

## **Deuteronomy 8:17-18: Invest #1**

*October 1, 2017*

Every year at this time we revisit the topic of money as we think about series we call Invest. Every dollar ever given at this church is used to support gospel ministry.

We are especially excited about our plans for Invest this year—and I'll unfold those as the series plays out. We entitle this series Invest because 100% of the monies is invested to advance the kingdom of Jesus Christ from our church.

We also use this annual opportunity to hear what the scripture says about money.

Today we are going to study how a disciple thinks money. You might think that how you view and spend your money is an intensely personal topic that you would rather talk about.

But we must talk about it. We must. If we don't we will not have the Lord's mind on how to think about your money. If we don't talk about it, you might think that God doesn't have much to say about how you spend what you earn.

And if you think that you would be wrong.

It might surprise you to learn that

There are around 2350 verses on money in the Bible which is more than faith and prayer combined.

Richard Halverson the late US Senate chaplain said this about our topic today,

“Jesus Christ said more about money than any other single thing because, when it comes to a man’s real nature, money is of first importance. Money is an exact index to a man’s (or woman’s) true character. All through Scripture there is an intimate correlation between the development of a man’s (or woman’s) character and how he (or she) handles [their] money.”  
Richard Halverson

The Bible’s teaching is different on the topic of money that it goes way past the land of the strange all the way to the territory of outlandish.

But each year at this time we take a few weeks to think together about our money and our God and how they relate. Otherwise, we will be doomed to think like Americans when it comes to our money.

And that is no good.

It seems better for us to think about money like Christians.

You might be surprised to learn that Bible talks about money like a toddler asks questions. Constantly. Incessantly. ALL the time.

Instead of mom, mom, mom, dad, dad, dad—it is

money, money, money, money.

Why?

Because when we have all we need we forget we need to listen to God.

There are repeated warnings throughout the scriptures. There is more danger in having more than enough than not having enough.

Is money evil? No.

Is being wealthy wrong? No.

What is the challenge?

To be faithful disciples we have to think about and spend our money faithfully. Today we are going to think together about how a disciple views money.

How a disciple thinks about money—The Christian knows that everything we have, all that we are and all that we earn comes from the hand of God.

How does a disciple think about money? Like this: Money comes directly from God to us.

“Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, <sup>12</sup> lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart

be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, <sup>15</sup> who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, <sup>16</sup> who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. <sup>17</sup> Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ <sup>18</sup> You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. Deuteronomy 8:11–18

## PRAY

Imagine you get a call (these days a text) asking you to housesit. You know what I mean? Imagine the homeowner asks you to watch over the house for a couple of weeks.

The number one duty of a house sitter is to occupy the house. To temporarily live in the house and show would-be thieves that this house is not empty.

The owner shows you:

What lights to leave on at night.

Where to park your car.

Might ask you to clear away any door hangers that show up.

Further, you get a tour so that you know—

Which plants need to be watered.

The code for the garage door.

The key to the front door.

Take a net around the pool every couple of days.

You get to know the pets and find out which ones to feed.

The owner familiarizes you with the general workings of the house—

Alarm

A/C

When the trash comes

Bring in Amazon Shipments

In general, the owner asks you to watch over her home so that it is in the same shape—with nothing broken, missing or dead—when she returns.

And inevitably the owner says, “Call or text if you have any questions, but most of all please make yourself at home.”

No amount of making yourself at home makes this your home. You can make yourself at home all you want but you will keenly be aware that you are only there temporarily.

And as she leaves—you settle in—

Enjoy the pool.

Get the mail.

The dogs get to like you as you feed them and take them on walks and they get to liking you.

You do what you were asked to do—you watch over the house.

How ridiculous would it be that in the course of a week you convince yourself that you were really the homeowner?

Imagine you began to—

Sell furniture on Craigslist.

Paint an accent wall here and there.

Pull up bushes and plant new ones.

Changed your permanent address.

You change the locks.

You do more than make yourself at home—you make a place that is not your home—yours.

Imagine when the homeowner returns and says—what are you doing with my house? Would they believe it if you said—I forgot it was yours.

