

LIVING FOR ETERNITY

THE LOVE FOR MONEY

We have started a series called Living for Eternity. It's to instill into our hearts and lives the understanding, the experience and the awesomeness of how this life on earth is only preparatory for the other life to come. Even though on this earth it looks like life could be quite long. Seventy, eighty, ninety to one hundred and twenty years. Yet when measured on or in heavenly terms, they are comparatively short. The bible in the book of first period even compared it to just a vapor that is now and then it pass away. We need to instill that into our hearts and into our spirits, otherwise living on this earth can cause us to be stuck to the needs of this earth, without realizing that we are in the world but not of the world. We pray that through this series the truth of what Jesus said that you are in the world but not of the world may gather more momentum and be established in our hearts.

I Tim.6: 10 *“for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”* And Paul continued, *“but you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.”* Verse 17; *“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share.”*

Now verse 10 is a powerful summary of what we will face on this earth. Of course we know that it did not say that money is the root of all evil. In fact God wills prosperity in the life of His people. He promised them prosperity is a part of Abraham's covenant. The part of the New Testament covenant that Jesus was made

poor that we might be made rich. So God is not oppose to riches but yet there is a certain thin and fine line between the ability to possess riches and between riches possessing us. The difference is where the word the love, the desire. The love for money is the root, not just of one evil but it says of all evil. You could think of any evil on this earth. Paul says that's the root. That means the beginning, the start of that evil. We know that there are many sins on this earth. There are the sins of the flesh. There are the sins of all kinds of manner of sin. But behind it is the love of money. It's not possible to do the wrong thing if you don't have available reason. Paul says the love of money has lured many away from the faith. What we are preaching is talking about what Paul gospel is. He reasoned about righteousness. He reasoned about temperance. We preach a balance gospel and we want to preach this part of the gospel where Paul commanded Timothy to warn, to tell, to proclaim to the people that the love of money is the root of all evil. We are going to see how in the bible there are many examples, but we are going to pick some examples of the fall of people who had great potential. Each one of them fell because of the love of money.

Lets look at the book of Numbers 16. When we live only for this earth, money becomes overwhelming. There's a man named Korah who wanted position. Verse 1, *"Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown."* In other words, powerful figures, leaders and men of influence. Verse 3, *"They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, 'You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?'"*

So here if you read just from the book of Numbers, it looks as if Korah was just after position but the background of Korah needs to be studied. Korah was actually a rich and powerful man. Let me read to you from the traditions of Jews. Let me read to you something he said that about this Korah from The Jewish History called 'Antiquity of the Jews' by Josephus, the most famous Jewish scholar and historian. He says when Moses came out from Egypt, Korah a Hebrew of principal account, both by his family and by his wealth. One that was also able to speak well. One who could easily persuade the people by his speeches, saw that

Moses was in an exceeding great dignity and was uneasy about it. He envied him on that account. He was of the same tribe with Moses and of kin to him was particularly grieved because he thought he better deserve that honorable post on account of his great riches. And not inferior to him that is Moses in his birth, so he raised a clamor against him among the Levites who were of the same tribe and especially among his kindred. Now in both the other Jewish and the Mohammedan version of this Old Testament, it also speaks about Korah as a man of great riches. What he actually did was that he wanted the position of power so that he could acquire more riches. To him riches were his entire goal. Riches with dignity and with the honor that comes with it.

So we see how the root of all evil has to do with the love of money. The love of money can sometime come in the form of the love for position because we know that, that position will bring influence and finances. The love for money can come in the form of a desire to get a better job or to change into a better position in the secular sense. Now we want to be very balance about it. We realize that God did say you shall be the head and not the tail. It is a promise of God to His people that when we walk with Him righteously with Him, He will promote us from step to step until you are the head and not the tail. But I will guarantee to you this fact that unless we die to the desire for riches we actually cannot receive it nor can that promise be activated for us. Sometimes God allows us to enter a situation where we are tested. Perhaps to get that new job, to get that new position, to get that new promotion, you may have to compromise some principles. You may have to lose your time with God. You may have to stay many hours away from your home and family and you may pull away from principles that you hold dear in your life. It's not worth it. That is what I mean by people who don't live for eternity, live only for this earth. We Christians are caught in a situation where at the same time we want to succeed in this world and have abundance in God so that we could enjoy God's goodness as well as being instruments of blessing others. Yet at the same time we need to understand that there is a danger when you handle riches. It has to be handled prayerfully at all times. Sometimes a man may be a very spiritual man who loves God and praises God regularly and at all times. But one change of his job that takes him from his family, requires another four hours extra per day. You begin to see that personality change. That man began to be drawn to live only for this earth and not live for eternity. So we do not judge the value of a job based on the pay cheque that comes at the end of the month. We judge the value of a job based on the total well-being. Your family, your time with God, your spiritual life

