

For the Love of Money, Part One: Earn

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, preached many times over the course of his life on the topic of money. To take Wesley's sermon "The Use of Money" seriously would require a whole new way of thinking about how we earn and use money in a world in which others are in want.

As church leaders wrestle daily not only with their individual circumstances but also those of the organization they lead, it would be helpful to revisit Wesley's 18th century sermon and learn applications for today.

In each section below, the "Simple Solution" lists a portion of Wesley's sermon, his most concise articulation of his views on how to use money. The sermon excerpts are adapted from *John Wesley on Christian Practice: The Standard Sermons in Modern English*, by Kenneth Cain Kinghorn.

THE QUICK SUMMARY

In the business community, as in any profession where the stakes are high, there is no credibility without proven success. So often business books distill that success down to a set of theories or "easy to follow" steps. *Make All You Can, Give All You Can* was written from a different perspective-to communicate the how and why of success with real-life, documented examples of business transactions.

Following the progress of a company from start-up to industry leader, you will learn how the application of God's principles as a core foundation brings true accomplishment, not just monetarily, but also in the satisfaction of growing your greatest asset: people. This book will help you learn to let God lead your business, expedite your learning curve in doing so, and give you access to more than 50 years of hard-earned knowledge with warnings along your journey.

There is much kingdom work to be done throughout the world. If God is calling you to help fund His work in even more significant ways, may you read, study, and begin applying His principles now as a business owner or leader. Though the journey is tough, you will have the immense joy and satisfaction of giving with an eternal purpose and influencing beyond what even you believe or perceive possible.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION - Gain all you can

The first of these simple rules is: **Gain all you can**. Of course, it is certain that we should not gain money at the expense of life or health. Therefore, no gain whatever should prompt us to enter into, or to continue in, any lengthy or difficult work that will damage our health.

If we are not to harm our bodies, neither are we to harm our minds. Whatever the circumstance, we must maintain a healthy mind. Therefore, we cannot begin or continue in any sinful occupations, any of which are contrary to the law of God or the nation. In gaining money, we

must not lose our own souls.

Furthermore, do your work as well as possible. Do not sleep or yawn over it. Put your whole strength into your labor. Let nothing be done by halves or in a superficial and careless manner. Let nothing in your business be left undone if labor or patience can do it.

In gaining all you can, use common sense. That is, employ all the intelligence that God has given you. It is astonishing to observe how few people use all that God has given them. From the understanding of others and from your own experience, reading, and thinking, you should continuously learn in everything you do better today than you did yesterday. See to it that you put into practice whatever you learn, so that you can take full advantage of everything in your hands.

If God chooses to bless you with wealth, His primary purpose is for you to use that wealth to bless others.

According to Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." How you deal with your finances is a barometer of where your heart is. There are so many scriptures on stewardship, finances, giving, and faith that we need a lifetime to experience and truly know and understand them all.

The more familiar we are with the idea that God owns it all anyway, the easier that becomes. Ecclesiastes 5: 15 reminds us that "Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands." Then there's the bluntness of Psalm 24: 1: "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it." We are not really owners; we are simply stewards of what has been given to us.

There is not a single verse in the Bible that condemns wealth that was created from hard work, as Solomon had. But there is much said about the love of money and wealth, and the dangers of making them your god. Money is not the root of all evil, as we have all heard, but the love of money is a sin. When we truly understand that God gives us the ability to create wealth and that He owns it all, that's when we can open the door to meaning and purpose and learn to greatly impact the lives of others with it.

Tom Chapman, *Make All You Can*

A NEXT STEP

In early human history mankind learned to trade items for other items. Eventually, the concept of "money" was developed, and money became the one thing that everyone was willing to trade goods for.

Money makes voluntary exchanges fairer, less wasteful, and far more extensive. We need money in the world in order to glorify God through using it wisely. If money were evil in itself,

then God would not have any. But Haggai 2:8 says, “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord.” It all belongs to Him, and He entrusts it to us so that through it we would glorify Him.

Along with the above thoughts, Wayne Grudem, professor of Theology and Biblical Studies at Phoenix Seminary, believes that leaders should rejoice in the God-given goodness of business itself pursued in obedience to God.

Specifically, he believes that the following aspects of business activities are to be enjoyed, and thanks given to God for them:

1. Ownership
2. Productivity
3. Employment
4. Commercial transactions
5. Profit
6. Money
7. Inequality of possessions
8. Competition
9. Borrowing and lending

As you might surmise, Grudem believes the above items are fundamentally good things that God has given to the human race, but they all carry many temptations to misuse and wrongdoing.

As you contemplate the list above, reflect on each by asking how God enjoys seeing His character reflected in that action in our lives as well as how that action could lead to sin that does not glorify God.

Set a firm foundation in your life by listing the nine aspects above and writing a one-sentence statement about each that anchors your theology and practice. Here is an example using #1: “God owns it, I manage it, Others see it.”

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