



Ezekiel 7:19

They will throw away their money, tossing it out like worthless trash. It won't buy their deliverance in that day of the Lord's anger. It will neither satisfy nor feed them, for their love of money made them stumble into sin.

The whole idea of money and religion is a sore spot for many in the church as well as outside the church. I have often heard people complain that “all the church is interested in is my money”. Thank God, they were not talking about the church that I pastor! Their complaint, however, grows out of a discontent that reflects the growing realization that to have a full service church in this day and age is not cheap. It also acknowledges that or more and more families today, the desire to keep up with material belongings means there is much less money available for both church and charity. As financial pressures increase, the joy of giving decreases. As the place of the church in the culture has diminished so has the financial support it receives from its members. The person who gives their \$5 or \$10/week and has for the last 20 years needs to ask themselves what else in their life costs the same today as it did 5, 10 or 20 years ago. Whether we like it or not, money and religion are connected. They have always been connected and they always will be.

People are often surprised to find out that the second most talked about subject in the Bible is money. This biblical conversation is about what the role of money should be in our lives. First of all we must understand that all things come from God. Because all things come from God, it is only natural that a portion of it should be used to support and encourage the work of God in the world. The

concept of tithing suggests that the farmer of old days was to give 10% of his crop to the house of the Lord to support the ministry done there. This was expanded over time to apply to all earned income, whether earned by farming or labor. Few people today are moved spiritually to tithe any more. That relates directly, I believe, to what they think God does to help provide for their needs.

There are two things about the issue of money to be clear about. First, it's not money that is bad, it's the 'love' of money that leads us into sin. Secondly, we can't buy our way into Heaven. Salvation comes by grace through faith not by works or gifts to the church. Churches that teach that there is a link between giving and salvation will find no biblical support for their position. It is this kind of teaching that has led to people arriving at the conclusion that all the church wants is their money.

One other thing to be aware of; your money will not do you any good on judgment day. When you stand before God to make an accounting for your life, you will be held accountable for how well you used the blessings you received. Did you care for those unable to care for themselves? Were you a good and faithful steward of what you possessed?

Maybe it is time you looked at both money and faith issues in a new way. Perhaps its time to rethink what's truly important.