Never. Absurd.

We do the same thing with God.

God gives us all we have. God gives us the ability to earn and yet we can forget and begin to believe that all that we have and all that we earn is really ours.

That is even more absurd than forgetting you are housesitting.

We need to understand that we will forget that we are merely housesitting HIS stuff if we don't watch it.

Two ways we can forget—

1. What God has done
2. What God has given

Money has a special amnesiac quality. It makes us forget what God has done and what God has given us.

PROP: Because money can make us forget God, we must remember God has given us all we have.

1. Never forget—What God has done (8:11-16)

In Deuteronomy, Moses is addressing his beloved but stiff-necked people one last time. He gets to address the people he gave the best years of his life to one last time. And he wants to make sure they don't forget.

He doesn't care if they remember him.

Moses wants them to remember God.

Forgetfulness in scripture—especially in the OT—is a constant problem. The people of Israel were perpetually and profoundly forgetful. It wasn't that they had bad memories, but they forgot they needed God.

The first step in forgetting that you need God is forgetting what God has already done for you—and that is Moses' concern as he addresses them one last time.

You can imagine that Moses speaks real and significant urgency when he says,

Vs. 11—

“Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, <sup>12</sup> lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery....”

Moses knows

- Have eaten and are full
- Have built good and sturdy houses
- Live and flourish in them
- Your herds & livestock multiply
- When your gold and silver pile up
- When all you that have is multiplied

The people will be apt to forget. Moses was fearful that when the people had all they need—they will forget that need God.



What was true for them—is true for us.

Most of us in this room have no idea what it is to be really hungry. Most of us have not looked ahead to an uncertain day and prayed with all you are worth, “Lord, give me this day my daily bread.”

We’ve good bread enough for months.

All of us—nearly all of us—have homes sturdy enough to stand against the elements, lock out intruders and keep our loved ones safe.

We do not fret the ravages of wild animals or pillaging highwaymen.

And Moses knew Israel would too—he knew that when they enjoyed full bellies, warm homes and general prosperity they would forget what God had done.

What had God done?

“...who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, <sup>15</sup> who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, <sup>16</sup> who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end.”

God had delivered out from under the thumb of Pharaoh—and led them by the hand through the howling wilderness. God miraculously fed them each day with the bread of heaven.

In short.

God single-handedly saved the nation of Israel from slavery to Egypt so that they might inherit a land flowing with milk and honey.

God saved them from slavery AND Moses knew that Money and Possessions had a dulling effect on their senses.

They would forget. When didn't have to look outside on the ground each day for food—but daily had—plenty to eat and were consistently full—they could forget.

When they didn't live in tents—but had sturdy houses—they could forget.

When they all they had was gratefulness not to be in slavery—but instead had livestock and gold piling up—they could forget.

They aren't the only ones.

We forget too.

We can forget all that God has done for us too.

- God rescued Israel from slavery to Egypt

- God rescued us from slavery to sin

They were trapped in a foreign nation—we were trapped by the foreign power of sin. We could not break out of our prison—we were perpetually slaves to sin and consigned to live under the curse of sin constantly living as slave to this foreign power.

[17] But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, [18] and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. Romans 6:17-18

We are slaves to sin no longer. We did not free ourselves but Jesus rescued us from the grip of sin by carrying the curse of sin to the cross and rising from the tomb.

We must not forget God has done this for us—we did not save ourselves.

- God led them through the terrifying wilderness
- God leads us through an often-terrifying wilderness of the fallen world.

Just as the desert was not a place conducive to life, this fallen world is just as harsh. We face the terrifying threats of:

- Discouragement
- Aging
- Disease
- Loneliness

- Disappointment

And all the while he leads us. Christ our good shepherd leads us—and promises to lead us all the way home:

Why?

[1] The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

[2] He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters.

[3] He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.

[4] Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.” Psalm 23:1-4

We must not forget God has done this for us—we do not lead ourselves—we are upheld daily, hourly, moment by moment by God in Christ.

- God protected them from fiery serpents & scorpions
- God protects us from fiery darts from the evil one.