in God as well as the pay cheque.

Korah allowed the love for money to be expressed in the love for position. That's one of the way the root of the love for money works its work in Christian life where they want more and more. Many multi-millionaires have had enough if they retire right now for the rest of their lives. Yet people want more. Many multi-millionaires are still earning more and they got more money that they can use. They are living only for this earth. We need to instill into ourselves that we live for eternity. Now that love for position, which is one of the roots of evil that comes from the love of money can also creep into a minister's life where the minister would do anything to get recognition. To do this and to do that. That is also living for this earth. It makes a minister unwilling to give place to another, to count other more worthy than himself and give it up. We need to watch that.

Sometimes that is in it seed form. For example, we were in a church camp sometimes back, it's good to see everybody have fun and fellowship as well as spiritual food. Then there is a game time. Although I didn't join in the game but as I watched the people playing the game, I realized everybody's personality came up in the game. If somebody is quite aggressive in their work and in the way they discipline their life, in the game it's the same. I mean you could see the aggressiveness. If someone who just takes life easily, lets say you are playing volley ball and the ball comes, hi brother its yours, its yours. You could see all the personality come out. You could see those who want personal benefit, when the ball comes to them and every time the ball comes, they will say, get away, it's my ball, my ball. You may not know I was observing but I was watching everybody's personality. It comes out even in the way we play games. Yet these are the things that we need to fine tune in our lives. There is a difference whether we live for others or we live for ourselves. No doubt when we are in something, we are there to win. That's a good attitude but then at the same time it balance with participation for the people. In other words, you can win and yet help others to win.

In life we realize on this earth out there in the world, people think that to be a winner you got to pull people down; you got to step over their heads. Sometimes you got to trample on some of them in order to get to the top. Come what may, by

hook or by crook, by any way possible. But in Christ it is possible to climb up to be the number one and along the way be a blessing all along the way. And help others who are climbing up all along the way. If you win, they win too. So this kind of attitude that has to do with living for eternity where you do not desire things unless they help you to be a person who could be a blessing to others. In other words, if you desire something if it helps the others, then you take it. If it doesn't help others, then you won't take it. So when you are negotiating a new job or your new promotion, you are thinking in the end does it really help all of us in the family. Does it really help everybody or is it just I wanting to possess more finances. So all these evaluations come in our life and many people are persuaded to pursue after position to the neglect of all other important values that cannot be measured by dollars and cents. Finally when they grasp the whole of the money, which they love, they turn around and there is nobody to share with. There's no home to go. There's no love ones to comfort them. There's nobody to share with. The higher they go they found out that the lonelier they become. In the end all they have is a lonely life. The last days of life are passed in loneliness and torment. It's not worth the millions dollars. So the love of money leads people like Korah to go after position but he is very clever. He hides behind the mask a spiritual mark. He never said that he loves money and position. He said, 'Moses you take too much for yourself. Everybody can hear God like you.' What he wants is, he wants Moses' position. Somehow, he influenced all the rest. It look like he was looking for spiritual position but actually he was after a natural position.

The second area where the love for money can hit a person is when you already have the position. How you got it that's in your past. But you already got the position. The temptation to abuse your office comes as a result of the love for money. In the book of Numbers chapter 22, the story of Balaam the prophet. Now Balaam was already a prophet unlike Korah, who had no position. His only position was to help carry the holy things of God as a Levite. He was not allowed the priesthood, which he wanted. He was not allowed the prophetic office, which he wanted too. Moses had and Aaron had. Now Balaam is a different case. He had already got a kind of spiritual position. He was a prophet who had an encounter and experience with God. But here comes the love of money unto his life. In the form of a king called Balak who was the king of the Moabites.

