

STEWARDSHIP | WEEK 3

Guard it!

Read the Parable of the Sower. It's found in Matthew 13:1-9, and the explanation is in 13:18-23. As you read, focus in on the third soil. It relates to our topic today.

- How does Jesus view money?
- What other biblical warnings about money come to mind in light of this verse?

Scripture is full of warnings about money. Matthew 6:24 says, "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." Money can be, and often is, the chief competitor to our heart in following Jesus faithfully.

Yet E. Stanley Jones rightfully said in light of that verse, "You cannot serve God and mammon, but you can serve God *with* mammon." In order to serve God with our wealth, we need to see it as God does. Remember, God owns it all. We are His steward or caretaker. It is more than money, but not less than our money.

Proverbs 4: 23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

This heart guarding in Proverbs sounds like the warning in James 4:1: "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?" And Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

Think | ■ What stands out about these verses in light of our conversation about money?

- How might you apply this Proverb here?
- What guards do you have in place to fight money's pull on your heart?

Many of the application questions you are asking (e.g., “what about _____?”) are good, but it’s not time to ask them yet. I want to invite you to a journey. It will be a journey with loads of questions. Make sure to direct them to right source.

Here is the journey and my conclusion: 1) Ask God what to do with your resources (finances, time, talents, network, and even your very life), 2) listen to what God is telling you to do, 3) then simply walk in faithful obedience.

That’s it: 1) Ask, 2) Listen, and 3) Obey.

You may consider limiting spending, cutting an area of spending, saving more, saving less, becoming transparent with someone else financially, giving more, delaying upgrades, or stopping comparison with others. Let God lead you.

Do | Take time this week to listen to the Shepherd’s voice and write down what He might be telling you.

Share with someone in your small group or a close friend how you feel that God is leading you with your resources. Ask him or her for counsel and feedback.