

Wealth Management: Love of Money vs. Love of God

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[0 : 00] There's a lot that we could talk about. But just for the sake of time, you've heard this said before, but love of money is not a... If you were to think about...

We talk about theological triage sometimes. We think about ranking doctrines. Gospel is of primary importance. And then these other things are not as important. Like complementarianism or whatever it is.

Your view on the millennium. And we naturally understand that these are less important. There's other things. Love of money is of real primary concern. Jesus, whenever he talks about money, he always includes a warning.

And it's so insidious. It's so easy to slip into love of money. And you see what that causes. It's a root of all kinds of evils. And it actually causes people to stray away.

We have to guard ourselves from that kind of love of money. And so I'm trying to highlight this idea that saving... There's faithful saving.

[1 : 03] And then there's unfaithful hoarding. And I think there are differences there. I think, again, the dangers of hoarding. The love of God. These are all things that I've already mentioned.

We can plan for future needs. Provide for our families. We can stay prepared to give generously at any time. And that we trust God to be our ultimate provider. But, yeah, there's a danger in hoarding. There's trusting in wealth rather than God. I think, for me personally... I mean, in general, love of money looks different for a lot of people.

My love of money looks very differently from my wife. My love of money is that I love to save. I love the security it feels to have money in my pocket.

That's... In college, that's pretty much how I continually operated. I would buzz my hair myself, completely bald, so that I could save on money instead of paying for a haircut.

[2 : 08] But I slept on a raw mattress. No bedding. I slept on a raw mattress so that I could save on bedding. I didn't have to pay for it. I didn't...

Everything I wore was basically hand-me-downs from alum who, like, left and gave their old clothes. That's, like, they were full of holes and stuff. That's what I wore. Like, all of that so that I could save a dollar.

Right? Save a few dollars here and there. Right? I did try to give faithfully to my church and support missionaries with the money that I had. But I think that saving, that desire to be that frugal ultimately is my love of money.

A trust in money rather than a trust in God. Right? I think it is this clinging of power and control that when we see that number, when we open up our bank account, we're like, yeah, I'm going to be set. You know, no matter what comes to me, I'm going to be set. But there's a distorted view there. There's something broken in that desire. Right? We cling to possessions out of fear and pride and identity.

[3 : 11] Talked about that. I think another diagnostic question of whether you're truly hoarding is whether you neglect others when you truly do have the means to help.

That's for you to decide. Looking at your net worth, looking at your bank account, are you properly generous? Right? There's a genuine question there. And then finally, even when you have money in your pocket, like when I had money in my pocket, there was still anxiety.

It never actually satisfied my cure or my desire to control because there was still constant anxiety in my heart. Right? When we don't rest in God, we will continually feel restless.

Right? There's no other source that could supply the stability, the peace that trusting in the Lord alone provides. Right? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

So I think saving crosses into hoarding really when we trust not in God, but we trust them as the ends, as the means, as everything that we need to be able to prosper.

[4 : 20] There's something askew there. I think Charles Spurgeon captured this as he always does so well. Christians often look to man for help and counsel and mar the noble simplicity of their reliance upon God.

If you cannot trust God for temporals, how dare you trust him for spirituals? Can you trust him for your soul's redemption and not rely upon him for a few lesser mercies?

Is not God enough for thy need? Or is all his self, all, or is, all, what? Is his all sufficiency too narrow for thy wants?

Is his heart faint? Is his arm weary? If so, seek another God. But if he be infinite, omnipotent, faithful, true, and all wise, why wander thou abroad so much to seek another confidence?

Why dost thou rake the earth to find another foundation when this is strong enough to bear all the weight which thou canst ever build thereon? Let the sandy foundations of terrestrial trust be the choice of fools.

[5 : 29] But do thou, like one who foresees the storm, build for thyself an abiding place upon the rock of ages. So there's something that we really do need to evaluate in our hearts.

And I want to talk a little bit more about this. But I think there needs to be a regular cadence in our daily liturgies. Maybe not daily, right? But quarterly, yearly, where we genuinely present before God every single dollar that we have.

Whether that's in our checkings account, savings account, in our retirement accounts, our houses, our cars. We present this to the Lord. And we ask, what do you want me to do with this?

Like, are you, are we willing to be that bold to pray for something like that? Are we afraid what God might do? I think there's, there needs to be some kind of regular cadence of where we strive for that kind of relinquishing, obedience to the Lord.

So that's, talk about saving. Yeah, please. What does it mean to be, to expand on being generous for others? Because I find it very easy to be generous with like my friends, people I know.

