

# (Basics) 45. God and Money Are Opposites

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the necessity of prioritizing God over money, illustrating the dangers of allowing money to become a master in our lives.*

**Duration:** 13:01

**Scripture:** Proverbs 22:7, Ecclesiastes 5:10, Matthew 6:24, Matthew 23:3, Luke 16:13, 1 Timothy 6:10, Hebrews 13:5

**Topics:** "Stewardship Of Wealth", "Materialism Vs Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of making a choice between serving God or serving money. He compares money to fire, stating that while it can be a useful servant, it can also be a destructive master if not handled carefully. The speaker encourages listeners to be cautious and responsible in their handling of money, as it can have a significant impact on their lives. He uses Jesus as an example, highlighting that Jesus worked as a carpenter and earned a living, but was not attached to material possessions.

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## Transcript

Today we want to discuss about something which the world considers to be the most important thing of all, and that is money. What should our attitude be towards money if we want to live for God? Money is the area where we know it's easy for us to be deceived. The world is full of people who have cheated others through various clever tricks in the area of money.

And so many people have discovered very very clever ways in which to cheat others. But there is no one who has cheated man as much in the area of money as Satan. He has given man a false understanding of the value of money.

He has made people feel that money is more important than God himself. That is worse than somebody cheating me of a hundred thousand rupees. I would rather be cheated of one hundred thousand rupees than to be cheated in this way, that I begin to think in my life that money is more important than God.

It's not true. And yet there are very very few people who really see this clearly. Satan deceives them.

Jesus came and brought the clear light of heaven on this issue. I want you to turn to Luke's Gospel chapter 16 and verse 13. Now this is a revolutionary verse.

I don't think many Christians have ever read this verse properly. I myself never read it properly for many many many years after I was born again. At least 20 years.

What does it say here? Luke 16 verse 13. Jesus said that no servant can serve two masters. He's talking about two masters and immediately you begin to think that the two masters are God and Satan.

But it's not God and Satan. Because everybody in the world knows you can't serve God and Satan. If I were to ask you, do you love Satan? You'd all say no.

Do you love God? Yes. Can you love God and Satan at the same time? No, you know that clearly. Can you serve God and Satan at the same time? No.

Are you holding on to God or are you holding on to Satan? You say sure, I'm holding on to God. Do you despise Satan then? Nothing to do with him? You say yes. So, that's not an issue.

If the two masters were God and Satan, there's no need even to talk about it. But here, Jesus said the two masters are God and mammon. Mammon means money and material riches.

Material things. And what did he say in relation to these two masters? Now listen very carefully. You must hate the one and love the other.

Listen carefully again. These are the words of Jesus because Jesus is bringing the light of heaven upon this area of God and money. And he was pointing out here that money is a master.

And God is a master. And you can't serve two masters because both masters will call you to do something. God calls you to do something and money calls you to do something and you have to make a choice which one you're going to obey.

It's so clear here, first of all, that you have to make a break with one of these masters. You have to decide which one you're going to serve. He's not talking about the use of money.

Money is a good servant but a terrible master. Remember that. It's like fire.

Fire is a good servant but a terrible master. You use fire and you keep the fire under control in the kitchen, in the gas stove. That's okay.

But if you let that fire go out of control, what happens? Your whole house is burnt up. And if you can treat money like that, as a servant, keep it under control like you keep the fire on the gas stove under control and it's a wonderful servant. Very very useful.

How can you live in the world without money? Useful for food, clothing, education, housing and everything, even in God's work. Money is required for God's work. Money can help the poor.

But when money takes over a person's life, you know what it's like? It's like the house catching fire. It destroys the whole house. So we're not against money just like we're not against fire.

But we say be careful when you handle fire. Fire is very dangerous. Don't be careless when you're handling fire.

So many people have died by being burnt in the kitchen because they were careless with fire. And many more people have died because they were careless with money. Are you as careful in handling money as

you are in handling fire? Actually you should be more careful because money is more dangerous than fire.

So we need to understand this in its proper perspective and proper balance. We're not preaching some type of sanyasi type of life or being a hermit or a monk or a nun or any such thing. That's not what I'm preaching.