Verse 4 *"So Moab said to the elders of Midian, 'Now this company will lick up*

everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.’ And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beorat at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, ‘Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are setting next to me. Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me.’

In verse 7 & 8, so they sought Balaam to divine or to be able to draw forth an anointing to curse the Israelites. To abuse his position when Balaam should not even have asked God. There are some things you don't even have to ask God, you know His answer. When Balaam came before God, God said, 'No, don't go with these people.' So the next morning Balaam came to Balak and said in verse 13, *“Go back to your land, for the Lord has refused to give me permission to go with you.”* So they went back and verse 15 Balak increased the pay. *“Balak sent princes more numerous and more honorable than they.”* I mean Balak sent greater influential figures with greater rewards. It is the love for money that started drawing Balaam's attention. Balaam said, alright let me seek God to see what God would say. He didn't have to seek God because God already told him don't go with them. But yet he sought God. And it was like God saying this way as you read the story. Which if you insist go ahead, God gives a kind of permissive yes. He went along the way and he nearly died if not for his donkey.

When he reached the place where he was to curse the Israelites in chapter 23: 1-2, they had seven altars built and then Balaam heard from God and instead of cursing he blessed the people. Then in verse 13 they tried again. They built all those altars again he blessed the people. Third time in verse 27, Balak said to Balaam, let us go to another place. Chapter 24, the whole part of it, again Balaam blessed the people. Balak was highly displeased in verse 10. *“King Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, ‘I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed them these three times.’* So Balak angrily strode away. Balak said he used the name of God in vain, that is in verse 11, *“Now therefore, flee to your place. I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the Lord has kept you back from honor.”*

No! The Lord never wanted him to have that kind of honor. There are some honors the Lord wants you to have but there are some honors the Lord never

wanted you to get involved with. When we live for eternity, there are some honors that you say no to. Not all honors are from the Lord. Some are just a distraction. That's the second area where the love of money leads a person to, the abuse of position. Because they love money they would trade their position for more money. I could imagine Balak filled with anger walked away with all the silver and gold and the reward and all his princes and Balaam was left there. It looks like the end of the story, Balaam couldn't curse, Balaam couldn't bypass his office. But as the money started walking away, Balaam had a sinking feeling. That was his golden opportunity to make a million buck and he just missed it. Then as Balak was going further and further away, Balaam had this sinking feeling. I mean he just missed a million dollar opportunity. Opportunists need to be sanctified because not all opportunities are from the Lord.

Finally this is the story, that is not in the bible but you can see the ending that must have happened. Balaam must have regrets. I mean he has great regrets. Finally he must have called back Balak and said I want the gold and I want the silver. Balak said you could curse them like I told you to. Balaam use his carnal crafty mind and said, although we cannot do it, there is another way that you can cause them to fall. All in exchange for gold and silver. He had so many roadblocks along the way. When he asked God, God said no. When he rode the donkey, the donkey protested against him. He got so many roadblocks. He tried to function in the office of a prophet and curse. He could not. He went past all God's roadblocks. Finally he taught Balak how to cause the Israelites to fall. Balak followed and Israel fell. Balaam got rewarded and this is recorded for us in the book of Numbers chapter 31 verse 8 and verse 16. *"They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed – Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword."* Sadly Balaam was among those who had to be killed. Verse 16, why was he killed? *"Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord."* In other words, Balaam valued gold and silver above his position.

A position given by God is an eternal position. Some of those positions God give include natural position, whether in the business or secular world in the spiritual kingdom of God. They come from God and they are bought with the Precious Blood of Jesus. We must recognize that a position that comes from God

must be guarded. Must be valued above silver and gold. Let not the love of money cause anyone to abuse his or her position. Otherwise the end of Balaam will also be their end.

The third incident is a story of destruction because of the love for money. The book of Joshua 7, this time is a man named Achan. Achan was the foot soldier as he was used for eternity. There is a balance that we need to understand. For example, if you are praying or believing God for a house, ask for a house that you could manage. Don't ask for a huge mansion with about one hundred rooms and you will spend sixteen hours cleaning that everyday. Or you say that you are rich enough to hire people, it will cost you twenty thousand dollars per month to hire people. It's a waste of money. See there are ways some where along the line and there must be a balance in our worldly possession. We must make sure we must not be distracted.

