

## “In God We Trust?”—The Blessed Life (3 of 4)

We’re in a series called, “**The Blessed Life**,” and we’re asking the question, “*Are you Blessed or are you Cursed?*” As you Pastor, it’s my desire for you to live the “*Blessed Life*.”

To be **BLESSED** means to be on the *receiving* end of God’s good life for us. Those blessings are both tangible and intangible. My family and I made a choice long ago to put God first in the area of our finances and He has blessed us beyond measure. We’re living *The Blessed Life!*

However, if we don’t give God our “First” or our “Best”—if we choose to rob God of what is rightfully his—we’re stepping outside of God’s perfect plan for our lives and we’ll end up Cursed.

To be **CURSED** means to *step out of God’s plan for your life* and try to live life by your own rules—especially when it comes to money and possessions. The end result is pain and bondage—a cursed life. Many Christians I see today live this way. They step outside of God’s will in the area of money and possessions. Why do they do this? They take their eyes off of God and put it on this world and all that it offers us. We choose this world over God’s world.

So, Are you living the Blessed Life or the Cursed Life?

Now, before you answer that question, let me remind you of the two tests we’ve taken so far:

1) “**The Priority Test.**” We asked the question, “*Who’s on first?*” Who’s first in your life? You or God? God demands our “*First*” and God demands our “*Best.*” When we give God the *First* and the *Best* of what we have, we’re *Blessed*.

2) “**The Heart Test.**” We asked the question, “*Who do you love?*” Who gets top billing in your heart? God or money? It’s either one or the other—it can’t be both. How do you find out which one you love? Look at what you treasure most, that will be the test. Is it God or money?

Today I want us to take another test. This test is called, “**The Trust Test.**” And I need you to help me out. I need everyone to take out some money from their pocket or purse. If you don’t have any, bum it off the person next to you. Can someone loan me one—I’m a married man, I don’t have any money! Can I borrow someone’s \$20 bill for this illustration?

Did you know that the twenty-dollar bill originally featured President Grover Cleveland on the front, but it was switched to President Andrew Jackson in 1928. He had previously appeared on \$5, \$10, \$50, and \$10,000 bills, as well as a Confederate \$1,000 bill.

The placement of President Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill is a bit of historical irony; as president, Jackson intensely opposed both the National Bank and paper money and made the goal of his administration the destruction of the National Bank. In his farewell address to the nation, he cautioned the public about paper money! That’s on the front, but what about the back?

In 1963 the words, “*Redeemable in Lawful Money*” were replaced by the words, “*In God We Trust.*” (BTW, nine years earlier the words, “*Under God*” were added to the Pledge of Allegiance)

While you’re looking at that phrase, “*In God We Trust,*” let me read from Proverbs 3:5-10, “*Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*

“*Don’t be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the LORD and turn away from evil. Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones.*

“*Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.*” Proverbs 3:5-10 (NLT)

**In God We Trust**—really? Isn’t that funny, it’s printed right there on our money!

We deal with it, we dream about it and we scheme about ways to make more of it and all of that time it’s right there in our face—“*In God We Trust.*” Do you trust him or do you trust this?

Jesus said it’s one or the other: We’ll either love God or love money. As you look at your life right now, who have you been trusting: God or money?

As Americans, we are so *rich* and yet we live in a world where we’re reminded of every day of what we *don’t* have! And we believe the lies that tell us that we need more to be truly satisfied.

Take your **job** as an example. If you work, how many of you earn more than \$1 per day? Around 1 Billion people in the

world live on \$1 a day. Folks, we're rich.

How many of you have a **car**? Only 8% of the people in the world have a car. So, if you have a car, you're rich. I don't care if it's a Pinto, or a Yugo, if you have a car, you're rich!

How many of you have **clean water** at home? 1 Billion people in the world don't have clean water to drink. And we take it for granted!

Have you **eaten** today? 800 Million people won't eat today. 300 Million of those are children. Every few seconds someone dies from hunger.

How about your **home**? Everyone of us here lives in a mansion by the majority of the world's standards. We in the United States possess only 5% of the world's population but we possess 85-90% of the world's wealth. *We rich, don't know it and aren't the least bit satisfied with it!*

We want more and more and more and are rarely satisfied with what we already have.

Today I want us to look at a simple, yet beautiful passage of Scripture from Hebrews 13:5-6, it says, *"Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, 'I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.'*

*"So we can say with confidence, 'The LORD is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?'"*

Hebrews 13:5-6 (NLT)

Often we think that if we get enough then we will be content—but we all know that it's not true. Every time there is a poll taken and asking Americans about how much more they think they need to have in order to live at a comfortable level of life. Do you know what people say each time? They say, *"If I only made 25% more income, then they would be happy."* That's not too bad, right? After all, we're not all wanting to become rich, just a bit more is all I need!

