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INTENTIONAL INVESTING ?

God doesn't want your money. Glad to hear that? Thing is, you don't have your money. You have God's money. And what you do with it speaks volumes on what you really think about God.

The pastor began a sermon by inviting everyone to take out their wallets and examine what is written on their currency - "***In God We Trust***" - imprinted on U.S. coins since 1864. He then asked the congregation if they truly believed it - and invited the ushers to come and collect what God had entrusted to them, since their money was already out of their wallets.

If you truly trust in God, wouldn't you want to do what He wants you to do with what He entrusts to you? That's what it means to be a "steward" - you take care of someone else's property. Stewardship involves intentional thinking - acknowledging that everything belongs to God. It involves intentional living - how all our earning and spending and saving reflects our relationship to Him. It involves intentional giving - because Jesus said "***it is more blessed to give than to receive.***" And it involves intentional investing - putting resources to work so they gain the greatest return.

Every time money changes hands, whether or not imprinted with "In God We Trust" and whether or not the exchangers believe it, the exchange echoes the reality that God owns everything. The Bible declares God as Creator, with prior claim on everyone and everything that exists. 1 Chronicles 29:11 says, "***O LORD, all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours... both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all.***" In Haggai 2:8 God claims all the silver and gold and treasures of the nations. In Psalm 24:1 and 50:9 God claims every person, every creature, every thing.

In Matthew 6 Jesus says God cares for birds and flowers, so how much more does He care for the needs of mankind, since we are created in His own image! He says, "***do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.***"

Did you know copper wire was invented by two old-timers over in Sioux County who wouldn't let go of a penny? Maybe not, but we understand being tight-fisted. Especially when it comes to the collection plate at church. But it's not about your MONEY, it's about your HEART. God asks you to invest it.

And when you give to God, you're not giving Him your money, but HIS treasures, including the time and talents He entrusts to you. You're really giving Him your heart. If your checkbook was examined in a court of law, would there be enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian? It reflects your heart.

And it tests your heart. Listen to 2 Corinthians 9:8 "***God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.***" If you really believed this, what would it look like in your life? Those words come in the context of giving to God cheerfully, not reluctantly or under compulsion - generous, sacrificial, consistent, regular giving.

It's a law of nature - whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. God promises those who give to Him will be enriched in every way - not for YOUR pleasure, but for HIS purpose, so you can be generous. And this will show you are living out the Gospel of God's grace in your own life. You TRUST Him to provide for your needs (not wants), with enough over and above to give to others.

Someone has said that we live three times: once here on earth, forever in eternity, and also in the hearts and minds of the generations after us. That's one reason "In God We Trust" was first imprinted on our coins. Since gold and silver survive the ages, it will provide evidence to succeeding peoples that we were a people who knew God. So how are you doing with being a steward of God's stuff?

Only people last forever, either in heaven or in hell. That's why the best way to "***lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven***" involves investing in people. Specifically, in God's kingdom work - which is all about bringing more people into His kingdom, who will live forever with Him.

Stewardship is about the Lordship of Christ. It's about living out the Gospel, doing everything in Jesus' name and for His eternal glory. If He has your heart, He has your treasure too. *Happy investing!*