Sometimes it comes in a different way. Some people are so hard up about these things of this world. It is a kind of childish attitude going after brand names. People will go all the way. Drive two hours just to go after a brand name. Now everything you wear has a brand. We are talking about a balance. We need to understand that as long as things are usable and if they are good enough, there is no necessity to purposely go into wastage just for brand name. If you ever buy a car because it's prestigious, you are worldly. If you ever buy a house because it's prestigious, it's worldliness. If you ever do wear clothes because it's prestigious rather than its practical and you feel that it suit you and look good, then it's going to worldliness. Of course that doesn't mean that we all have to wear slippers to church, wear shorts to church because that will save us a lot of money. We want to have a balance here. At the same time we don't want to go to the other extreme of saying the world is not ours. It all belongs to the devil. We will just eat plain rice and live in an wooden hut and let the devil have all the good things in this world. That is the other extreme. I am not talking about that. But yet the other extreme is to spend so much time on worldly things. You spend two hours planning your shopping, three hours shopping and five minutes on prayer. Then it has become a distraction. When purchasing a car takes three hours per day, doing all the research, examining the car engine, car color for six months, it has become a distraction.

We live in a world where we live on a fine road. We need to understand of being distracted and not being distracted. Using those things that are there and those things that are not. So this pursuit of brand name is an unnecessary burden that one places on one's life. Usually young people go after it because young people are insecure. Just like advertisers advertise cigarette smoking by using famous people smoking a particular brand. These advertisements are based on identification. Just because a famous guy uses that so you also use that. You can be like him. It's a false identification. It says do not be conformed to the things of this world. Yet at the same time we are not saying all of us must look as shabby as possible in church. The more shabbier the holier you are. You buy thing that suits you. Buy thing that you could wear and it's reasonable but let it not be such a distraction. If you stand two hours every morning in front of your mirror before you go off, there is something that is slightly off balance.

In the book of Joshua 7, he says that he saw this beautiful mantle and he took it. He dug a hole and hid it then went back to fighting. Extra time involved and he thought nobody knew. God saw it. God knew about it and God will deal with it. The third aspect of the love of money manifests in a distraction upon someone's life. In the gospel of Mark 4: 19 those that fell among the thorns, the seeds that fell among the thorns, Jesus interprets as this: verse 19 *"the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."* When it becomes time consuming to manage your finance resources; something must give, something must be surrendered. I mean some people busy themselves so much. Handling hundreds of thousand and millions of dollars but it takes them so much time. It's much easier cut down all those excessive ones and minimizes it so that you could have more time for eternity. It would be a more balance approach. Because in this world you could keep yourself occupied until you got no time. This is a very busy world. A world that fills you with all its thrills, glitters and attractions. If we live for eternity, we got to watch no. 3 the distraction that is actually the love of money. If you ask someone, do you love money? He/she will never say I do. Unless the real hard nut unbeliever says, yes, I love money. But if you ask the average Christian, do you love money? No, no, I love the Lord. But they go about their lives looking for position. They actually love money. It's hidden in form. Then if you ask a Christian, do you love money? He/she says no. Then they use their position in the secular world to get more money. Side job here and there. A little here, a little there. Just to get extra

money. But it's all illegal. You ask them do you love money. No, no, I go to church on Sunday. I love the Lord. They will never deny but they are abusing their position for money. That is the love for money. That's what we want to clarify. That's the third area.

You are the Christians, are you worldly? They say, no, no. I am not worldly. I don't put make-up. I don't use lip stick. I don't use earring. I don't wear gold chains. Using or not using doesn't make any difference. That means it's alright for you to use make-up. Better don't go too far. I was telling my wife, I said, do you know the secret of putting make-up? She said, I don't know. Do you know anything about make-up? I said, it must be such that it looks natural. If a make-up looks artificial, it's no more real make-up. Make-up is to make you look more natural and fresh. But some people's makeups make them look like a clown. So all those things are not wrong. But you ask them, are you worldly? They say, no, no. Do you love money? They say, no, no. But they are highly distracted by things of this world. They cannot walk pass a shop without looking. Are you worldly? No, no. Tongues talking, Spirit filled, demon casting, bible carrying but never read. We need bible reading not just bible carrying. You ask them are they worldly? They say, no. But they are actually living for this world. Not for eternity. Because they are distracted. Distracted by the things of this life. It occupies their lives. I mean hunting for furniture, hunting for this and that and all these things take so much time. But when you talk about looking for a good version of bible, they say any version will do. Just go and buy. Then we called ourselves Christians. We called ourselves the most spiritual people on earth, unworldly in the world but not of the world. But actually we are of the world and in the world when we are distracted.

