

Kingdom News

Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever... (Matt. 6:13)

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Kingdom Investments

The First in a Series of Investment Discussions

As we approach spring, it is customary for us to take stock in our selves and our environments. We begin our spring cleaning schedules; we make efforts to become more active, more health-conscious, etc. Let's not stop there, let's take stock in our affairs in the Kingdom of God. How about we look at it from a perspective related to investments?

- ✚ What or who are we invested in?
- ✚ Who or what is invested in us?
- ✚ Why do we even care about investments?
- ✚ What does the Kingdom of God have to do with investments?

I'm sure you are asking what in the world does investments have to do with the Kingdom of God. Well let's see.

In what (or whom) are we invested?

Why does it matter in what (or whom) we're invested?

Investments

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The Leadership Corner ***Leadership Living, Inc.***

Basic Problem Solving Principles

If we accept that God has called us to be leaders in our environments, then we will want to understand a couple of basic principles related to problem solving. The activity of problem solving is something people (including you and me) engage in on a daily basis. Yet, we may not be as effective as we'd like to be at this task. Is it possible that our ineffectiveness in this area stems from not accurately defining the problem that needs to be resolved; or not understanding whose job it is to solve particular problems? Let's contemplate this further.

First, let's develop a working definition of what constitutes a problem, as well as what could be considered a solution. According to Webster's New World Dictionary & Thesaurus (2002), a problem is "a matter that is perplexing, difficult, or hard to understand or satisfy." Webster goes on to say that a solution can involve "the act of forming a homogeneous mixture." There are two key words that we can focus on for our discussion. Those are "perplexed" and "homogeneous". From these definitions we can apprehend that problems actually exist in our minds. Think about it. If something perplexes me, this activity takes place in my mind. And, it usually has some affect on my emotions. We could further consider that all sorts of seemingly perplexing events happen on a daily basis. However, one event can be a problem to some, and not be seen as problematic to others. Let me share an example.

I happen to be what some would call a "neat freak".

Leadership

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In my mind everything has a place. Order is important to me.

My husband, on the other hand, is of a different school of thought on this topic. He is not overly concerned about it. Having various stacks of paper in random strategic locations throughout the house is quite normal to him. Our dining room table is often the site of several of these stacks of paper. Now, the fact that my husband has papers spread “ALL” across the dining room table is not, in and of itself, a problem (at least not for my husband). The real issue is that it bothers me. So, by this example we can see that the “problem” is in **my** mind (not his).

Once we’ve embraced this principle (problems reside in our minds) we can move to the realization of the next principle. “If the problem is in me, there too is the solution.” This is great news because it lets us know that whatever is happening in our heads that is perplexing us can be brought into a state of homogeneity. How? Let’s revisit the stacks of paper on the dining room table.

God gave me the answer. Once I understood that the “problem” was MY problem and as such, I was responsible to seek a solution (one that didn’t include “assaulting” my husband), I was able to listen to God’s guidance without blaming Sherman (my husband). God said, “Joyce, Sherman puts his papers on the dining room table because he doesn’t have anywhere else to do his work.” The lights came on. You see, I have a home office where I store my papers and supplies. And it had never occurred to me that Sherman needed or wanted a work area. Long story short, Sherman & I discussed the idea of creating a work area for him. He got excited and gave me ideas on how he wanted his space set up; showed me how we could fit it in the budget; and we made a plan to secure the items needed. Wow! All of this happened because I understood that the “problem” existed only in my mind. And, there too was the solution (which again, did not include being prematurely judgmental).

God reminded me of Revelations 21:6a (KJV paraphrased) that says God is “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” Among other things, this means that whatever problems start in my head; must come to an end in my head before I can reach outside

of me and formulate effective and lasting solutions.

Finally, I do need to mention that we know events happen that are much more intense and far reaching than my example. However, the principles still hold true. Before we can be successful handling external issues, we have to address the “problems” as they present themselves in our minds. This is where God can do the foundational work that will allow us to hear him clearly to affect positive change in our environments.