Do you see the problem with that kind of thinking? We will never have enough! One of the richest men ever to live was Howard Hughes. He was asked the question, *"How much money is enough?"* and do you know what his answer was? *"Just a little bit more."*

That kind of thinking is the exact opposite of what God desires in his people. God tells us in this passage to stop loving money and start being satisfied with what we have.

To illustrate this, I want to talk about the two sides to the "love of money." The first side of loving money is more obvious and we see it every day:

### **Loving Money=Spending**

We're told, *"Don't love money..."* but some of us love money for what it buys us.

For some of us, money isn't the God we worship, but "Pleasure" really is—and money is a way to feel that euphoric high off of the next big thing we've purchased.

Some of us love money because of what that money buys us—MORE. More stuff, more pleasure.

Some people when they get their money find that it burns a hole in their pocket. They get their money so that they can spend it. As soon as they get more money, they buy things. Their lives are filled with things that make them happy.

That's one part of loving money. The second side of this is found through storing:

### **Loving Money=Storing**

For some, the words, *"Don't love money..."* are a challenge because money represents something else to us—Security. Our God of money looks like this: "If I could provide for me, all of my needs would be met." For some it's a big fat savings account and for others is the lack thereof.

Some people make their money and their desire isn't to spend it, but to store it. Some people put every possible dollar they earn into the bank. So if their savings account has a certain amount in it that brings them happiness. Do you know what brings them more happiness? More savings! This is the other part of loving money.

Which one are you? Are you a spender or are you a storer? The Bible says that both of those taken too far amount to covetousness. Is the desire in your life for more things or more money?

### **SO, WHICH ONE ARE YOU MORE LIKE? THE SPENDER OR THE STORER?**

By nature, I am a Spender and by nature Mary Beth is a Storer. They say "opposites attract!"

The spender gets more money so that they can turn around and get more *pleasure* from it. The storer gets more money so

that they can turn around and get *security* from it. The *spender seeks pleasure*, the *storer seeks security*. ***The person who spends all of their money is driven by “greed.” The person who stores all of their money is driven by “fear.”***

Now please don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying that it's inherently wrong to spend money nor that it's inherently wrong to store money. But I am talking about the extremes of loving money. And if we could be honest, I'm sure we would admit that at one time or another we slide closer to one of these extremes.

*Do you struggle with greed?* Then you'll need more money to fill the hole greed is creating in your heart. *Do you struggle with fear?* Then you'll need more money to fill your storehouse so that you'll be able to provide for yourself.

There is another way... There is a way out of the trap of loving money through greed of pleasure and fear of the future and it's right there in the verse...

### **Loving God=Satisfaction**

*“...be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, ‘I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.’*

*“So we can say with confidence, ‘The LORD is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?’”*

Hebrews 13:5-6 (NLT) ***After all, what is God promising us? Himself!***

I believe that it all comes down to the issue of our heart. As followers of God, are we now trying to find fulfillment in money? Are we trying to fill our heart through the pleasures of this world's toys? Or are we trying to fill our heart with the assurance that we have taken care of everything?—there's no need to worry about the future—we've taken care of that.

In our marriage Mary Beth and I work at balancing each other out in these two areas. Left to myself I would swing the “loving money” pendulum towards *spending*. Mary Beth would swing the “loving money” pendulum towards *storing*. We frequently have to check ourselves and each other to make sure that we are finding our contentment in God, not in money.

Years ago (in our BC, “Before Children” days) Mary Beth and I took a Sabbatical and traveled to 18 different European countries in the span of 12 weeks (Yeah, we're crazy Americans).

I took my Palm Pilot with me because it kept our schedule, a few games, and most importantly a Currency Calculator! This was back before the Euro went into distribution and each and every country had a different currency. We had a hard time keeping it all straight, *“Now, how many Francs make a Lira, is 100 Pounds really worth 700 New Shekels? And if I buy this shirt for 175 Koruny am I really getting a bargain?”*

But it was really no problem with the Calculator I carried with me. It always showed me the true value of the money I was holding. I carry with me an even greater Currency Calculator with me—it's my Bible. The Bible has an uncanny way of getting my perspective straight.

You see, the world around us puts a high value on those things in life that really don't have true value. On the one hand we look enviously on those friends of ours who have all of the latest possessions. On the other hand we look covetously on those friends of ours who have a large sum of money in the bank. But God looks for those who's hearts are fully his and he puts the highest value of our heart finding contentment and satisfaction in him.

*“Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.”* Philippians 4:11-13 (NLT)

It's called, ***“The Trust Test.”*** How are you doing? Is it **Spending-Storing-or Satisfaction?**

What will be your response? Repent!!!