

Money

(Poverty and Abundance Cycles)



What did Jesus have to say about money and possessions and what it looks like to follow him in this area of our lives?

Scripture

Jesus said a lot about money and possessions. Matthew Chapter 6 contains quite a lot of his teaching on this subject. Read the following sections:

Matthew 6:1-4 (Giving to those in need)

Matthew 6:19-21 (Treasures in heaven)

Matthew 6:24-34 (Do not worry)

What things strike you about Jesus' teaching on money/possessions?

What does Jesus present as the solution to money worries?

Story

In another part of the Gospels, Jesus is recorded as saying 'Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you,' Luke 6:38.

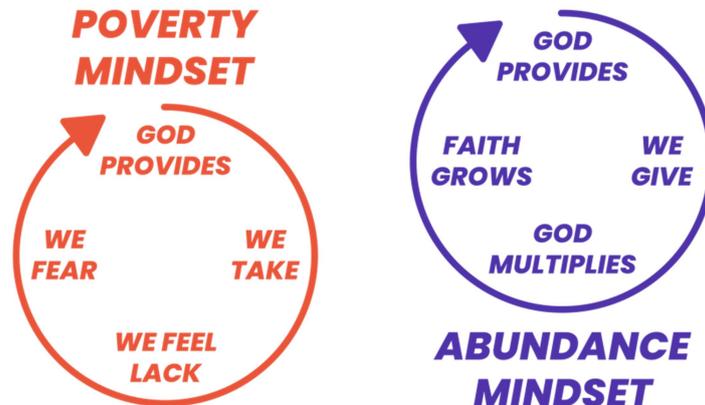
Imagine going to the deli counter in a supermarket; that place where you can buy freshly cut meat and cheese and the tubs you can get filled with olives, pasta salad and other such things. Imagine asking for a tub of sundried tomatoes and the person who serves you fills the tub up, and then presses the absolute maximum amount into the tub so that there are absolutely no gaps. They then put even more in the tub such that the lid won't close and there are tomatoes coming out over the sides.

This is the picture of generosity that Jesus promises that God will show towards those who are generous to others; a measure pressed down and flowing over.

What stories do you have, or have you heard, of God providing abundantly?

Shape

The **Poverty and Abundance Cycles** below illustrate the two different ways we can think about our money and possessions – one which trusts in God’s provision and one which does not.



The starting point for both cycles is the truth that God owns all the wealth, money and possessions that exist on the whole earth and **God Provides** for all that he has made.

In the **Poverty Mindset Cycle**, even though God has provided resources, we don’t trust that it will be enough or that there will be more coming in the future and so **we take** it all and cling to it for ourselves. This ‘taking’ can outwork itself in very different ways, from over-spending to hoarding. Whatever the form of ‘taking’, it results in us **feeling lack** which in turn leads to **fear**. Even when God provides again in the future, we repeat the same sequence, stuck in a cycle of fear and distrust towards God.

In the **Abundance Mindset Cycle**, we trust in God as the provider and the one who has more than enough to abundantly meet ours and others’ needs. When we receive God’s provision **we give** some away first in faith and in obedience to his command to be generous, investing in causes that are close to his heart. God sees this and, in line with his promises, **God multiplies** what we have given and blesses us with even more provision. When we see God amazingly and miraculously providing for us in this way, our **faith grows**. This cycle of receiving from God, trusting him, being generous and seeing him come through is an exciting life with God that is free from fear and worry about finances.

Adapted from <http://www.aneternalimpact.com/generosity/>

Do you feel like you are currently living in the **Poverty Mindset Cycle** or the **Abundance Mindset Cycle** with regards to your money and possessions?

So What?

In smaller groups, take some time to talk and pray about your money and possessions and how you can live in line with the **Abundance Mindset Cycle**.

Use the questions below to help you:

God Provides

What has God given you that you can give thanks to him for, e.g. clothes, food, housing, gadgets, books, any favourite items?

What income streams has God given you that you can thank him for, e.g. wages, benefits, investment income, savings interest?

We Give

What opportunities has God given you to give to and bless others that you can thank him for? (Think particularly about causes close to God's heart, i.e. the poor and needy in our world and the work and ministry of his church).

What changes, if any, do you sense God leading you to make to your giving, e.g. giving more to an existing cause, giving to a new cause, giving less to an existing cause or stopping giving to an existing cause entirely (it's OK if he says this – you can trust him)?

God Multiplies and Faith Grows

What stories do you have of giving generously in obedience to God, only to receive more back from God soon afterwards?

What affect did this have on your confidence in God and his faithfulness to provide for you?

Grow Further

Memory Verse:

Romans 8:32

'He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?'

Other Bible passages:

- Mark 12:41-44
- Matthew 19:21
- Luke 18:18-30
- Philippians 4:19
- Romans 13:8
- 1 Corinthians 16:1-4
- Hebrews 13:5
- 1 Timothy 6:10

Other resources:

Stop Worrying About Money and Start Trusting God – Troy Black,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slyXGNHgTPY>

Christians Against Poverty – Debt Counselling Charity – <https://capuk.org/>