Test no. 3. These are three tests whether you really love money or not. Test no.3; go back to I Kings 21: 1, this is the story of Ahab. *"It came to pass after these things that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which was in Jezreel, next to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, 'Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near, next to my house; and for it I will give you a vineyard better than it. Or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money.'* But Naboth said to Ahab, *'The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you.'* So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, *'I will not give you the*

inheritance of my fathers.’ And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food.”

Look at him king of Israel. He asked for his neighbor’s vineyard, the neighbor said cannot for good reason. I mean it has been his family inheritance for many years. Who wants to sell that? I mean it’s their life’s blood. Their descendants and their ancestors are supposed to continue on that plot of land. Ahab said I want it. I will give you a better land. Even if it’s a better land, that land has more sentimental value to them. Ahab fell into an emotional state of distress. He fasted and he prayed but for the wrong thing. His wife who is also as bad, in verse 5 said, *“Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?”* Verse 6, He said to her, he didn’t give me the vineyard. I want the vineyard. And of course Jezebel was more cunning than Ahab. She plotted a murder. Got Naboth killed and then said to Ahab in chapter 21: 15 *“Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead. So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”*

The fourth test: Are all your prayers centered on your need? When you don’t have your needs met, will you turn your face from Jesus Christ of Nazareth? A lot of Christians will love Jesus only as long as He supplies their needs. He will of course. But there are times when He will want to watch whether you love Him because He is the giver or love Him because of who He is with or without Him giving you anything. When you were asked, do you love money? No, no, no. But 99% of your prayer have to do with Father God who are in heaven, give me this day my daily bread. Give me a good job. Give me all my needs for all my house. Give me all these things. Give me food on my table. Give me this. Give me that. Thy kingdom come on earth. Thy will be done on earth as its in heaven. Amen. 99% of their prayers have to do with their needs. When if their needs are not met, they will be bitter at God. Bitter at the institution of the church. Bitter at Jesus. Bitter at the bible. They say God didn’t meet their needs. Don’t want to read the bible. They behaved like a spoiled child. They behaved like Ahab.

When Ahab went out to collect Naboth’s vineyard, his archenemy Elijah the Thisbite, came to bite him. Came to teach and bite. ‘teachbite’ that is not his real

name. When he saw Elijah in verse 20, *“Ahab said, ‘have you found me, O my enemy?’ And Elijah said, ‘I have found you.’* Verse 21, he pronounced a judgment on him. I want you to notice this fact. When Ahab was worshipping idols he was bad enough. He did a lot of other evil things, which were bad enough. But it was only when he killed Naboth for the love of money that the real judgment came. The real judgment came not just because of Baal. His heart was like a divided heart. Sometimes he trust Jehovah, sometimes he trust idols. But it was when he yielded to the love of money to the extent of no. 2 abuse and compromise principles to murder that it affected his entire life. He cannot sleep without money. He cannot sleep if he does not have what he wants. It’s only when he became crooked to possess the real judgment came on him. Because it was a wicked thing to steal, to rob, to murder, to possess, that’s the extent that the love of money brought him to. But the point that we see here is how emotionally affected he was. Would you if today, you see God will not steal, God will not kill, God will not destroy, but God will only say would you be willing to give up. If today God would to say give up your house, which you have slogged, you have worked your sweat out; you have saved and invested for thirty years. God said, ‘give it up.’ Would you be able to say yes without a struggle? If you cannot, you are not living for eternity.