[6 : 44] But what I find hard is, is like beggars. Like, people I stop by, I just hold their signs. I mean, I had a particularly aggressive beggar one time ask me for money.

And he said, I don't have any cash. You know, don't worry, I have tile. Like, he wanted me to like swipe my card, right? So, you know, on it. He doesn't have cash in your tile. Sorry. Like a tile, it's like a payment process.

Yeah. Like the ones that plug into the, your iPhone. He had that on his phone? No. So he was like, no, what? That is, that is crazy. I can see like, uh, you know, so.

Well, I have Venmo, you know, so it's like. I have Venmo. Maybe that's an extreme situation, but I do. Yeah. It's like, okay. Yeah, yeah.

That's, that's really helpful. Steve, did you talk about this at all? In choosing how to do that? I don't like Q&A; time. Yeah. I think that we just give, there is a level of like giving, fortunately, to like, amount of trust. Like, yeah. We have given much more to people that we know closely than to people that we don't.

[7 : 46] Or maybe like people that we trust, people that we don't. But, um, I think there's still some extent of generosity that's just like called for regardless. And this is, I think for us, Lucas can get two shout outs in this whole thing.

Lucas, are you here? Right here. Yeah. We were talking to you about generosity and just like, Lucas and others too were carrying the idea that like the blessing of, of giving is, comes to us for our giving, not for like the correct allocation of the money, if that makes sense.

And so it's like, it's not like God's like, ah, that person at the corner tricked you when you gave away that money. And so you don't have rewards in heaven. It's like, no, the act of giving is in itself, along with wisdom, of course, like what we're exchanging for the reward in heaven, essentially.

So, I don't know whether you give the guy your credit, I mean, I would not slide my credit card on you. I'm the guy who like wiggles the credit card reader at the gas pump in case there's a fake one on top. So I'm not scanning my credit card for that guy, but like, I think that there are ways to still like find a way to be generous.

So should I, should I just keep like a bunch of 20s in my car and I can be soft like? I mean, we have, I also shared this to you guys right now, but they, they carry Dunkin' Donuts gift cards on them at all times. They're like 10 or 20 bucks.

[8 : 54] And I've watched Gary give those out to homeless people before. Yeah. I was going to mention that again. Yeah. I think there are creative means to go around that. And I think just another way to reiterate what Steve was saying, I think we, the people that we're generous to are done in concentric circles, right?

The people that are closest to us, I think our church, our family is like closest friends. And then I think it should naturally taper off with the people that are a little bit further away from us. Does that make sense? Yeah. But I think there are really, I love that idea of carrying around Dunkin' gift cards. If you say that you're super hungry, then yeah, here, let me give you a Dunkin' gift card. That's like meeting their claim and meeting their need. But that's, that's very, I've never heard of that. That, that really does feel like a scam. Like he's definitely going to steal your information and steal your identity.

Yeah, please. Go back one slide. How, how, how does it connect to the next one?

[9 : 55] Or is it like a separate one? This one. Yeah. Just keep creating the idea of just, do you love money? Do you trust in money? Or do you trust in God to provide for you? Can you go forward, Mom?

What does it, what, what does it look like to trust God for us? Like where are your expectations set when you say you trust God when living out like the, the saving part?

I don't know if I fully understand your question, but I think we trust the means. Is that, is that what you're getting at?

Like we can have full fridges. I don't think we necessarily, again, need to go take vows of poverty and be monks and really live hand to mouth.

But I think even with the means, we fight. And it is a struggle, right? Like we do need to fight to remember every single thing comes from the Lord. And we rejoice.

[11 : 00] And that we, when we pray before our meals, we don't pray just because it's habit or we feel forced to. But it's as a means to really give thanks to God who provided every single thing to us.

I think as we hold that in our heart, and it's possible we can hold on to those things even when we have full fridges. Does that answer your question? I think so.

Yeah. It's just trusting that God also provides ordinary means as well. I want to do a group exercise. We talked about saving a little bit, but again, the natural extension of that is retirement.

Think about retirement, right? So I know that I'm kind of trying to take advantage that we don't really, you know, you guys don't get to interact with one another. Basically what I'm saying, I want you to form groups that you don't talk to normally with people you don't talk to normally.

So try to break out into groups of three to four. And I want you guys to discuss how should Christians think about the concept of Western retirement.

[12 : 03] Right. Like the idea that you save a bunch of money when you're young now until you're 65 and then you retire and then you go sailing off into the sunset. What are good reasons and bad reasons for Christians to save for retirement?

We talked about saving more broadly, but I want to hone in on the idea of retirement now. So the more you can use scripture to back up your reasons, the great, the better.

