

MONEY

The Foundational Faith

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What are the commands in the Noble New Testament regarding money? Let us discover most of them in this study. We will notice that God does not command us to tithe, i.e. giving ten percent from income. So, what does God say about money?

CHRIST

Christ said to us, ***“Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But accumulate for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If then your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is diseased, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”*** (Matthew 6:19-24)

And Christ said, ***“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't there more to life than food and more to the body than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky: They do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you more valuable than they are? And which of you by worrying can add even one hour to his life? Why do you worry about clothing? Think about how the flowers of the field grow; they do not work or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these! And if this is how God clothes the wild grass, which is here today and tomorrow is tossed into the fire to heat the oven, won't he clothe you even more, you people of little faith? So then, don't worry saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For the unconverted pursue these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But above all pursue his kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So then, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.”*** (Matthew 6:25-34)

Teachers of the law came to Jesus to trip Him up in His words. But He answered them with great wisdom. ***“They said to him, ‘Teacher, we know that you are truthful and do not court anyone's favor, because you show no partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?’ But he saw through their hypocrisy and said to them, ‘Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.’ So they brought one, and he said to them, ‘Whose image is this, and whose inscription?’ They replied, ‘Caesar's.’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.’ And they were utterly amazed at him.”*** (Mark 12:14-17) (see also Matthew 22:15-22 and Luke 20:20-26)

And Christ commanded us and said, ***“But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other as well, and from the person who takes away your coat, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your possessions back from the person who takes them away. Treat others in the same way that you would want them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to be repaid, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, so that they may be repaid in full. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to ungrateful and evil people. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use will be the measure you receive.”*** (Luke 6:27-38)

Christ describes four types of people who hear the word of God and one of which loses faith because they are more concerned with riches and pleasures of this life. Christ said, ***“As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.”*** (Luke 8:14, see also Matthew 13:22 and Mark 4:19)

There were two fighting over money. Christ told a story to give them understanding on money and fear, ***“Then someone from the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator between you two?’ Then he said to them, ‘Watch out and guard yourself from all types of greed, because one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’ He then told them a parable: ‘The land of a certain rich man produced an abundant crop, so he thought to himself, “What should I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?” Then he said, “I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to myself, ‘You have plenty of goods stored up for many years; relax, eat, drink, celebrate!’” But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life will be demanded back from you, but who will get what you have prepared for yourself?” So it is with the one who stores up riches for himself, but is not rich toward God.’ Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For there is more to life than food, and more to the body than clothing. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn, yet God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than the birds! And which of you by worrying can add an hour to his life? So if you cannot do such a very little thing as this, why do you worry about the rest? Consider how the flowers grow; they do not work or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these! And if this is how God clothes the wild grass, which is here today and tomorrow is tossed into the fire to heat the oven, how much more will he clothe you, you people of little faith! So do not be overly concerned about what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not worry about such***

things. For all the nations of the world pursue these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, pursue his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is well pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide yourselves purses that do not wear out — a treasure in heaven that never decreases, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Luke 12:13-34)

And Christ told us to count the cost before we believe. Following Christ is extremely important, much more valuable than this life. *“Now large crowds were accompanying Jesus, and turning to them he said, ‘If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, wanting to build a tower, doesn't sit down first and compute the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish the tower, all who see it will begin to make fun of him. They will say, “This man began to build and was not able to finish!” Or what king, going out to confront another king in battle, will not sit down first and determine whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot succeed, he will send a representative while the other is still a long way off and ask for terms of peace. In the same way therefore not one of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his own possessions. Salt is good, but if salt loses its flavor, how can its flavor be restored? It is of no value for the soil or for the manure pile; it is to be thrown out. The one who has ears to hear had better listen!”* (Luke 14:25-35)

Christ said, *“And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by how you use worldly wealth, so that when it runs out you will be welcomed into the eternal homes. The one who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and the one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you haven't been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will entrust you with the true riches? And if you haven't been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”* (Luke 16:9-13) Dear Reader, are you trustworthy? Are you honest? If so, then God may entrust you with more, even heavenly riches. And Christ continued by saying, *“The Pharisees (who loved money) heard all this and ridiculed him. But Jesus said to them, ‘You are the ones who justify yourselves in men's eyes, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly prized among men is utterly detestable in God's sight.”* (Luke 16:14-15)

Also, *“...a certain ruler asked him, ‘Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: “Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.”’ The man replied, ‘I have wholeheartedly obeyed all these laws since my youth.’ When Jesus heard this, he said to him, ‘One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’ But when the man heard this he became very sad, for he was extremely wealthy. When Jesus noticed this, he said, ‘How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a*

rich person to enter the kingdom of God.’ Those who heard this said, ‘Then who can be saved?’ He replied, ‘What is impossible for mere humans is possible for God.’ And Peter said, ‘Look, we have left everything we own to follow you!’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, there is no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of God’s kingdom who will not receive many times more in this age — and in the age to come, eternal life.’” (Luke 18:18-30) (see also Matthew 19:17-26 and Mark 10:17-27)

And, *“Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box. He also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, ‘I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all offered their gifts out of their wealth. But she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on.’”* (Luke 21:1-4)

And Christ said, *“Do not work for the food that disappears, but for the food that remains to eternal life — the food which the Son of Man will give to you. For God the Father has put his seal of approval on him.”* (John 6:27)

The above commands are impossible. If we do not follow them according to the command then we sin. But we have died with Christ and have risen with Him, so it is Christ that completes the commands. Believe in Him! Let us discover the commands from the saints who wrote to the believers by the inspiration from God.