I'm talking about living a normal life, earning your living in whatever profession you do, earning money and by all means earn as much as you can without destroying your soul and without neglecting your family, putting God's kingdom first. But once you earn it, remember that what you earn is like a fire. Keep it under control.

Keep it as your servant. Let me use another illustration. Supposing you've got a servant in your house and the servant becomes like a mistress or a master running the house and you who are the master of the house or the mistress of the house have been reduced to the place of a servant and your servant is bossing you, telling you to sit down and get up and go here and go there.

Ultimately the servant has taken over the house. What a tragedy that is. The servant who came to help in the house has become the mistress.

This is exactly what has happened with many Christians. Money has not been kept in the place of a servant. There are many unrealistic attitudes towards money among Christians.

Some people have preached extreme things which are unrealistic and impossible to live by. God hasn't called everybody to be a sanyasi or a hermit. God hasn't called everybody to be a full-time worker, to give up their jobs, only one in a thousand.

The rest 999 of them must be in a secular job. But they must know how to handle money. To see the relationship that God should have and money should have, let's take an illustration from what I said earlier.

Here is your husband in your home and here is a man who works as a servant, a gardener in your home or a cook. Now, it's useful to have somebody who is doing the gardening or the cooking. But if you begin to love that cook more than your husband, something has gone wrong.

See, that's the problem with many believers. Money is all right when it's kept in its place. They've started loving the servant and forgotten about their husband.

It's like the wife going and marrying the servant man or the gardener and forgetting all about her husband. This is an accurate picture of what's happened to many Christians. And they've destroyed their lives.

They've divorced their relationship with God. So what am I saying? Get rid of the gardener, get rid of the servant? No. By all means, keep the gardener, keep the servant, but keep them in their proper place.

And you'll be devoted to your husband. Be devoted to God. Be so devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ that money has no value for you except as a servant.

You know how you and your husband will go out together and the servant, he doesn't come into the picture at all. No, he maybe works in the fields for you, but he doesn't come into the picture when you and your husband go out. You're living with your husband, not with your servant man.

And that's what Jesus said here. You must hate the one and love the other. Can you say that your relationship with God and money is like that? That you hate one and love the other? You love God so much that your interest in money can be compared to hatred.

And he said you must hold on to one and despise the other. That means you value your husband so much that you don't care for that servant who works in the field. Your love for Jesus is so great that money has no value for you at all.

Many people have not taken this verse seriously. And many believers, so-called believers, don't realize it, but actually they hate God and they despise Him. Because according to this verse, if you love money and material things, you hate God and you despise Him.

Yeah, it's true. You know the Pharisees. We read in Matthew 23 verse 3 that Jesus said they were doctrinally pure.

Their doctrines were all correct. They were extremely religious. But we read in Luke 16, 14 that they loved money.

Which proved that they hated God. They were religious but they hated God. Because they loved money so much.

See, you can't have a neutral attitude towards money. Just like you can't have a neutral attitude towards Satan. You must either love Satan or hate him.

And you must either love money or hate it. You will either hold on to money or despise it. God and mammon are like two opposites.

Like the north and south pole of a magnet. If you are attracted by one pole, you are repelled by the other. You know, anybody who studied science, physics, will know that a magnet has got a north and a south pole.

And if you bring another magnet to it, if you are attracted to one pole of that magnet, you will be repelled by the other one. Automatically. So then, how shall we learn to be detached from money or to hate money? In the way Jesus said.

Jesus used some strong words. For example, he told us to hate father and mother. Wife and children.

What did he mean? Here he says you got to hate money. We need to understand what he meant. He didn't mean he told us to kick father and mother and wife and children out of the house.

That's not the meaning. Neither is he saying that you must get rid of all your money and be a hermit or a monk or a pastor or full time worker or go and give your money to some Christian work or faith home or any such thing. No.

That's not the way. Let me use an example. If you look at Jesus' life, you have the perfect example of how to handle money.

He worked as a carpenter. He earned his living. But he was not attached to it.

That is the answer. Look at Jesus. You say, Lord, I want to have the same attitude that you have to material things.

That's the answer. We've got more to say about this in which we shall continue in our next program.

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