

Financial Principles of the Bible

Part 8: Trust in God, not Money

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Mark 10: The Rich Young Ruler

Mark 10:17-18 says *Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God."* We see that Jesus responded, "why do you call me *Agathos* (good)." The Greek word *Agathos* speaks to a goodness that is so pure that there is not one man that qualifies to be described by it! Jesus was saying "only God qualifies for that!" Does Jesus qualify for that? Yes! So, why did Jesus question the man about calling Him *Agathos*? Jesus wasn't questioning the word, He was questioning the motive. Jesus was asking "are you flattering Me, are you trying to manipulate Me? Or... do you actually believe I am God?" The man later drops "*Agathos*" and just calls Him "teacher."

Jesus continues in verse 19: *You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'"* And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth." Then Jesus, looking at him, **loved** him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." Please notice Jesus' heart stance and disposition towards this man . . . He loved him! He looked at him and loved him; He wanted to minister to him. What a beautiful Lord we have!

Now, look at what Jesus said to him. He said "come, take up the cross, and follow Me." There were very few people in His entire life to whom Jesus said "come, follow Me." He let others make the decision for themselves, but there were precious few He said "come, follow Me" to. Nevertheless, this man was sad at Jesus' word and he went away grieved. Why did he respond like that?!? Look at verse 22: "*But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*"

Did the man actually have great possessions? He did not. The man did not have the possessions in all actuality. The possessions had him. That is not just a play on words, that was the reality of his life. You can have great possessions - or great possessions can have you. In this case, great possessions had him. Jesus knew that, loved him, and wanted to set him free - which is why Jesus gave this instruction to this man! Do not take it as a general instruction from the Lord for all mankind -that's not what it is! This instruction was for this man and for any man whom is had by his own possessions. The Lord says "if a possession has you, let it go!"

Picking up in verse 23 ... *Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were astonished at His words.* Why were the disciples astonished at Jesus' words here? Because in their culture, they believed completely in Jehovah Jireh! They did not receive the eastern, religious garbage that "God is opposed to wealth." We have been inundated culturally by that teaching, but they (Jesus' disciples) did not have any non-sensical views like "God is opposed to wealth" or "God is opposed to money." They believed in Jehovah Jireh - the Lord Our Provider! And because of it, they were all wealthy as a nation! The Israelites were an incredibly wealthy people and they knew that it was God that did it!

God moved them into the promised land and blessed their socks off! God told them He was going to establish them in the promised land and He warned them in Deut.. 8:18 to not forget who got them there! *"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."* God told the Israelites that He was going to make them wealthy; He just exhorted them to not forget in that day of plenty who had brought them into such prosperity! God said it, they believed it, and God prospered them greatly!

When Jesus said *"How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!"* they were astonished! "Lord, what are you saying!?" Jesus answered their concern and confusion with clarification: *But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who **trust** in riches to enter the kingdom of God!"*

The issue isn't money. It's trust; WHERE is your and my trust?

Is our trust truly in God - or is it in your bank account? If you were to line up 100 Christians and interview each with the question "do you trust in God or your bank account?" the vast majority - in fact nearly every believer would say "I trust in God!" But, most of them, would not be telling themselves - or you, the interviewer - the truth. It's not that they would be trying to lie, it's that they are deceived. They think they trust in God, but their trust is more likely in that monthly statement from their bank. This teaching is important! It pertains to all of the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven! It pertains to all of life! In Luke 16:11, Jesus said *"Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"* Money is one of the greatest and most broadly applicable training grounds for faith - a training ground for all other aspects of the Kingdom. If we have not been faithful with money, who would commit to us true riches?

Knowing the Depths of our Hearts

Because of the fall of man - and sin entering in - we all swim in fear. That is to say, we may each individually be operating from a place of fear, but we definitely swimming in and bathing in a world's system that is typified by fear! So, chances are, we are all also operating out of some measure of fear - we're swimming in it after all! So, how do we make sure that we are not operating in the fear that is in this world? If we are all operating in fear in varying degrees, how can we lessen that degree greatly?

We are afraid of ourselves - of what we will do. We know that in our flesh we are weak. We know that we struggle with lust, lying, and self-centeredness. We're afraid of what we might say to our spouse or do to our children. We want to be good to our spouse, children, members of our church family, co-workers, clients, and strangers. We want to be a good person before God, but we don't know that we are going to do a good job. We're afraid we're going to fail. We are personally afraid of failing all the time!