Now I realize that somehow while we live on this earth, human being first get tied up and sentimental to the things that they have to work for. To the things they possessed. To the things they accumulated in their short life. But the test of whether you are living for eternity is if you don’t have those things, would you still love the Lord? If you don’t have a roof above your head, would you still love the Lord? If you have to walk from place to place without transportation without any car or any vehicle, would you still love the Lord? If you have only one tee-shirt and two pairs of pants, would you still love the Lord? Or would it occupy your mind so much that 99% of your prayer is to get that?

Let me give you a powerful key. We are not against prosperity, but we are giving you a powerful way to receive true prosperity. If only Christians will realize that when they occupy their time, for example, you live in a small little hut place in a squatter area, you have two pants, one pair of shoes and one tee-shirt, but instead of praying, ‘O God, give me all these needs,’ you just say, ‘Father, I have needs and you know about it. I ask for you to supply above all my needs. Thank you.’ And then the rest of your time you are praying, ‘O God, I thank you for Jesus. How

wonderful He is. How wonderful salvation is. Thank you for the mansion in heaven. Thank you Lord that I could be a blessing to many. Thank you for your bible. Thank you Lord for the time in Your word.' You spend 99% of your time thanking God for those spiritual gifts you have received from Him. Thank Him for the spiritual blessings. That man will receive prosperity. He will receive probably a new job. He will receive finances such that he cannot dream about above his expectation. We are not saying that you don't ask for your daily bread because it's in the Lord's Prayer. But it's one of the items in the many things in the Lord's Prayer. Those of you who had exercised faith for cars, house or finances realize this. It is only when you come to the point where it's not really important to you whether you get it or not then you get it. But when it is very important to you, you are still attached too much to it. It's not surrendered to God. When you surrender it to God then it comes. So God deals with our heart's attachment.

Perhaps you believe in God for a car. You are so attached. I mean always praying on that area. Its high full concentration. But perhaps you have been praying for six months, it didn't turn up. Twelve months, it didn't turn up. After sometimes you are happy as you are. You praise God. I mean that you do the best you can on your little bicycle. You are still praying for a car but it's not so important to you now. You still remember your request. You still would like to have it. But it is not so important to you. Lo and behold it suddenly appears. But when it was important to you, so important that to have it was the only thing in life. Most important thing it will never come because God knows our hearts. He says that when you love Him above father, mother, family or any area above all else and you give up all for Him, then He bless you a hundredfold in this life and in the life to come.

God is not against your prosperity but God is against worldliness and covetousness in our hearts. God will deal with your covetousness until it is not important and you praise God and you worship God as you are. It will come to you. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you. That's point no.4. If you ask somebody, he/she says no. But how much of your time do you spend praying about the things of this life. 99% they are worldly. They love money above God. Of all Paul's prayers, Philippians chapter one, Romans chapter one he prayed briefly. I Corinthians one, Colossians one and Ephesians one and three, of all Paul's prayers surprisingly you will find none of

them were for physical needs. Indirectly they applied to physical needs but one of them was for physical needs. Philippians one prayed for love to grow in judgment. Ephesians one prayed for the Spirit, more of the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Ephesians three prayed for the love of God to be established in our lives. Colossians one prayed that we might do the will of God. None of them were for physical needs. How worldly are we are judged by the extent of our prayer in God. Then we say we are not of this world. We are so occupied that it occupied all our prayers. Set yourself free. With every little you have, with whatever much you have, be faithful. Thank God as you are. By all means believe God for the best. Believe God for abundance. But be separated from them. Don't be attached to that and God will bless you beyond what you asked.

No. 5 II Kings 5, all these are because of the love for money in different forms. Naaman was healed by Elisha and he told Elisha in II Kings 5: 15-16 *"Indeed now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel, now therefore, please take a gift from your servant. But he said, 'As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing.'* And he urged him to take it, but he refused."

Can you imagine being persuaded to take something and you don't want. Some people don't even have to persuade. You just have to put the money out and they will grab it straightaway. Naaman wanted to give a gift to Elisha, Elisha said no, thanks. He is satisfied living in his cave like house with his table and desk as compared to Naaman's standard. He was satisfied as he was. And Naaman said, 'take.' The bible says, he persuaded. He urged him to take. Elisha said 'no'. All the servants were watching. There is another man of God who also did that. Abraham after he had conquered and freed Lot from captivity and also freed the king of Sodom and all his people and won the battle, the king of Sodom said to Abraham, 'Give me all the men servants and the people, you keep all the gold.' Abraham said, 'No, you take back all the things. If any other servants want to have anything let them have. I will not even take one shoe's lace from you.'