THE APOSTLES

Paul said about money, *“I have desired no one’s silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine provided for my needs and the needs of those who were with me. By all these things, I have shown you that by working in this way we must help the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*(Acts 20:33-35)

Pay your debts and do not become indebted to anyone. *“Pay everyone what is owed: taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.”* (Romans 13:7-8)

And the apostles encouraged helping the poor. *“...when James, Cephas, and John, who had a reputation as pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we would go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They requested only that we remember the poor, the very thing I also was eager to do.”* (Galatians 2:9-10)

Those that lead the believers must not be lovers of money. *“The overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher, not a drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not contentious, free from the love of money.”* (1 Timothy 3:2-3)

Take care of your parents and your family. ***“if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn to fulfill their duty toward their own household and so repay their parents what is owed them. For this is what pleases God.”*** (1 Timothy 5:4) ***“if someone does not provide for his own, especially his own family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”*** (1 Timothy 5:8)

And, ***“Now godliness combined with contentment brings great profit. For we have brought nothing into this world and so we cannot take a single thing out either. But if we have food and shelter, we will be satisfied with that. Those who long to be rich, however, stumble into temptation and a trap and many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils. Some people in reaching for it have strayed from the faith and stabbed themselves with many pains. But you, as a person dedicated to God, keep away from all that. Instead pursue righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness. Compete well for the faith and lay hold of that eternal life you were called for and made your good confession for in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you before God who gives life to all things and Christ Jesus who made his good confession before Pontius Pilate, to obey this command without fault or failure until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ”*** (1 Timothy 6:6-14)

By our good works we store up treasure for what is truly life. ***“Command those who are rich in this world's goods not to be haughty or to set their hope on riches, which are uncertain, but on God who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, to be generous givers, sharing with others. In this way they will save up a treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the future and so lay hold of what is truly life.”*** (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

Avoid those who love money. ***“But understand this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, opposed to what is good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, loving pleasure rather than loving God. They will maintain the outward appearance of religion but will have repudiated its power. So avoid people like these.”*** (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

And, ***“Your conduct must be free from the love of money and you must be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you and I will never abandon you.’ So we can say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’”*** (Hebrews 13:5-6)

And, ***“My brothers and sisters, do not show prejudice if you possess faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. For if someone comes into your assembly wearing a gold ring and fine clothing, and a poor person enters in filthy clothes, do you pay attention to the one who is finely dressed and say, ‘You sit here in a good place,’ and to the poor person, ‘You stand over there,’ or ‘Sit on the floor’? If so, have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my dear brothers and sisters! Did not God choose the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor! Are not the rich oppressing you and dragging you into the courts?”***

Do they not blaspheme the good name of the one you belong to? But if you fulfill the royal law as expressed in this scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well. But if you show prejudice, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as violators.”
(James 2:1-9)

“Come now, you rich! Weep and cry aloud over the miseries that are coming on you. Your riches have rotted and your clothing has become moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted and their rust will be a witness against you. It will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have hoarded treasure! Look, the pay you have held back from the workers who mowed your fields cries out against you, and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived indulgently and luxuriously on the earth. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person, although he does not resist you.” (James 5:1-6)

How do we serve others? Inspired by the Holy Spirit, John writes, ***“We have come to know love by this: that Jesus laid down his life for us; thus we ought to lay down our lives for our fellow Christians. But whoever has the world's possessions and sees his fellow Christian in need and shuts off his compassion against him, how can the love of God reside in such a person? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue but in deed and truth.”*** (1 John 3:16-18)

WORK ETHIC

When we agree to work for someone, we become like a servant to him during the work hours. ***“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in every respect, not only when they are watching — like those who are strictly people-pleasers — but with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you are doing, work at it with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not for people, because you know that you will receive your inheritance from the Lord as the reward. Serve the Lord Christ. For the one who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there are no exceptions.”*** (Colossians 3:22-25)

And he said, ***“I ask you brothers,... to aspire to lead a quiet life, to attend to your own business, and to work with your hands, as we commanded you. In this way you will live a decent life before outsiders and not be in need.”*** (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12)

“But we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from any brother who lives an undisciplined life and not according to the tradition they received from us. For you know yourselves how you must imitate us, because we did not behave without discipline among you, and we did not eat anyone's food without paying. Instead, in toil and drudgery we worked night and day in order not to burden any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give ourselves as an example for you to imitate. For even when we were with you, we used to give you this command: ‘If anyone is not willing to work, neither should he eat.’ For we hear that some among you are living an undisciplined life, not doing their own work but meddling in the work of others. Now such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and so provide their own food to eat.” (2 Thessalonians 3:6-12)

God commands us to work hard and not be lazy.