We are also afraid of others hurting us. We know people are going to fail us, violate us, hurt our feelings, hurt our financial situation, or our relationships. As a result of this fear that we live in and swim in on a daily basis, every one of us has layers upon layers over our hearts. And we actually believe the layers more than we believe what is actually in our heart! Because that's what we live by - the facade, the mask that we put over our hearts!

God does not want us living that way! That is why He, in His most beautiful way peels back those layers as we walk with Him . . . beautifully getting to the real issues of our heart in order to set us free. We actually live out of the deepest part of our heart. Our actions are based on what we REALLY believe. Our words say one thing, but our actions betray us. We ask ourselves "why do I keep doing this?" Our actions betray our words because we really believe something deep in our hearts that our words do not accurately represent. The depths of our hearts - that's what we actually act out of.

Our thoughts determine our beliefs. What we meditate on forges our beliefs. Then what you believe will actually cause you to think what you believe! Those thoughts then drive our words. From our words come our actions and from our actions come our habits and from our habits come our destiny. (adapted from Gandhi). Gandhi's quote echoes Prov. 4:20-23 on some level. What is deep in our hearts is actually what is in the driver's seat of your life - not the layers that we show everyone else.

Why say all of that? Because there is a mindset - a mental construct - that every child of God must have in order to have a successful life! When I say successful, I mean "going from faith to faith and from glory to glory the way God intends for us to be!" Not just that you are saved and going to Heaven. That's great! But if you want to have a successful walk with God here on the earth, you and I should be going from faith to faith and from glory to glory. We should be ever increasing in wisdom and knowledge and understanding! ***We should be going higher in our joy and deeper in our peace!*** We should be operating more and more in the power of God. That's a successful Christian life and that's a continuum that God is expecting His children to be on!

If we are going to have that sort of successful life, we must have a certain mindset that produces a spiritual discipline. "I know I have layers on my heart; I must see what's actually in my heart. I cannot live by just the layers - I must myself peel back the layers (not just wait for God to do it)." God is so patient, our initiation is important! He knows when we are ready for "it" so if we don't press on ourselves to get ready for Him to peel back the layers, we may end up waiting on Him . . .

but we are really waiting on ourselves! We can make ourselves ready - faster! He is waiting for us to be willing! God waits for us to be ready before He speaks. We, on the other hand, tell our loved one whether they are ready for “it” or not! God waits - He’s patient! So, if you and I want God to speed things up, get willing!

God is a gentleman. He will not force a change in you that you’re not ready for. Perhaps you’ve felt like He has changed you past what you’re ready for some time before, but you were ready - or else He would not have brought it! Not all changes are easy and painless, but you were ready - that’s why He brought it! We can get there ourselves faster! How can we peel back the layers?

We cannot do it on our own! We do it solely by letting the Word of God shine on our hearts, letting it reveal what’s in our heart . . . and then the brave will adjust accordingly! If repentance is in order, the wise will repent. The fool goes on without changing.

Life is busy. We get very busy. This process is not going to happen amongst our business. We all must slow down - yes, even STOP - on a regular basis. Pull aside. Get off the highway of life! ***Stop. Consider our heart. We must be attentive to our heart.***

We have to say to ourselves “I have to know what I am really believing about _____.” About what? About whatever it is that we want to take on! You are not going to be able to do this all in one day. It’s a lifestyle. It’s a mindset every Christian must have - on a regular, routine basis. It can be daily or weekly. Or it can be a fluid, continual basis.

For example, you can ask yourself “what do I really think about my spouse?” It’s scary. You don’t want to go there! But, when you find that reaction, do you know what you have? Layers! When a person has done the work of being attentive to their heart, they are not afraid of that question AT ALL! “Go ahead, ask me!” They have already been there, done that, answered that question honestly and quietly before themselves and God. They’ve previously and recently plumbed the depths of their own heart on that issue. They’ve not just plumbed the depths of their hearts on that challenging question once. They’ve done it with some consistency and freshness. You have to be brave and courageous to ask yourself these questions - because if you are not being brutally honest with yourself it becomes an exercise in delusion.

