

15. Managing Money

In the previous lesson we first learned that we don't need to worry about our needs being met, God has already promised that he will take care of that. Then we learned that God wants us to have an attitude that our work, the money that we receive as a result of our work, and the things that that money buys are ultimately gifts from him. Our job is to manage those gifts in a responsible and God-honoring way.



It should not be a surprise to you that money, and the proper handling of it, is frequently a major cause of conflict within most marriages and relationships. This could be because you and your wife may have been taught different ideas about money, or may have different views on the proper way to manage your money, or have different financial goals. As we've seen in many of the previous Fathering in 15™ lessons, this is another important area where you need to view your wife and you as a team, working together to meet those goals. As we saw in lesson 6, you are to be "united" with your wife as "one flesh". You might want to go back to the supplement for lesson 6 to refresh your memory on this important concept. So it will be important for the two of you to talk about your money management, to work on your budget together, and to set realistic financial goals for your family.

As you work together with your wife your first step should be for both of you to examine your attitude toward money and the things that it buys. This is what the Fathering in 15™ lesson refers to as your "relationship to money". Once again the Bible tells us what that relationship should look like. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches us:

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Matthew 6:19-21

And how do we "store up treasures in heaven"? There are many answers to that question, but one of the most important "treasures" that we have as fathers are the children that God has put under our care, and one of your most important responsibilities is to guide them "to heaven". So make sure that your pursuit of money does not get in the way of your responsibility to show your children the way to their heavenly father. If you handle that responsibility well then you will find that as you grow older one of the great blessings you will have will be to see those children following God also. You will find that that is a greater blessing than a big house or a fancy car.

At the same we need to realize that God has given us the responsibility to provide for our family through the work that he gives us to do. From the very beginning, God had good intentions for work. In Genesis 2:15, we read, "The LORD God took the man (Adam) and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it." We have the God-given responsibility to manage well what he has given us. It says in the book of Luke:

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?"

Luke 16:10-11

Finally, the Fathering in 15™ lesson makes the suggestion that you seek help with your money management if you need it. We, as men, frequently resist asking for help but money management is an area where many of us do not have some of the most basic knowledge and skills. You may remember that, back in the 9th lesson, we talked about the wisdom of Solomon, much of which is recorded in the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 19:20 says:

Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.

That is what these Fathering in 15™ lessons are all about – drawing on the wisdom and experience of others to make you a better dad. As we saw in the first lesson, we can choose a different and better future for our family.

Questions for thought and discussion:

- a. Are you working together with your wife/partner to be better money managers? have you taken time to sit down with her to discuss your family's financial goals and how you will achieve them?
- b. What attitude do you and your wife/partner have toward money and the things that money buys? Do you realize that God has provided them and wants you to handle them in a responsible way? Do you need to make some changes in this area?
- c. Consider for a moment that you have a responsibility to "guide your children to heaven". What does that look like in your family? What steps can you take to improve in this area? Are there other men who can help you learn how to do that?
- d. This lesson, like all of the other Fathering in 15™ lessons, challenges us to make changes. Every time we respond to God's wisdom and make some of these changes we are showing our love for God and for our families. Can you start today?