

FINANCIAL LITERACY – valuing the wealth and resources God has given us and being good stewards thereof

What is financial literacy?

We learnt last week about biblical literacy. Financial literacy is an applied aspect of biblical literacy. We endeavour to understand and apply what the bible teaches on finances. It is both very spiritual and practical and essentially is to do with how we relate to money or more importantly how we should learn to relate to money. We believe that empowering ourselves and others in financial literacy is honouring to God and important for the advancement of his Kingdom. It is very difficult for a church to recover from a money mismanagement scandal as this represents a breach of trust. Many have fallen victim to this.

Key highlights of financial literacy

Money – is neutral – neither good nor bad in itself. It is the love of money which is the root of all evil

Wealth – it is not more spiritual to be rich or poor.

Debt – where debt is accumulated so that you are living above your means this needs to be addressed. We are not against business or mortgage debt where the asset being borrowed against is likely to appreciate.

Financial goals – are you living with purpose in this area. Do you have a financial goal? This can be as simple as saving for a deposit, paying your mortgage off faster or spending less than you earn

Budget – Do you have a spending plan or do you have no idea where the money goes.

Why is financial literacy important?

Primarily because it is important to God. It is also important in the London context. London as city is one of the worlds financial capitals. One of the key purposes of London is that people buy and sell shares, foreign currencies, oil. London is also a very prosperous city. The financial wealth in London is scary. Now traditionally in church culture people leave discussions about money to outside the church building in the belief that money is somehow a dirty topic. But if we are ministering to people in London we need to be clear on money as it has a serious impact on peoples lives.

Another church culture problem is that hours of sermon time is spent on the topic of giving but nothing is mentioned about other financial topics. This leads people to go to the world for answers. This unbalanced teaching puts people into bondage. You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. I had struggles with mortgages and insurances, but through being able to talk to people about this I discovered truth in these areas. Praise God CJ's City is quite vocal about finances.

We value all the resources God has given us

What does it mean to value? Hold in high esteem. Treat as a priority. When we take a ten pound that God has entrusted us with out of an ATM do we value it. Money is there to be enjoyed and used wisely.

That God has given us.....

This is a key area as we need to understand what it is God who is our Provider. Math 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

God is the owner of everything

Psalm 50:10 – 12 10 for every animal of the forest is mine,
and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

We need to put ourselves in a position where God will give us(as individuals) and as a church more to manage.

Remember the Abrahamic blessing. I will bless you so that you will be a blessing.

We aim to be good stewards:

Go back to my opening, the key aspects of financial literacy – these are all areas that we cant escape. If as a believer you are extremely well off it means you have greater responsibility than most. This is very different to the worlds culture where the more you have, the more you can waste. To whom much has been given much is expected.

Another myth in church culture is and you will here Christians say that 10% belongs to the Lord and the rest belongs to me. This is not biblical. Everything we have belongs to Him.

Math 25:14 – 30

14"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15To one he gave five talents^[a] of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

19"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

21"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

22"The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

23"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

24"Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

26"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

28" 'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 30And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'

This passage highlights that no matter what we have been given we have responsibility to look after it and account for how we have used it. It is not our own after all.

Benefits of handling money faithfully:

More intimate fellowship with Jesus.

One of the rewards given to the faithful stewards was that he was told to enter his masters joy. Daniel was a good steward and he had an intimate relationship with God. The bible says he prayed three times a day and would not stop worshipping God even when faced with death.

The development of character

Often how we view money is a reflection to ourselves of our inner selves. Money reveals the deep motives of our heart and reflecting on these can be painful. But the encouragement is that this reveals to us areas of growth in our lives which the Lord wants us to bring out.

A more immediate and obvious benefit is that our finances will be in order.

Faithfulness in little things:

Luke 16:10: He who is faithful in little things will be faithful in much and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous in much. David was a good example of this. He was faithful as a shepherd and God raised him up to be one of the greatest kings of all time.

Hudson Taylor put it this way. Small things are small things, but faithfulness with a small thing is a big thing.

Faithfulness with another's possessions

Luke 16:12. And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own.

Joseph was an excellent example of someone faithful with another's possessions. He was put in charge of everything Potiphar owned. The Bible says Potiphar had no worries in the world other than the decision as to what he should eat as he had full trust in Joseph's management. God blessed the people Joseph was serving because of his good stewardship.