I’ll catch up with you in next month’s edition.

Leadership Living, Inc.
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It matters, because investments take place in the heart. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also (Matt 6:21 KJV paraphrased). Not only will your heart be where your investments/treasures are; it is the heart that drives investments. Your investments discover, to all, what is in your heart. How and where you spend your time, energy, money and other resources speak volumes about what is important to you.

The object of your investment (mutual funds; stocks; your career; your family, your self, etc.) is important. But more importantly, it is the motive for your investments that is telling. As you know (or will come to appreciate) motive is everything; especially in the Kingdom of God. We are defined, judged and rewarded by our motives. That is why the scriptures teach us that we are obligated to guard our hearts, diligently.

Who or what is invested in you?

Perhaps the first people who come to mind (when we consider who is invested in us) are our parents; or our spouses. Perhaps we were fortunate enough to have teachers, coaches, friends and other family members who were invested in us. We know these people are invested because they care about our welfare, our

hopes and dreams, our successes, etc. It is natural for us to be partial to people who are invested in us. How worthy we are of investment will determine who are our friends and associates. I would assume that just about everyone would fancy having their very own, personal fan club.

Should we care about investments?

Aren't investments strictly the concern of Wall Street, corporate entities, governments, fund managers and financial institutions? Why would any of this matter to us and our relationship with of God? It matters because whatever you invest in represents a thing of value to you. Whoever invests in you shows that they value you.

In business investments, the rule is to ensure that whatever the company selects as an investment vehicle must bring a certain net Return on Investment (ROI).

I know ... I know ... this is not a class in Finance. News flash, life is a class in investments. We make investments every single day, with our time and other resources. In the Kingdom both the object and motive of our investments will affect our ROI. Our investments will deliver a net ROI (whether positive or negative). This is not optional. The laws are set, in this regard.

We need to care about our investments because they shape our quality of life; our happiness; our health and well-being; and our relationship with God. Our investments matter because they tell everyone what is in our heart. Often our mouths try to tell a different story. But when words and works conflict, a picture is worth a thousand words. One needs simply to see what we invest in, to determine what's valuable to us.

I can hear it now. Who cares what other people think about our investments? Good question. Who does care what other people think about your investments? God does.

What does the Kingdom of God have to do with investments?

Our investments tell God on what we place importance. He cares about what our investments tell Him (and others) about WHO is important to us. And order of importance is significant. He cares what our investments say about how important He is to us. Our confessions tell the world, around us, that we are Christians; and that

we love God. But often our investments prove otherwise. Just as our attire, demeanor, behavior affect how we represent our employer. Likewise our character, language, motives, and actions all affect how we represent the Kingdom. Do you think these matters to God? Of course they do.

God has His own schedule of investments. There are certain things that are important to Him; certain people and situations that He is invested in. Say what? Someone told you that everyone was of equal importance to God? To some degree, we are as important to God, as He is to us.

Another reason that God wants to know what you are invested in, is because it affects the priority of His investments. Really...it does. The order of our investments affects the order of His investments.

Hopefully, this doesn't blow your theory right out of the water. For some strange reason, it seems as if we have been socialized (or tricked) into thinking that we are more important to God, than He is to us. Somehow we seem to believe that we can have certain expectations of God; where we've made no investment in Him. This assumption is amazing, because that "line of reasoning" doesn't hold true anywhere else in creation (or business for that matter). Try that with your bank. Go ahead. Open an account with \$100. Leave it there for three (3) months. Then write a check for \$1,000, take it to the bank teller and try to cash it. Exactly how long, in hours (or days), would you have to stand there before they cash that check for you? I venture to say that you're grandchildren's grandchildren will be opening bank accounts of their very own, before a bank cashes a \$1,000 check written against an account with \$100 in it. I'm sorry for that diversion; let me get back on track here.

What the Lord is saying to us is that He has made investments in us, namely Jesus Christ. This is His way of showing that He values us. But every worthy investment must have a favorable return; or wisdom would require that no further such investments be made. What is our return on God's investment in us?