Blessed be the man and woman of God who say no to silver and gold. Much less if man and woman of God ask for money. They have compromised their principles. It is better to starve and to go without food than to ask for money because the integrity of your character and the respect for your position is

something that money cannot buy. By compromising it the respect that you have cannot be build up again. Which is why the fifth test of worldliness here is the ability to say no to something that could rightfully be yours. Something that you could have earned it. Something that is a gift could you say 'no'. Some people cannot say no to a gift. Some people cannot say no to a better offer. Some people cannot say no if something glitters like gold. Free this. Free that. Everything free. In this world, advertisement attracts people by free. You see those huge advertisements in the papers or anywhere; they say free gift and everybody rush for it. That is the spirit of the world. They cannot resist something free. Now Abraham and Elisha did not even receive something free. It was something that could have been rightfully theirs because it was through their gifting, their works and their sacrifices that they had paid and the other person got blessed. Yet they could say no. But his servant cannot say no. His servants disagreed with Elisha's principles.

In chapter 5: 20 "But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, 'Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought, but as the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something from him. So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, 'Is all well?' And he said, 'All is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments. So Naaman said, 'Please, take two talents.' And he gave him two talents of silver. Two changes of garments, and handed them to two of his servants; and they carried them on ahead of him."

Gehazi told a lie. Gehazi was someone who could not say no if there is a free offer. Usually if you see a free offer, you see the small print there, a lot of other things. That's how they advertise today. If you could not resist something that is free, there is a spirit of worldliness there hanging in your closet. The only time I buy anything is really useful. Like sometimes these books on the wars on the whole world, that to me is good research because I was researching on the wars and the famine. See the connection to see its fulfillment. In the book of Genesis it says, if blood is shed there will be the earth will not produce. So I did research. Then only I will buy those books. If buying those books they give some other things like free watches or some other things then take it. Take it and then give it away again. But I will not buy anything just because the free gift is there dangling. Sometimes in

supermarket it attracts you. You buy \$500 worth of goods and you get this thing free. You go and you spend. But the \$500 is spent on unnecessary things. That free gift cost perhaps RM50. If you count it's not worth. You've over spent your budget. This is where a lack of temperance of self-control comes. You cannot say no to something free.

Perhaps it says the first 200 customers will receive a free gift. I tell you, you never got up for early morning prayers but when it says the first 200 customers will get a free gift, from 8.30am before the shop open at 9.30am you are already there lining up. You are customer number one. But when the church doors are not opened, you never line up early to go in to pray. You say church starts at ten; let me be there at eleven. Free gift starts at 9.30am, 8.30am you are there waiting. Then people ask you, do you love money? You say, O no, no, I love the Lord. But look at what happening. You couldn't say no to something free from the world. It's a test. Every one will be tested. Abraham was tested, whether he want to have something free. He said, 'no.' Elisha was tested with something free. He said, 'no.'

There are the five other tests for the love of money. They are hidden behind all these areas. Test no.1 for the love of position. Test no.2 for the abuse of position. Test no. 3 was distraction with worldly things. It takes a lot of your time. Test no. 4 prayers for earthly needs occupy 99% of your time. Test no. 5 is where you could not say no when some carrot is dangling right before your eyes. So all these five tests reveal a person's love for money.

Then we look at the importance of being able to handle a relationship with money all through our life. Some people do it well in their early stages but they fall in the middle or a later stage. But we must be able to handle a good relationship with money. For that we want to look at the book of I Samuel. You notice that these are the statements always made at the conclusion of people ministry in bible. To you how important the final test of a ministry at the conclusion is whether you have lived in an unworldly life, whether you have lived a life that is tempered and balanced between spirit, soul and body.

In I Samuel, we see here in chapter 12: 3 *“Here I am. Witness against me before the Lord and before His anointed: Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received any bride with which to blind my eyes? I will restore it to you.”*

Samuel at the conclusion of his public ministry said, if there is anyone who says I have taken anything I will repay. If I have taken any donkey, you say it, you could bear witness and if it's true, I will repay. In other words, Samuel at the end of his life could wash his hands and said he stayed clean from the love of money. Since the love of money is the root of all evil. If you could stay clean from the love of money, you would be free from the root of all evil. You will be free from all evil if you could stand with a clean heart and live for eternity.