And then we're going to come back and then kind of discuss. So let's take, I'll check in, but five to seven minutes. If that's not enough time, I'll give you more time. Yeah. For the sake of time, I'm going to keep going on.

But these are a couple of my thoughts. You guys are nailing all of them, right? The good, again, our bodies change. We get weaker. Numbers 8 has that idea that God knew this, right?

At age 50, you're not as strong. Hopefully no one's age 50 here. We're not. It's a different age when compared to when you're 18 or 20, right?

[13 : 04] So we shift. We are able to shift the work that we do, right? Our bodies do have limits. Again, the idea of not being a burden onto others, it's true, right?

If we aren't able to work and provide for ourselves and we don't have money, then you are going to be a burden on somebody. You're going to be a burden on your church.

You're going to be a burden on your government. You're going to be a burden to your family. It's just the reality. And then finally, right, the idea of freedom. Do you have a question? Yeah. Yeah.

What is the timeline of breaking down as a guy? That is a wild question. I'm 30, man. Why are you asking? I mean, I think 65 is not chosen, like, necessarily completely just, like, blinded. [14:02] I think there's probably a reality where when you're closer to that age, your mind is not as quick and your body is tired. I think it could be a time where you think about it. But I don't think, again, that's, although that it is in that general age of where most men or most people get, you know, might think about retirement, I don't think that's a hard and fast set rule that you have to retire at 65.

Do you know what I mean? Yeah. I think I recently learned. Yeah, please, doctor. Please. Well, I mean, on that front, there are actually a lot of, like, people well into their 90s who are very active. Let's go. Let's go. Surprisingly. No excuses. That is not going to be me. So I don't think that really there's, like, an age one, but I recently learned that the age of 65 was actually chosen with the, like, expectancy was, like, 60 days.

So that hasn't changed, even though the life expectancy was changed. That's fascinating. Yeah. So you can imagine, I think that, yeah, yeah. I guess it wasn't really, I can imagine that it was thought of, retirement was thought of as, like, this time of future and comfort.

Yeah. You know, less than your life. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So what is the average age expectancy now? I think it's, like, well into the 70s now. Yeah, okay. Modern medicine.

[15:32] So those are some good reasons. I, again, have a John Piper quote, as you guys are saying, right? He talks about not wasting our retirement. I'll skip the quote because we already talked about it.

Some of the bad, right? Viewing retirement as the ultimate goal of life. You guys talked about this. My grandma, we still always say all the time that life starts at 60. And God bless her soul, but I disagree, right?

It's like retirement and rest is not the thing that makes our life full. It's being able to walk every single day next to Jesus Christ. And seeing, being able to glorify him, being able to enjoy him, being able to do life with other brothers and sisters.

There's something beautiful in the present day now that we get to experience, right? And even as a pastoral caution, I was actually fascinated to read this.

But there are some biblical counselors that do heavily caution against this idea of retirement. Just because they have seen cases where removing the structure, the accountability, the purpose of the work that they do, once they retire, it could destabilize them.

[16:41] And so there's a man who this counselor was tending to. And he was one of the most diligent, hardworking men when he was working. But then he retired and then everything went haywire.

He started staying up way late into the night, waking up at 1 p.m., buying random purchases that he never needs, speaking very rudely to his family members.

Like all that, I think part of it was that big life factor, that big change is that he retired and he didn't have that regular accountability structure in his work. So there's something to that.

I think retirement can very easily and quietly become an invitation to self-centeredness. Distorted view of work, right?

I talk about this a little bit, but work is a gift. We know this, right? Work was part of God's original design even before the fall. Of course, the fall cursed our work to make it back-breaking, that we only produce fruit by the sweat of our brow.

[17:44] But really, work is part of our good design. So I personally do think, as you guys are talking about, I think that all Christians should work until their bodies give out.

I don't think that means you need to work for money. And I think Daniel Stabile's father, Rod, if you've met him, I think he's a great example of this. He's not working his engineering job right now, but with the skills that he's developed over his life, he's volunteering at three different Christian nonprofits.

I don't exactly know what he does. I think he's a software engineer or something of that related.

Sure. But he's able to support these Christian organizations with the abilities that he's gained.

And I think there's something really beautiful about that. Yeah, I think the third is a hidden desire to be rich, to hoard.

I think this is maybe by far the most insidious or careful reason why we have to think about retirement. It's that retirement planning, I think it's become so easily socially acceptable to hoard.

[18 : 55] I think it's really easy to do that. We call it wise stewardship. But I think at some point, we don't need to save as much as we are saving.

If we are thinking about retirement, it's really to take care of us for 20, 30, 40 years, Lord willing. Some of us save for centuries and centuries.