◆◆◆ ***This series on Kingdom Investments will continue in the next Edition.***

Motives

Motive, according to Webster's dictionary, is something (a need or desire) that causes a person to act or take action. Motives, in a more universal sense, are the "why" behind our actions.

✚ Why did we say what we said?

✚ Why did we do what we did?

Motives govern our behaviors, our attitudes, and our intentions; whether or not we recognize them.

When the scriptures speak to us about our motives, it talks to us about our heart. Our motives are determined by the condition of our heart. If our heart is deceived or deceitful, our motives will be selfish and covert. If our heart is governed by integrity, our motives will represent love and honor for God and a mutual respect for mankind.

We are directed to diligently govern the condition of our heart, because our life flows from our heart. (Proverbs 4:23 KJV paraphrased)

An interesting thing about motives is that, in many cases, the only persons who can discern motives are God and the individual. Two people can donate a large sum to a charitable effort. The one contributes because it is a tax write-off. The other contributes because the scripture says that the "strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." (Rom. 15:1-3 KJV paraphrased)

We are obliged to know the motives that dictate our actions, because we are accountable to God for them. If everything we do, somehow resolves itself in bringing pleasure or comfort to us, our motives are selfish. When the scriptures tell us that we shall all be held accountable for our actions, it means that our motives will be judged and we will be rewarded accordingly.

Once again, it is vital that we use the same rule of measurement that God uses in judging our motives. Our motives aren't acceptable, because we manage to justify them to ourselves and others.

The Lord's perception of a situation is not the same as our perception of a situation. We judge according

to what we see or perceive; but God judges the heart (motive).

I used to think, that as long as I understood the "rules of engagement" I would be fine. Just tell me how I'm supposed to act then I can handle it from there. But I soon learned that you can't fake motive. And that a right motive does not happen overnight. And it cannot be created by positive thinking,

A right motive comes when we surrender our hearts to God. It comes when we accept the gift of salvation, through Christ Jesus. When we study the scriptures, to understand the things that God expects from us and then do them. When we understand how God has made all of this easily accessible to us, through faith. These are the humble beginnings of a heart filled with right motives. And a life filled with peace with God. ♦♦♦

GIVE

...and it shall be given.

Give and it shall be given to you. (Luke 7:38 KJV)

That's what the scriptures teach us. Isn't it? But over the course of your life have you met someone who seemed to be a giving person; but the principle didn't seem to apply to them? Has that someone ever been you?

One thing is certain, the law of the Lord is perfect (Psalm 19:7 KJV). The law of giving and receiving (sowing and reaping, as it is known to some) were established in eternity past. It is not administered on a monthly basis, or a case-by-case basis. It has been established and whenever the criteria is met, the law is manifested.

If the Lord says that the giver is blessed; that law cannot be broken. That being the case, how do we reconcile the truth of the principle, with the situations where the principle doesn't seem to apply?

Again, it is imperative that we comprehend the kingdom definition of the term "To Give."

In the earth, we give with our hands. In the Kingdom of God, giving is done with the heart. What is done with the hands is simply an expression of the

intention in the heart. However, let it be clearly understood that “giving with the hands” can take place where there is no giving with the heart. But the reverse is not true. There is no giving with the heart, where there is no giving with the hands.

Sidebar: “Giving with the hands” is a representation of a broader, more encompassing condition of the heart. “Giving with the hands,” can be the same as sitting bed-side of someone in the hospital; because you want them to know that God sees. Or preparing dinner for six (6), and sending half of it to your neighbor to help mitigate the burden of the single-parent having to work late, to make ends meet; because you want them to know that God cares about their situation. It can mean stopping by, to sit for an hour with someone who is home-bound; because you want them to know that God loves them. Giving with the hands takes on all shapes and sizes of activities that express a “love your neighbor, as yourself” attitude.

When the heart gives; a gift is returned to the giver. When the hand, alone, gives no obligation is placed on our Father to reward the giver.