THE TEACHER DESERVES PAY

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul writes that the teacher deserves to receive compensation for teaching from those who are learning. “***Now the one who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with the one who teaches it.***” (Galatians 6:6)

And those who preach the word of God deserve financial compensation. “***If we sowed spiritual blessings among you, is it too much to reap material things from you?***” (1 Corinthians 9:11) (see 1 Corinthians 9:1-14)

SUMMARY

The New Testament commands you to do many things in regards to money. As a summary, you are commanded:

- Do not accumulate earthly treasures, but heavenly ones.
- Do not worry about food, drink, clothes or a place to live.
- Do not worry about tomorrow (the future).
- Give to the government what belongs to the government.
- Give to God what belongs to God.
- Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you and bless those that curse you and do good to those that are evil toward you and whoever hits you on one cheek, give him the other and whoever takes your jacket do not refuse to give him your shirt too.
- Give to everyone that asks of you.
- Whoever takes what is yours, do not ask for it back.
- Do to others as you want them to do to you.
- Be merciful as God is merciful.
- Do not judge others and do not keep an account, but forgive.
- Gain friends by how you use your earthly wealth.
- Do not pursue food that is temporal, but pursue food that lasts through eternity.
- Give to everyone what they deserve, like taxes, honor and respect.
- Take care of your parents and your family.
- Stay away from the love of money, instead pursue righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness and work hard in the faith.
- Do not trust in riches that pass away but trust in God who gives you everything generously.
- Do not love money.
- Stay away from those that love money.
- Let your way be free from the love of money, instead be satisfied with what you have.
- Do not discriminate between people.
- Do not owe anyone anything (except love).

- Sacrifice yourself on behalf of your brother and have compassion on the brother in need.
- Obey your employers and do everything with your whole heart.
- Live a quiet life and do not interfere in the affairs of others but earn your own keep by the sweat of your own brow.
- Avoid any brother who is lazy and those who do not want to work do not deserve to eat.
- To those that teach you the word of God, give them some of the goods which you have.

These are most of the commands in the Book. We are to obey them according to the leading of the Holy Spirit who leads us according to His wisdom and we respond to His command in His moment.

Though Peter and John had no money, they had the Holy Spirit who healed the sick (Acts 3:1-10). We too, listen and obey the Holy Spirit in His moment. God has given you a valuable gift, which is the His Spirit. So, let us walk in His life in every moment.

It is clear that eternal life is more valuable than money. But how do we obey these commands? Does God ask us to obey them or are they just suggestions? Indeed, they are commands and God asks exact obedience. But, you are not able. Christ is able and you died with Him by faith and He lives in you. ***“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*** (Galatians 2:20)

ALIVE IN HIM

Through Paul, the Holy Spirit commands us to ***“Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”*** (Colossians 3:2-3) We have died with Christ and therefore our life is in Christ. So, it is clear that He does not ask for a tithe (i.e. ten percent), but everything (i.e. one hundred percent). There is nothing for you, even your own life you do not own it yourself, because you have died and the life you live is the life of Christ. Dear Reader, you now live every moment for Him. And He is pleased with you when you trust Him and pray something like this, *“Oh Lord, I trust in You. In this moment and in this work I know that You are alive and I not me. What do you command that I do at this moment? I trust that You will do it.”*

We live a new live in Him and it is not us that are getting better, because the dead do not improve. By our choice it is Christ in us that glorifies God by His obedience and strength. Let us pray like Paul, ***“I do not cease to give thanks for you when I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him”*** (Ephesians 1:16-17) and ***“For this reason we also, from the day we heard about you, have not ceased praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may live worthily of the Lord and please him in all respects — bearing fruit in every good deed, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the display of all patience and steadfastness, joyfully giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light. He delivered us***

from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:9-14) We grow in knowledge, knowledge of Christ *“in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”* (Colossians 2:3) So, we please God by our faith in Christ, with whom we died and rose.

And lastly, from 2 Peter 1:3-8, in our death in Christ we receive a righteous life. Let us walk in it. *“...his divine power has bestowed on us everything necessary for life and godliness through the rich knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence. Through these things he has bestowed on us his precious and most magnificent promises, so that by means of what was promised you may become partakers of the divine nature, after escaping the worldly corruption that is produced by evil desire. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith excellence, to excellence, knowledge; to knowledge, self-control; to self-control, perseverance; to perseverance, godliness; to godliness, brotherly affection; to brotherly affection, unselfish love. For if these things are really yours and are continually increasing, they will keep you from becoming ineffective and unproductive in your pursuit of knowing our Lord Jesus Christ more intimately.”*

Amen.