“What do I really think about my spouse?” Nobody is around. Nobody is listening - but God. We sometimes don’t want to “go there” in our self-talk and personal, honest thoughts because we know that God is listening to our thoughts. Newsflash: God already knows what you think about your spouse! You are the only one between the two of you that doesn’t know what you think about your spouse! God not only knows what you think about your spouse, but He also knows what you think about your kids, your pastor, all the people in your church family, and what you think about Him!

It is good and healthy to really consider “what do I think about God?” Not what I say on Sunday to my brothers and sisters in Christ. Perhaps not even what I say to Him in prayer time. I

mean “what do I really think about Him?” Do I actually in true honesty feel like God has kind of short-handed me? Do I feel like He has really been kind of hard on me? Get brutally honest with yourself and ask yourself these questions!

We are afraid that God is going to hear our thoughts. We are afraid of what we are going to see - and afraid of God seeing it too! The beauty of it is, God already knows - He knows everything you think about your kids, your pastor, your church family, etc. . . AND He has not squashed you like a bug! He’s awesome! Not only that, He has completely 100% accepted you and me and loves you and me right where we are!

We’re safe. We can go “there.” We can go as deep as we want - only to find out what He already knows so that we can find God there - ready to help! God is there, at your depths, at my depths, ready to undo and straighten out anything that needs undone or straightened out! He has just been waiting for you and me to show up - to meet Him there - so that He can do the work.

Why is He waiting? Because it requires our permission! God has given us an incredible gift that He uniquely bestowed upon humans - not to animals and not to angels - only to humans. And that gift is a free will! He only gave it to us. Animals cannot speak and God determines where they are going to live, how they are going to live, and when they are going to die. God determines everything about their lives. He doesn’t do that with us. We have the power of speech - the creativity of words - and God gave that to nobody else. The angels speak, but they speak ONLY what God tells them to speak. When one angel decided to do otherwise, he was cast out of heaven like lightening.

We, on the other hand, have the right to speak our own minds. We have a free will. God is waiting on us to give Him permission to move on our heart - to change our heart. So we need to truly look upon our own heart on a regular basis. “What do I think about my spouse or such and such person?” “What am I thinking about myself? God? Money?”

Here’s where this applies to money. “What do I actually think about money? Really.” Don’t sprinkle religious, sugary language all over it. “What do I really think about money?”

Pulling back the Layers of our Heart

The wise in heart are living with eternity in mind at all times. The wise are planning for and building toward the time when they will be with the heavenly society in the New Jerusalem! They are setting their minds on things above - where Christ is - and not on the things of this earth! The foolish have only this world in focus.

Our hearts will be revealed to us in the last days! We can either wait until then and see what was really in our hearts and have no opportunity left to make adjustments as necessary. God will reveal the hearts of men in those last days. What God desires is that we would reveal our own hearts - now! Take it before the Lord NOW and make any adjustments necessary NOW so that you can live a life that produces more and more beautiful fruit so that in the last day you can hear from the Lord “well done My good and faithful servant!” That’s what we want to hear from God. It will not just

happen. It happens because His people were intentional. They were living with eternity in mind. They say “I must consider my heart stance NOW on this and that matter!” And they make adjustments! How? Meditate in God’s Word!

When we read in the Word what doesn’t mesh with our hearts, let the Word burn it out of you! Stop! Go back to that verse! Read it again! Stay in the ring with that verse! God’s boxing gloves are velvet covered! There is a softness to them. Stay in there with that verse. When it’s all said and done you’ll think “I feel good! I feel clean!” The Word cleanses you and you will find yourself changed - responding better to your spouse or children perhaps. The fruit of that transformative time in the Word is both sweet and precious, but it doesn’t just happen! We have to do this. We have to be deliberate about looking at what’s in our heart and taking it before the Lord!

This man, in Mark 10, if he had been exercising this principle in his life, he would have known his heart was not good about money. If he had already been real with himself, he would have clearly realized that his possessions possessed him! We actually know what’s going on inside our hearts ... and that’s why we put layers on it: because we don’t like it! When you decide “I’m going in!” and you start pulling back layers, you get there and you think “oh man, I knew that. I’ve known that all along! Yes, I didn’t just want to really see that.” Had he been reflective, the man would have known that money had him and then he could have said “God help me. God show me. What do I need to do? Help me change this?”