Giving is an expression of love...love for God...love for our neighbor...love for our family & friends...love for our enemies...Love. We know this to be true, because when the heart of God became so overwhelmed with love, what did He do? How did He (whose ability to be expressive is as infinite as He is) show His overwhelming love? Did He erect a monument to Himself? Did He create another vast universe? Did sit back on His throne, with His arms folded, marveling at how awesome He must be, to be so loving? No, ... He GAVE. For God so loved the world, that He ... gave ... His ... only ... begotten ... Son. And if you believe this, I mean really believe it; you will live to see it. First begin by receiving His gift of love; then by, yourself, becoming a giver. (Adapted from John 3:16 KJV)

James (2:16 KJV paraphrased) teaches us that when we see a brother or sister naked and destitute of food; and say to them “I hope things get better for

you;” but we do not give what is necessary to lessen the burden. What’s the purpose? Unless, I be understood as saying that we have an unwarranted, unlimited obligation to give to others under any/all circumstances; notice here, that the scripture references a need for clothing or sustenance. These are basic human needs.

The type of giving that is implied in this Kingdom principle operates from a heart-felt love for God, primarily; and a subsequent love for our neighbor, whose needs are equal in value to our own. (Tongue-in-cheek) Wow!!!! What a concept!!! You mean to tell me that I am not second in importance to God? You mean that my neighbor’s needs are of equal importance to my own needs? Surely that can’t be... Isn’t the pecking order God first; me second; and everyone else afterwards? That’s how I’d been socialized, but now you’re telling me that is not acceptable to God. Oh my, where does one go from here?

Be careful that you do not interpret the scriptures to mean that you give in order to receive. We give out of love and obedience. The scriptures teach us the situations, in which we are obliged to give. So out of obedience, we give. We are taught that it is a blessing to be able to give; as a show of our appreciation for being blessed, we give.

We are directed to give:

- ✚ Because our brother/sister has a need;
- ✚ Because we desire to see another prosper, succeed, overcome;
- ✚ Because we are appreciative of being in a position to give;
- ✚ Out of a heart-felt gratitude for the grace that God has shown to us;
- ✚ And on...and on....and on.

There are a great many reasons to give. May I submit to you that if you were to take each one of the ‘millions of reasons to give,’ and distill them down to their basest element, you’ll find that we are to give to bring glory to the heart of God.

I’ll let you in on a little secret: The reason that God

directs us to give (according to the Kingdom definition of giving) is because it releases a chain-reaction in the spiritual realm; that cannot be stopped.

From another perspective, in prison (as a form of punishment) prisoners are placed in solitary confinement. They are neither able to give, nor receive (with the exception of their daily sustenance). Over a period of time this isolation has a way of breaking an individual down. Biology proves likewise, take a body of water that has neither tributary, nor fountain, nor inlet. It is confined to itself. Over time the various elements in the water begin to breakdown; to become stale; to die. And so is the case with everything else in the water. This is the goal of the adversary, when it comes to giving. If he can get you to refrain from giving; then he has, by default, stopped you from receiving; simultaneously shutting out your blessings. Two, for the price of one;

the enemy doesn't have to stop you from receiving or block your blessings. If he can stop you from giving; by a law of necessity receiving stops. He knows the principle of giving and receiving; sowing and reaping. If sowing stops or is restricted; reaping is likewise impaired. It is not negotiable; it is a kingdom principle.

Give (from a heart full of love for God) and it shall be given ... good measure ... pressed down ... shaken together ... and running over ... ♦♦♦

Bite-Sized Wisdom

Food for thought -

"Return on Investment (ROI) - God invests in you, now you invest in Him." - JoAnn C White

Summary

It is important that we identify our current *investments*. We should then outline a Kingdom-centric investment strategy, for our lives. Ensure that your time, money and other resource investments are acceptable to God. Recognize that most of our problems can begin to be resolved in *our minds*: how we perceive people and situations. Remember to make *giving* a key component of your investment strategy. Be sure that your *motives* are God-ward, and not predicated "what's in it for you."

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