Just as God protected them from fiery serpents, he protects us from the devil. Our mortal enemy breaths out threats against us daily. And yet, we are not left without protection.

We are protected by the full armor the gospel of Jesus Christ offers and affords—

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm....[16] In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one...” Ephesians 6:11-13, 16

We will be shot at, but we are not left alone.

We must not forget God has done this for us—we do not protect ourselves—faith in the testimony of Jesus Christ and what he has done for us is our ONE and only protection in life and death.

- God fed them and gave them water in a place there was no food and water.
- God feeds us in a much more hostile place.

Jesus is our constant bit of nourishment and support. Those that come to Jesus will be protected forever. Jesus is our portion. Now and forever.

“Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in

me shall never thirst. [36] But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. [37] All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. [38] For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.” John 6:35-38

We must not forget God has done this for us—we have Jesus Christ our bread. He feeds us, protects us, stays with us daily.

Do you remember all that Jesus has done for you?

And yet, we can forget these things. We forget how much the Lord has done for us and is doing for us. We forget and don't live with Jesus Christ at the center of our spending.

We forget that we are merely house-sitting when we forget all that God has done for us. Christ has come and has given us every good gift.

We owe him everything—even our very lives.

You might say—well, I've earned all that I have. No one has given me a hand, what I have I have earned.

2. Never forget—What God has given (8:17-18)

Look at verse 17,

**17 Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.'**

That is like forgetting you are house-sitting.

What?!

You might say—no one gave me a hand. You have what you have because you went and took it. You were given opportunities and made the most of them. You were the one who pulled the overtime.

- You were the one who pulled an all-nighter to make that proposal just right.
- You were the one who studied past the point where your mind creaked.
- You were the one who found those properties and knew they would be perfect.
- You were the one who oversaw the project and delivered it on time.
- You were the one who saved the team with your elegant bit of code.

Yes, yes. You did those things.

No one doubts that. I don't. We are good at remembering what we did.

But we need to remember something else—

**18 You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth...”**

There is our conversation with the homeowner if you will. All that you are, all that you earn and all that you can do comes from him.

He is the one who gives you the ability you have.

God gave you your strong back.

God gave you your keen mind.

God gave you all your opportunities.

God gave you your health.

God gave you that internal drive to get things done.

God gave you the eye for detail.

God gave you those problem-solving skills.

God gave you your sales ability.

God gave you the desire to work hard.

God gave you the ability to learn.

God gave you your artistic ability.

God gave you your eye for color and décor.

God gave you the drive to succeed.

God and God alone gives you the power to earn and have.

We must not forget this!!

When we forget this and fall into the trap of thinking that we get what we get because of our own ability alone—we are apt to forget God.

What does this mean?

It is probably going to make us think differently about what is ours.

God owns everything—we are merely housesitting.



Ways to remember we don't own what we have—that we are merely housesitting:

- Changing your thinking

It is helpful to remember that we owe all to him. He owns everything. And if he owns everything, all that we have we have to use, not own.

The Lord has given us what we have to use for him and his glory.

Do you?

This doesn't mean that when you get something new or whatever you have to be all super-spiritual. Get a new truck—this is the Lord's truck.

No, it is yours. And it is not wrong to get a new truck. But you can't forget who owns it and who gave you the ability to earn it.

- God has been generous with us

Think about how much God provides for us—absolutely everything. From the drive to work hard to our Tupperware.

You might not think that you have much, but all that you have comes directly from him.

Are you living like an owner, or a house-sitter?

- Are you generous?

Do you serve others with what you have or do you live so that what you have serves you?

Do you live like an owner, or a house-sitter?

You might say—I didn't know that I was a housesitter!  
Or I forgot that I was a housesitter.

That is why the word of God gives us a way forward—when we put ourselves under the authority of God and his word we find that he tells us—he is the owner.

“Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it.”  
Deuteronomy 10:14

“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts.” Haggai 2:8

As I think about this series—by the end I hope that:

- We understand God owns all I have
- We believe that God owns all I have
- We live like God owns I have
- Excited about spreading the reach of the kingdom
- Convinced that your attitude toward money says a lot about what you believe about God