And God would have met him there. He may have simply changed his heart in that place of meeting. Or He may have told him to give the money away. God knows what will be necessary for a change in each of us. For one person it will mean “giving the money away” so-to-speak. For another it will just be a change of heart and they can keep the money. God knows whatever it will take to set us free! We cannot do this on our own; that’s why we have to go to Him! We need God and we need His Word!

God beckons us to do this now - while we can still change things! We see in the Psalms that David was a man that constantly was peeling back the layers of his heart before the Lord! He was constantly saying “God, look at my heart! Show me anything that needs to be changed!” God says “I love this guy!” And as a result, David did great exploits with God and God was able to entrust him with great riches - and not only with the wealth of this world, but also with true riches!”

“Truly my soul silently waits for God; from Him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved. How long will you attack a man? You shall be slain, all of you, Like a leaning wall and a tottering fence. They only consult to cast him down from his high position; they delight in lies; they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah” (Ps. 62:1-4) The word “selah” means “think about it.” Look again at what the verse 4 says: *“they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.”* They were doing something different with their mouth than what was in their hearts! The heart of man can be very deceitful. It’s true nature and character can be covered over. But a man of understanding, like David, draws out what is in his heart!

My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah Surely men of low degree are a vapor, men of high degree are a lie; if they are weighed on the scales, they are altogether lighter than vapor. Do not trust in oppression, nor vainly hope in robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them. God has spoken once, twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God.

How do you peel back those layers of your heart and correct those things that need be corrected? You go to God's word, you read what it has to say about a matter, and then you contemplate it. You meditate on it. What does it mean to meditate? It means to muse, to chew on, to think about, to pound in. You use your imagination; think and think deeply about what He is saying. Go there! We all know that some of the greatest things we have ever learned we learn by experiences. Usually, the greater the experience, the greater the learning outcome we pull from it! BUT it is NOT God's will that you have multiple bad experiences in order to learn a lot from them! People come up with the sovereignty doctrine because "they learned so much" from the process of healing in the hospital over 6 months after flying through the windshield of their car in a catastrophic wreck. Not God's plan! Did He work in the midst of that tragedy? Of course - He's a loving Father! But that was not God' best. That person could have learned the same things sitting comfortably and healthfully in their chair in the living room reading the Word of God!

God's will is that we would have good experiences and learn from those! And, some difficult situations will also sometimes be orchestrated by God. That is to say, even if we are walking in the perfect will of God and walking in perfect faith, we are still going to have some difficult situations. Not only will difficult situations arise from simply being in the world, but at times God will also orchestrate difficult situations to teach us things. But, be careful about your interpretation about whether a difficult thing was from God or not. We have to rightly divide the word of truth. Certain things like sickness, disease, and ALL sin is never from God! He did *not* tempt a wife or husband to commit adultery so that He could "teach them something in their marriage!" That wasn't God. He will help them through it and teach them great principles but His plan was for them to have those principles beforehand so they never would have had that situation!

James 1:13 settles that: "*Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*" Let that be settled in your heart! But, will God leave you in a job that you hate? O yea. He certainly will - and for an extended period of time! For how long, brother?!? "Until you learn whatever it is that you need to learn!" Until you graduate! Until you pass the test! Because until you pass the test, you are going to go around and around that mountain. You don't have to go around that mountain for 40 years - it is up to you! Will He bring difficult situations into your life to teach you things? Yes. BUT never will it be evil! God calls sickness and disease evil! Jesus, anointed of the Holy Ghost went about doing GOOD -

healing all those oppressed of the devil. “Good” by definition of God was to HEAL that which came from the devil.

Anything that you see that was nailed to the cross is evil and not of God. Isa 53 tells us what was on the cross: *“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”* Grievs and sorrows (sickness and disease in the Hebrew) were placed on the cross because they are evil! Isaiah makes it clear that Jesus was not stricken and smitten of God for His works, but for ours! When you have anxiety, it is never from God! Peace is from God! He took the chastisement for our peace! If you are worried about God being angry with you and you are walking around on eggshells all the time wondering deep in your heart what He thinks of you, BE AT PEACE. He is not going to be angry at you or yell at you - ever! He is at peace with you! Jesus took the chastisement that has brought you peace with God!