Paul in the book of Acts 20 makes this statement at the conclusion of his public ministry. Always conclusion must be a good one. Acts 20: 33-34 He says, *“I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me.”*

I want you to know that is the kind of reputation that money cannot buy. Something that we must hold true. That I pray that I could deposit that into your spirit. Even though in life and in early ministry we have a lot of persecutions in different areas but after we have reconciled with many of them. Not a single one of them could say that we have ever compromise when it comes to the finance. Which is the integrity we have built over fifteen or sixteen years. We intend to keep it that way. We pray it could be built into the life of each one of the minister here and each one of those here in the secular world. It is an integrity that money cannot buy.

I remember my seminary professor, after we got acquainted, after the fellowship, years passed by and things became more amicable and I heard this indirectly. They said, even though he is not the typical Baptist, and even though to us in the Baptist church, he is extreme in his practices, they were talking about me. One thing we know, he said, he loves the Lord. Then later on when we were

having hard times with the Full Gospel fellowship and then later when we restored, we heard word from some of them, it was whatever disagreement, whatever there was, but one thing they cannot find fault is this; one of them said, though all the seven years we have been working together, they know that not one time I asked for finance. Even though they were very rich. That was the clean relationship we have with people. That's the kind of reputation we need to build. Not just here but also we need to build to the completion of the entire ministry. What we are encouraging all of you here is that in Samuel's ending, in Paul's ending and it's our goal in our ending of public ministry and it is a goal we need to set.

You see sometimes even in the business world, some of you say why I am not in the ministry. Isn't it sad in the business world, after you have accumulated all your wealth, all your finances, you are just freshly retired, you are just about to enjoy your wealth, your past catch up with you because of the crooked ways you accumulated your wealth. You compromised with godly principles in your business and now your past catch up with you and you lose all your wealth in your old age. You got nothing to show after that. You are brought into a situation where you got no money in your bank account, no money in your pocket. Isn't it terrible that kind of legacies that can come, where from a multimillionaire you can be reduced to rags? Instead of rags to riches, you have riches to rags. I want you to know that on this earth as Christians we need to leave a legacy behind. We confess to people we have a mansion in heaven and yet at the same time we must show forth a life that is unworldly, unaffected by this world, unaffected by the rumors, by the word or anything like that. That we could stand clean before people.

Jesus could stand up and says, if there is any sin among you. Jesus said, I have no sin. Paul could stand although he could not say about the sin area because he being human may have fallen here and there in words or any area. But yet in this area of practice and handling the love of money, he said he is clean. That's the legacies we must have if we want to live for eternity. Prove it and be free from all those areas and be determined. Sometimes we hear of ministers who compromise on those areas, my wife and I are grieved because we said when we had not a single cent for bus fare we walked. We walked with twenty cents in our pockets. We walked all the way from the railway station, from the bus station. We walked all the way to town on our legs. And even when somebody picked us up and happened to pass by and gave us a lift right to the place we were going, they said,

why are you walking? We could not say anything. We said, praise the Lord. We want you to know that, that's the kind of relationship we must learn. If you want prosperity, you must have it under controlled. But if prosperity controls you, the love of money comes. All other evils will be opened up like a Pandora's box. May God preserve us.

I Tim. 6: 10 *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."* Then the love of money is something we must be able to handle and overcome in our life. If you can overcome money and finances and the love of it, you can overcome all other evils because the love of money is the root of all evil.

I will close by reading Hebrew 11 and show you how others have lived for eternity successfully. Why was Abraham able to say no to finances? Because in Hebrew 11 says, verse 8 onwards, *"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*

His eyes were on the heavenly reward. Do you know why Paul never gives up all his life? Do you know Paul was not moved by silver and gold and apparel because Paul says, 'I seek for the reward up there.' He lived for eternity

In chapter 11 verse 23, *"By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward."*

These people lived for eternity. He could have been called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh but he refused. He could have the riches of Egypt but he

refused because he was the kind of person who lived for eternity.