

# ***The Solution: Use Money to Worship God***

## ***~ Part 1***

*(Suitable for use within a group over approximately one hour, or for an individual's personal Bible reading)*

---

In the previous two studies, we observed our capability of worshipping money - despite the futility of such, and despite it incurring God's wrath (for He does not share His glory with another). However there is a solution to our tendency to worship money and its devastating consequences - use money to worship God. Over the next three studies we will look at 3 solutions that will help us use our money to worship God.

**Hebrews 13:16** says,

*'And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.'*

And in **Philippians 4:18**, Paul describes the Philippians' financial gifts to him as:

*'... a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.'*

In the Old Testament, people worshiped by completing rituals which involved sacrificing animals so they could be pleasing to God. However, as these passages show, in the New Testament, sharing with others and financial gifts to people spreading the Gospel are acceptable sacrifices which please God! Thus one of the ways we New Testament Christians worship is by being generous with our money. *We don't worship with rams, we worship with cash!*

So the big question is: how do we get from worshiping money as our god to worshiping God with our money? Paul says we must 'Put to death ... greed, which is idolatry' (Colossians 3:5). But how do we do that?

Brian Rosner, who wrote the book 'Beyond Greed', suggests that greed has two dimensions:

1. A *grabbing* dimension; and
2. A *keeping* dimension.

And he points out that God Himself (through the words of the Bible) points us to an antidote to each of these:

1. for the '*grabbing*' dimension, the antidote is *contentment*; and
2. for the '*keeping*' dimension, the antidote is *generosity*.

The above two antidotes provide two out of the three solutions to overcome the problem of worshipping money. This study and the following two will now examine these three solutions to help us understand how we can, instead, use our money to worship God.

### **SOLUTION 1: LEARN CONTENTMENT**

1. Paul says in Philippians 4:12 that he has 'learned the secret of being content in any and every situation'. Let's read the context of this passage, and see if we can learn the secret too.
  - a. Read Philippians 3:1-11. *Why* can we be content?
  - b. Read Philippians 3:12-21. *How* can we be content?
  - c. Read Philippians 4:10-13. What is the secret of being content?
  - d. Does contentment mean learning to tolerate a second-best existence?
  - e. Does it mean pretending we don't have desires for luxury things?
  - f. What would you say to a Christian who grumbles about his lack of possessions, or strives hard for luxuries?
2. List some current TV shows which foster discontent. Come up with some ideas for how to help protect yourselves from this discontent.
3. Contentment requires us to accept that God knows what is good for us better than we do.
  - a. Read Romans 1:18-29. Do you really want to be given your heart's desires (Romans 1:24-29)?
  - b. Suggest practical ways we can change our heart's desires, so enabling us to strive for that which is best for us and will give us lasting (rather than short lived) satisfaction.
4. Discontent people usually compare themselves to people with more possessions. Suggest some practical things we can do to avoid such comparisons. Think particularly how you might do that post graduation when interacting with your classmates.
5. For more thinking about contentment, read: Ecclesiastes 5:10; Hebrews 13:5; Luke 12:22-30; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Colossians 3:15-17; 1 Timothy 6:6-8.

# ***Bible Bites***

(Suitable to be completed over approximately 20-25 minutes)

## **The Solution: Use Money to Worship God ~ Part 1**

In the previous two studies, we observed our capability of worshipping money - despite the futility of such, and despite it incurring God's wrath (for He does not share His glory with another). However there is a solution to our tendency to worship money and its devastating consequences - use money to worship God. Over the next three studies we will look at 3 solutions that will help us use our money to worship God.

**Hebrews 13:16** says,

*'And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.'*

And in **Philippians 4:18**, Paul describes the Philippians' financial gifts to him as:

*'... a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.'*

In the Old Testament, people worshiped by completing rituals which involved sacrificing animals so they could be pleasing to God. However, as these passages show, in the New Testament, sharing with others and financial gifts to people spreading the Gospel are acceptable sacrifices which please God! Thus one of the ways we New Testament Christians worship is by being generous with our money. *We don't worship with rams, we worship with cash!*

So the big question is: how do we get from worshipping money as our god to worshipping God with our money? Paul says we must 'Put to death ... greed, which is idolatry' (Colossians 3:5). But how do we do that?

Brian Rosner, who wrote the book 'Beyond Greed', suggests that greed has two dimensions:

1. A *grabbing* dimension; and
2. A *keeping* dimension.

And he points out that God Himself (through the words of the Bible) points us to an antidote to each of these:

1. for the '*grabbing*' dimension, the antidote is *contentment*; and
2. for the '*keeping*' dimension, the antidote is *generosity*.

The above two antidotes provide two out of the three solutions to overcome the problem of worshipping money. This study and the following two will now examine these three solutions to help us understand how we can, instead, use our money to worship God.

### **SOLUTION 1: LEARN CONTENTMENT**

1. Paul says in Philippians 4:12 that he has 'learned the secret of being content in any and every situation'. Let's read the context of this passage, and see if we can learn the secret too.
  - a. Read Philippians 3:1-11. *Why* can we be content?
  - b. Read Philippians 3:12-21. *How* can we be content?
  - c. Read Philippians 4:10-13. What is the secret of being content?
  - d. Does contentment mean learning to tolerate a second-best existence?
  - e. Does it mean pretending we don't have desires for luxury things?
  - f. What would you say to a Christian who grumbles about his lack of possessions, or strives hard for luxuries?
2. List some current TV shows which foster discontent. Come up with some ideas for how to help protect yourselves from this discontent.
3. Contentment requires us to accept that God knows what is good for us better than we do.
  - a. Read Romans 1:18-29. Do you really want to be given your heart's desires (Romans 1:24-29)?
  - b. Suggest practical ways we can change our heart's desires, so enabling us to strive for that which is best for us and will give us lasting (rather than short lived) satisfaction.
4. Discontent people usually compare themselves to people with more possessions. Suggest some practical things we can do to avoid such comparisons. Think particularly how you might do that post graduation when interacting with your classmates.
5. For more thinking about contentment, read: Ecclesiastes 5:10; Hebrews 13:5; Luke 12:22-30; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Colossians 3:15-17; 1 Timothy 6:6-8.