Sickness and disease were nailed to the cross because they are evil and not of God! He never brings sickness to teach us ANYTHING! He does not cause the break-up of households! That’s the devil who has come to steal, kill, and destroy. But Jesus has come that we may have life and have it abundantly! (Jn. 10:10) Let that verse clarify your doctrine! It simple: if it is evil it is not from God! James says don’t ever say “I’m tempted of God in this situation.”

An Example of how to Meditate in God’s Word

God says “don’t trust in riches.” He doesn’t say “don’t have them (riches)” - that’s a religious filter and not what God said! For example in 1 Tim 6:17 Paul says *“Command those who are rich in this present age . . .”* Now, what do you think he’s going to say? What’s the typical response? “Give it away!” That’s not what he says! Instead, God, exhorts the wealthy through Paul to: *“not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.”* Don’t be proud. Don’t trust in the riches, but in God! That’s the issue! Money is not the issue! Trust is! Where is your and my trust?

Here’s an example of how to meditate in God’s Word. God says “don’t trust in riches.” So, we can actually use our imagination to test our own heart. “What if I won the lottery . . . what would I do with \$400 million in my personal bank account?” Let that soak in. Feel it! You would not have to work for the rest of your life! What could you do with this? You’ve been enjoying it for weeks, maybe months, You’re married. You and your spouse have been having a great time celebrating. You decide to go on a weekend trip to Cincinnati because you have some friends there that want to see you! Since your spouse doesn’t know these old friends you both decide that you will go alone. As you drive, the whole drive down, you don’t have rest in your heart. You realize “I don’t want to do this without my spouse - I want my friends to meet and know my spouse.” So, you stop, turn around, and drive an hour back home to get your spouse and now you are getting excited to include

your spouse in the trip! And as you walk in, you hear in astonishment the sound of your marriage covenant being utterly violated and shattered in your very own bedroom. What good does your money do for you now? Can it save you? Can it buy back the purity of your marriage? Can it buy back the peace your heart possessed just minutes earlier? Will it buy back your love and respect for your spouse? Would all the money in the world be sufficient to prevent the wounds of divorce that are sure to strike the hearts of your children and affect them for the rest of their lives?

Money is a liar. It promises to take care of everything and to make you happy. Yet, it can do NOTHING in the things that truly matter in life!

Here's another scenario. Your marriage is solid, wonderful, and you both have a deep love for one another because you have taken the time to cultivate a healthy marriage on a daily basis. There are not issues because you talk out everything. And for the sake of truly considering where our trust is, in this second scenario, this couple also wins the lottery! \$400 million. All the money you can possibly need or spend for the rest of your life! You go out and get the house you both always wanted to get - and you feel God's blessing on it! You buy a big house that even has a maid's quarter in the back. You hire a maid and she makes all of your meals, does your laundry, and iron your clothes. You buy that dream car. You are buying \$500 shirts, \$500 pants, and eating at any restaurant that you want. Your whole family is going on cruises together. You get home from your lovely family cruise and you and your wonderful spouse are planning your next trip. You hire a nanny for the kids and you and your spouse are going to go alone to Greece and Italy - an international date!

In preparation for your trip, you wake up with flu like symptoms that get bad enough that you need to cancel your Mediterranean trip. You finally go to the hospital and you get the report - and it's cancer. And it's throughout your body. They tell you that you have, at most, one month to live. What will your money do for you now? Can it heal you? Can you pay the doctor enough money to guarantee that it goes away? Can your maid heal you? Will your expensive clothes be sufficient to cover it up and make it disappear? Can you order a new, healthy body online with all the money that you have? Can you scrub your body with new \$100 bills to rub that cancer off of you? Will all the money in the world buy you even one more day with your family?

Money is a liar. It has a voice and it lies to us. That voice is the spirit of Mammon that Jesus talks about when He says "you cannot serve God and Mammon." Money promises to take care of everything - to make you happy. YET it can do NOTHING in any of the things that truly matter in life. Like the psalmist says in Psalm 62, "*if riches increase, don't place your heart in them because power belongs to God!*" Only God can heal your body! God can heal your marriage! God can heal the heart of man! God can fill the heart with joy and peace - regardless of circumstances! God can stop the mouth of lions! God can part the sea and drown the pursuing army that seeks to kill you! God can raise the dead and God alone can give eternal life! "*Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God ...*"

When you get that doctor's report, when you get that call into your boss's office, when you go to that job interview and you know that you don't have all the qualifications that they are looking for, when others are attacking your reputation and character . . . you need to be able to go into those situations saying "I TRUST IN GOD!" That comes from staying with God and not allowing your heart to be take away by money.

