

AMERICAN IDOLS III. MAKING MONEY

By pastor Richard H. Jones

A. SOME OF THE SIMPLE REASONS WHY MAKING MONEY HAS BECOME AN AMERICAN IDOL.

1. Making money has become an American idol because it has been given pre-eminence in many people's lives and it comes before the Lord's service. Note what the Scriptures say about the acquisition of money (Eccl. 5:10; I Tim. 6:10).

It's a fact that some people have to work on the Lord's day. Some are in the medical field and they are required to work at all times. Some have other jobs that require them to also work on Sundays which take them away from regular church attendance and opportunities to serve the Lord.

It is also a fact that some people volunteer to work on Sundays and miss church services when they have a choice not to work. For some of these it means pay for overtime, so they choose to make the money when they could be in church. When a person chooses to work on Sundays and miss church services when he doesn't have to, then his making money has become an idol to him.

2. Making money has become an American idol because it's what so many in this world are pursuing and this pursuit has influenced multitudes of professing Christians.

According to the Scriptures Christians are not to pursue wealth but rather to be laying up treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21). However, it is not uncommon today to see church folks working, or working all kinds of deals, on the Lord's day when it is not a necessity.

3. Making money has become an American idol because money has come to mean power and prestige. Multitudes pursue making money because it promises them power to do what they want to do and have what they want to have.

B. SOME OF THE SINFUL RAMIFICATIONS OF SERVING THIS AMERICAN IDOL.

1. Making money can become an addiction. Some people don't need to work but making money controls their lives and it comes before anyone and anything else. For this reason they have no time to serve the Lord and do not tithe what they do have.
2. Making money often leads to sinful greed and when a person gets to loving money there is nothing he won't do to get it. Consider what the Enron executives did!
3. Making money often engenders pride in many people. They get to thinking they are better than others and are worth more than others because they have a little more money than others. Note how contrary this is to the Scriptures (Prov. 16:18).
4. Making money can lead people to become selfish and self-seeking and develop a false sense of security in the power of money and assets. A Christian should realize that what he has today could be taken away tomorrow and his trust should be in the Lord. Note I Tim. 6:17,18.

C. SOME OF THE SHAMEFUL RESULTS OF SERVING THIS AMERICAN IDOL.

1. Making an idol out of making money has taken multitudes out of church and away from the Lord's work.
2. Making an idol out of making money has robbed many of the blessings from tithing and having a part in supporting God's work.
3. Making an idol out of making money has caused many to miss a lot of opportunities to be a blessing to others and, in the process, to lay up treasures in heaven.
4. Making an idol out of making money has caused some to miss church services, the fellowship of God's people, and a part in serving the Lord. Someone has said - "There's no reason why every Christian shouldn't receive a reward for tithing, because everyone can do it."

The truth be told, multitudes will one day lose rewards for not tithing in the Lord's service. Some had rather drive a fancy and costly car than to honor God with a tithe. Some had rather rob God so they can have a bigger house or travel all over the country.

D. SOME THINGS WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND REGARDING MONEY

1. We should be reminded that there are two treasuries.
 - a. One treasury is on this earth. When a person puts his money in the material things of this life he is investing in temporal things which have no spiritual value. The Lord Jesus exhorted believers to beware of the idolatry associated with the wealth of this world (Matt. 6:19-24).
 - b. The other treasury is in heaven - when a believer puts his money in spiritual things he is investing in eternal things which will yield eternal dividends. Someone has said, "When we do anything in time with an effect that extends out into eternity, we have laid up treasures in heaven."

David Livingstone said, "I place no value on anything I possess, except in relation to the Kingdom of God."

John Wesley said, "I value all things only by the price they shall gain in eternity."

The Lord Jesus equated giving and helping others with laying up treasures in heaven (Lk. 12:33; Matt. 10:42; Lk. 14:12-14).

2. We should be reminded that there are two masters (Matt. 6:24).
 - a. One master is God. When we are investing our money in spiritual things we are serving God and laying up treasures in heaven.
 - b. The other master is money. When a person loves money it will control his life and prevent him from serving God. For example people whose lives are controlled by money do not honor God with a tithe, do not share their money to help others or use it to further the Kingdom of God. They forfeit the eternal rewards of supporting the

ministry of a local church and mission works to reach the lost.

Wendell Heller has listed several directives for us to follow when it comes to the use of our money:

- "(1) Never covet money or material possessions, but be thankful for and content with what God provides (Lk. 12:15).
- (2) Don't allow your focus to center on this life and the material things money can buy (Matthew 6:19).
- (3) View money and possessions as temporal - trade the temporal possessions you can't keep for the eternal possessions you cannot lose (Matthew 6:20).
- (4) Be wise in the investments you make, and always make them in light of eternity (Matthew 6:20).
- (5) Understand that what you do with your money determines where your heart goes (Matt 6:21)
- (6) Remember it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).
- (7) Allow God to direct you in the choices you make as a steward. Spiritual insight comes from Him (Matthew 6:22,23)." (Today's Christian Preacher, Fall 2006 issue, pp. 10,11).