

Devotion, To God and People

How God Uses Money--part 5

November 12, 2023

DAY 1: Devotion

1. God uses money to build the quality of devotion in His people.
2. What is “devotion”? Love + loyalty + long-suffering.
3. What strikes you about that definition?

Proverbs 15:17 Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened calf with hatred.

4. Why do you suppose Solomon gives us this contrast and this warning?
5. It's very easy to give lip service to marital love while pursuing the "fattened calf." The effects are some of the following:
 - ___ Marital conflict over money
 - ___ Increased stress over spending beyond your means
 - ___ Acquiring too much debt
 - ___ Adding too many "easy payments"
6. Check any of the items above that you have done.
7. What does Solomon say is the effect on family life of putting too much emphasis on acquiring?
8. The question to ask is, "What's my *real* goal?" Many times, the *real* goal is “we want the big house,” and just assume that **if** we acquire the big house, the nice cars, etc., **then** our family life will be "together." This goal needs to be exposed, owned and the warning heeded!
9. What strikes you personally from today's study? Have you experienced what Solomon's warning about? What would keep you from pursuing the fattened calf at the expense of the people around your dinner table?

DAY 2: Relational devotion and money

1. Yesterday we heeded Solomon's warning to not pursue the "fattened calf" at the expense of the relationship at your dining room table!

2. The danger is to have greater devotion for accumulation that ends up costing us vital relationship.

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

3. God gives us three verbs that describe the devotion a husband and wife are to build. Jot down what thoughts strike you about each:

- "Leave" parents -
- "Be united" -
- "Become one flesh" -

4. You might be wondering, what do these verses have to do with finances, and how does God use finances to build marital devotion.

*1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, **so that nothing will hinder your prayers**.*

5. The husband-wife relationship is so important that God slaps a BIIIIIIIG warning on the end of instructions on how to relate to your wife! What is that warning?

6. Do you think that God would turn off the spigot of financial resources in order to:

___ Get your attention?

___ Wake you up to how you treat your wife?

7. Do you think there is a correlation between Solomon's warning about pursuing the "fattened calf" and the warning Peter gives in today's study?

8. Could God also shut off the money spigot depending on how a wife treats her husband?

DAY 3: Devotion to God's people

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

1. Paul tells the Roman Christians to **be devoted** to one another. He is speaking to the church folks in the church in Rome. What does this say to you about your role in church life?

2. At the end of the first sentence, how does Paul explain or define what it means to be devoted?

3. The standard is raised twice more in the second sentence!

a. What does it mean to honor someone?

b. What does it mean to honor someone above yourself?

4. Let's look at the early church in Jerusalem.

*Acts 2:42 They **devoted** themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

5. How would this verse read to you if the words "devoted themselves" were replaced by "attended to?"

Acts 2:44-45 All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

6. How was devotion seen in these two verses?

7. What was their attitude toward money and things?

8. What is your attitude toward being devoted to God's people?

9. What is your attitude toward money and things?

DAY 4: Devotion to God

*Luke 16:13 No one can serve two masters. **Either** he will be devoted to the one and hate the other **or** hate the one and be devoted to the other. You cannot serve God and money.*

1. Jesus compares devotion to God and devotion to money. We try to believe that we can be devoted to God and money. Does Jesus think this is possible?

2. Why do you think it is impossible to be devoted to both God and money?

*2 Cor. 11:3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your **sincere and pure devotion** to Christ.*

3. How does Paul describe the kind of devotion we are to have toward Christ?

a. What is "sincere" devotion?

b. What is "pure" devotion?

4. The prophet Ezekiel further illustrates the struggle to be devoted to God and try to be devoted to money.

*Ezekiel 33:31 My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their **mouths** they express **devotion**, but their **hearts** are **greedy** for unjust gain.*

5. What appearances of devotion to God are visible to the eye?

6. What is the true state of their devotion?

7. The problem lies in the heart! What is the real driver of these people?

8. Do you see this battle for devotion in your own heart? What strikes you about it?

DAY 5: God turns off the money spigot to build devotion

Haggai 1:2 This is what the Lord Almighty says: "These people say, 'The time has not yet come for the Lord's house to be built.'"

1. God's people returned to Jerusalem from exile.

Hag. 1:4 "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"

2. What was it they were most devoted to doing? What were they less devoted to be doing?

3. God speaks to them, to show them what He has already been doing to get their attention!

Haggai 1:5-6 "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."

4. God turned down the spigot. In what ways did the people hit a financial wall?

Haggai 1:7-8 "Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored."

5. What does God instruct the people to do?

6. How is this an expression of devotion to God?

Haggai 1:9 "You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why? Because of my house which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house."

7. When people hit a financial squeeze they rarely think like God does in this passage! We usually blame the economy or our spouse for our condition.

8. When devotion to self supersedes devotion to God, we "invite" God to step right into the middle of our financial dealings!

9. After looking at devotion this week, you may be sensing that you have been very devoted to yourself and not so devoted to your spouse, God's people in church or even God Himself. Finish today with some honest soul-searching and confession of sin. Ask Him to give you a devoted heart.