There is NO problem AT ALL in having money. The problem is in letting money have you. Fight against it. Peel back the layers of your heart. Ask yourself the hard questions. And if there is a problem about money in your heart, don't be afraid of it, but instead take it to God and let God work the solution in your heart. He is faithful to do it! We don't have to know how to change our hearts! That's not our job - that's God's job! He's just waiting for you and me to give Him permission!

But we will never give God that permission if you and I don't take the time to "go there" and peel back the layers of our hearts and say "God I see an ugliness in me in my attitude towards my spouse, my kids, towards you Father, or towards money." Go there and let God heal your heart, change your heart - and watch the beautiful fruit that comes out of it!

May we have an increased courage and boldness to go before you God and to rend our hearts before You! That we might invite you in and give you permission Father to change our heart!

Text Summary (for reading as a group)

We see an exchange between Jesus and a rich man in Mark 10 after which Jesus said “*How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!*” His disciples were astonished! “Lord, what are you saying!?” Jesus answered their concern and confusion with clarification: *But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who **trust** in riches to enter the kingdom of God!”* **The issue isn’t money. It’s trust; WHERE is your and my trust?**

We actually live out of the deepest part of our heart. Our actions are based on what we REALLY believe. God, in His most beautiful way peels back the layers as we walk with Him . . . beautifully getting to the real issues of our heart in order to set us free. There is a mindset - a mental construct - that every child of God must have in order to have a successful life - a life that is ever increasing in wisdom, knowledge, understanding, joy, peace, and the the power of God! That mindset is: “I know I have layers on my heart, so I must see what’s actually in my heart. I cannot live by just the layers - I must rend my heart before Him.” But, how can we peel back the layers of our hearts? We do it solely by letting the Word of God shine on our hearts, letting it reveal what’s in our heart . . . and then the brave will adjust accordingly! If repentance is in order, the wise will repent, but the fool goes on without changing.

Life is busy, but this process is not going to happen amongst our business. We all must slow down - yes, even STOP - on a regular basis. Pull aside. Get off the highway of life! **Stop. Consider our heart. We must be attentive to our heart.** For example, you can ask yourself “what do I really think about my spouse?” It’s scary. We don’t want to go there! But, when you find that reaction, do you know what you have? Layers! When a person has done the work of being attentive to their heart, they are not afraid of that question AT ALL! They’ve previously and recently plumbed the depths of their own heart on that issue.

You have to be brave and courageous to ask yourself these questions - because if you are not being brutally honest with yourself it becomes an exercise in delusion. We sometimes don’t want to “go there” in our self-talk and personal, honest thoughts because we know that God is listening to our thoughts. Newsflash: God already knows what you think about your spouse! God not only knows what you think about your spouse, but He also knows what you think about your kids, your pastor, all the people in your church family, and what you think about Him! We are afraid that God is going to hear our thoughts. The beauty of it is, God already knows - He knows everything you think about your kids, your pastor, your church family, etc. . . AND He has not squashed you like a bug! He’s awesome! Not only that, He has completely 100% accepted you and me and loves you and me right where we are! We’re safe. We can go “there” with Him! We can go as deep as we want - only to find out what He already knows so that we can find God there - ready to help! God is there, at the deepest depths of our hearts, ready to undo and straighten out anything that needs undone or straightened out! He has just been waiting for you and me to show up - to meet Him there - so that He can do the work! His work in our hearts simply requires our permission!

