, whether they scored \$6 million or \$100 million, generally spent or lost all of it within five years. Research on windfall riches, carried out in a 2008 Dutch study, has shown that after the initial glow has faded, those who enjoyed big wins end up, within six months, no happier than they were before.

It reminds me of the story of a man who came to Peter Marshall, the Chaplain of the United States Senate in the late 1940s. He was concerned with tithing, and he said to Dr Marshall, 'I have a problem. I've been tithing for some time. It wasn't too bad when I started out working. I was making \$20,000 a year and I could afford to give \$2,000. But, you see, Peter, I'm now making \$500,000 a year, and there's just no way that I can afford a tithe of \$50,000.' Dr Marshall reflected on the wealthy man's dilemma, but offered him no advice. He simply said, 'Yes, sir, I think you do have a problem. I think what we ought to do is pray right now. Would that be OK?' The man agreed.

So Dr Marshall bowed his head, put his hand on the man's shoulder and prayed with boldness and authority: 'Dear Lord, this man has a problem. I pray that you help him, Lord. I pray that you reduce his salary back to the place where he can afford to tithe.'

You may laugh, but one of the big 'God tests' in your life if you are to fulfill God's purpose for your future is, 'What do I do with what I have right now?'

MYTH EIGHT – 'I'M STUCK AND THERE'S NO WAY OUT'

I think a vast percentage of the Church has this feeling that they can't escape because lack or debt has ruled for so long. Once again, we can't afford to allow the patterns of the past to determine the pathway into our future.

Deuteronomy 8:18 And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

This verse will echo through the rest of our teaching on this topic of God Money & Me. I strongly encourage you to get hold of this truth. God does not get wealth for you. Write it down and remind yourself. God empowers you to get wealth.

That means for all of us that we can be in a position to be able to fully have sufficiency in all things. Then add this to your arsenal:

Jeremiah 17:7-8 Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.

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Are you already like 'a tree planted by the waters'? If not, then you might be saying, 'God, maybe I need to change some things. I've got to change the path I've been on, and go Your way. I'm going to have to trust and activate Your word.'

With that new trust comes a renewed expectation. For the one who trusts and hopes in the Lord 'shall be like a tree planted by the waters which spreads out its roots by the river'. It will not fear when the heat comes. Note that it doesn't promise that you won't go through hard times. But it does promise that your 'leaf will be green' and you 'will not be anxious in the year of drought'.

You might say, 'I've been faithful to God, but, gosh, I'm in a drought season now.' Yes, we all go through drought seasons. But even in a drought we will not cease from producing fruit, because we understand God prepares us in the toughest of times for a stronger tomorrow. God searches our hearts, tests our minds and examines our thinking to see whether we realize that we are blessed and that we are called to multiply and take dominion. He will give to us according to our ways, and according to the fruit of our actions.

That's a challenge. Between the promise and provision is the place of my responsibility of my responsibility. To trust is to walk with increasing expectation.

****** If John Calvin's statement that 'where riches hold the dominion of the heart, God has lost His authority' has an ounce of truth, many of us are in big trouble. You can take it in two ways. You may be somebody who has nothing, deep in debt, which is dictating your level of hope and your ability to trust God's word. You feel under the control of your lack, and cannot see God's way through.

Or, on the other end of the scale, you may feel secure in your level of finances, and right now you find yourself allowing that security to distract you from the purposes of God for your life. What a sad thing it would be, to be in a place where God is wanting to do so much more but we are giving Him no opportunity to do so. When we don't handle money God's way, He has no authority in the financial areas of our lives.

Whatever state we find ourselves in, either negotiating lack or enjoying financial security, our human hearts are vulnerable. This world, our families, and the future generations need us to allow God to obtain access to our hearts in this crucial area.

Remember, you may feel stuck but you're not – there is a God way out.

God Money & Me by Paul De Jong

Take a few quiet moments and ask the Holy Spirit this question: 'How can I allow God full and free access into my material world, so I can be fruitful and multiply?'

MAIN REFLECTION POINTS:

1. Financial breakthrough always seems to attract attention – Why do you think this is?
2. God has blessed us and wants us to be fruitful, multiply and have dominion – What does this mean to you and has it been a focus in your finances?
3. Money either limits or liberates us – Explain more fully how you would see this.

7. What is the biggest personal revelation you received from Part One of God Money & Me?