The wise in heart are living with eternity in mind at all times. The foolish have only this world in focus. Our hearts will be revealed to us in the last days! We can either wait until then and see what was really in our hearts and have no opportunity left to make adjustments as necessary. Take your heart before the Lord NOW and make any adjustments necessary NOW so that you can live a life that produces more and more beautiful fruit so that in the last day you can hear from the Lord "well done My good and faithful servant!" We make adjustments in our hearts by meditating in God's Word! When we read in the Word what doesn't mesh with our hearts, let the Word burn it out of you! Stop! Go back to that verse! Read it again! Stay in the ring with that verse! God's boxing gloves are velvet covered! There is a softness to them. The Word cleanses you and you will find yourself changed! The fruit of that transformative time in the Word is both sweet and precious, but it doesn't just happen! The man in Mark 10, if he had been exercising this principle in his life, he would have known his heart was not good about money. If he had already been real with himself, he would have clearly realized that his possessions possessed him! And God would have met him there. God knows whatever it will take to set us free! We cannot do this on our own; that's why we have to go to Him! We need God and we need His Word and He beckons us to do this now - while we can still change things! We see in the Psalms that David was a man that constantly was peeling back the layers of his heart before the Lord! He was constantly saying "God, look at my heart! Show me anything that needs to be changed!" God says "I love this guy!" And as a result, David did great exploits with God and God was able to entrust him with great riches!

What does it mean to meditate? It means to muse, to chew on, to think about, to pound in. You use your imagination; think and think deeply about what He is saying. Our imagination allows us to experience God's Word in a very real way - without needing to go through all the experiences in our day-to-day lives! Not understanding this, some people come up with the sovereignty doctrine because "they learned so much" from the process of healing in the hospital over 6 months after a catastrophic car wreck. Not God's plan! Did He work in the midst of that tragedy? Of course - He's a loving Father! But that was not God' best. That person could have learned the same things sitting comfortably and healthfully in their chair in the living room meditating on the Word of God!

It is true that at times God will orchestrate difficult situations to teach us things. But, be careful about your interpretation about whether a difficult thing was from God or not. Certain things like sickness, disease, and ALL sin is never from God! James 1:13 settles this exact issue: "*Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*" But, will God leave you in a job that you hate? O yea - until you learn whatever it is that you need to learn! You don't have to go around that mountain for 40 years - it is up to you! Will He bring difficult situations into your life to teach you things? Yes. BUT never will it be evil! God calls sickness and disease evil! Anything that you see that was nailed to the cross is evil and not of God! Griefs and sorrows (sickness and disease in the Hebrew) were placed on the cross because they are evil! When you have anxiety, it is never from God! Peace is from God! Sickness and disease were nailed to the cross because they are evil and not of God! He never brings sickness to teach us ANYTHING! He does not cause the break-up of households! That's the devil who has come to

steal, kill, and destroy. But Jesus has come that we may have life and have it abundantly! (Jn. 10:10)
Let that verse clarify your doctrine!

Here's where this applies to money. "What do I actually think about money? Really." Don't sprinkle religious, sugary language all over it. "What do I really think about money?"

In 1 Tim 6:17 Paul says "*Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*" For example, can money buy back the purity of a marriage? Or, for another example, if you had cancer, can you order a new, healthy body online with all the money that you have? Will all the money in the world buy you even one more day with your family?

Money is a liar. It has a voice and it lies to us. That voice is the spirit of Mammon that Jesus talks about when He says "you cannot serve God and Mammon." Money promises to take care of everything - to make you happy. YET it can do NOTHING in any of the things that truly matter in life. Like the psalmist says in Psalm 62, "*if riches increase, don't place your heart in them because power belongs to God!*" Only God can heal your body, your marriage, or your heart! In the difficult situations of life, you need to be able to go into those situations saying "I TRUST IN GOD!" That comes from staying with God and not allowing your heart to be take away by money.

There is NO problem AT ALL in having money. The problem is in letting money have you. Fight against it. Peel back the layers of your heart. Ask yourself the hard questions. And if there is a problem about money in your heart, don't be afraid of it, but instead take it to God and let God work the solution in your heart. He is faithful to do it! We don't have to know how to change our hearts! That's God's job! He's just waiting for you and me to give Him permission! Go there and let God heal your heart, change your heart - and watch the beautiful fruit that comes out of it! May we have an increased courage and boldness to go before God and to rend our hearts before Him! That we might invite Him in and give Him permission to change our heart!

Points to Ponder . . .

- What issue was really at hand in the heart of the rich young man in Mark 10?
- How do our hearts affect our lives?
- How does God want to affect our heart?
- Only God can change our heart, but what can we do to help that process?
- What role does imagination play in meditation?
- God may orchestrate a difficult learning opportunity in our lives, but list some scriptures that tell us the things that He will never orchestrate in our lives.
- Money claims it can do everything, but what is money not able to do?