I think that's the idea of retirement planning. And we, again, call that wise stewardship. But is there a better use for those resources today? I think we have to ask ourselves of those things.

So I think we have to be aware of our Western tendency to plan diligently for our retirement years, where we neglect and we are distracted from our eternal years, from eternal investment.

And so I think, again, I touched upon this, but a diagnostic question of financial advisors will never tell you to touch your retirement accounts.

[19 : 56] They'll always tell you, don't ever pull from that. And I think generally that is wise financial advice. But if there is a need that came where you don't have the money in your checkings or your savings or in other means, but it would actually cost you to pull into your retirement account, what do you think about that?

Like, is that an immediate no? Or could you actually be willing to take into, reach into your retirement account and give to the people that are in need?

Really, if there's anything that's off limits to God, I think we no longer are acting as stewards of God's money, but that we are embezzlers. We become owners, right?

We act like owners, not stewards. And I want to speak a little bit, right, about inheritance. Millennials will inherit over \$68 trillion from previous generations by 2030.

That's according to Newsweek. Some experts believe that this is the largest transfer of wealth in modern history, or in the history of humankind in general.

[21 : 07] If you are expecting an inheritance for yourself, I mean, I know that every family situation is different, be aware, be wary of putting your trust in that money that's coming.

If you're thinking like that, oh, you know, my parents have a car and have a house, two houses, whatever, or, you know, have this much money and all that's coming to me.

I think there needs to be a, we have to call it out for what it is. There's trust in that money. We have to be aware of that kind of expectation that we have. I'm not saying that all of it is bad.

I'm not saying that you have to give every, you know, all of it away, but we would be, I think, lying to ourselves if we didn't, you know, think about the inheritance that's coming to us, and if we put trust in that.

I feel that, you know, right? So I think we need to think about the kind of money that we are going to inherit and how we're going to use it, plan wisely. The other question, so, I mean, as we think about this, then, like, the question is, how much is too much?

[22 : 13] Honestly, I have no idea, right? I don't think scripture is dogmatic about it, so I'm not going to be dogmatic about it. To be clear about our, how we save for retirement, so when we were dink, if you guys know what that means, double income, no kids, it was a much sweeter, easier time financially.

When we were dink, right, so we would put in our 401ks, and I'm going to talk about this a little bit more, 401ks, we also tried to max out our Roth IRAs, if you guys know what those are.

Right now, obviously, our financial situation has changed dramatically. So Christine went part-time recently and then took a salary cut to be a pastor. But I think it's still more than enough.

If we were able to put in money to maximize our Roth IRAs for both of us, if we were able to do that this next year, it'll probably be a stretch, but if you really plan it out, if you're able to do that and plan out for the rest of the 20, 30 years, you could do that, we're going to be completely set for retirement.

We'll be completely fine. And I don't feel poor at all. It is more than enough. And maybe for Christine, it's a little bit different because she's not used to...

[23 : 33] I just like to buzz my head and sleep on a raw mattress, but I don't feel poor whatsoever. So I can't tell you how much is too much, and that's not, I think, my role.

But I think you should be asking that question to yourself. How much is too much? How am I thinking about retirement? Is my gut instinct just to retire thinking like, yeah, you know, that's the sound financial advice.

Let me just do that. I think we need to be intentional about every dollar that we're actually putting away. Where's our money going and where's our heart? And finally, the overemphasis on

dependence, independence from God.

Western culture prizes self-sufficiency. And I think retirement planning can quietly become an expression of that pride or that desire. Obviously, we talked about that in terms of God, but I think it also, there's something about that with others.

I know I'm kind of contradicting myself when I say not being a burden on others. I think there's something beautiful there. But, you know, I think there's a kind of dependence, that dependency that's unhealthy, that's terribly unhealthy.

[24 : 45] If you're presuming upon the need of others, if you're expecting that. But I think there's also a kind of independency that's equally unhealthy. So the question is, who are we trying to be independent from?

Is it from God? Is it from our church? Do we really think that we can provide for ourselves entirely by ourselves? So I think there's some kind of factor where when we think about retirement, when we think about the rainy days, I think not enough of us consider and factor in that, hey, I have a church family that can help me.

I have a church family that has promised that they're going to get me across that finish line. I have a church family that's committed themselves to me. So often we think about the rainy day, we think about retirement, oh, I have to do it on my own.

No, I have to fend for myself. But there is something beautiful about being one family, right, where we're all in together and we're going to help each other, support each other. So I think we need to feel that kind of openness to depend on others.

Wow, I need to hurry up. So really quickly, I'm not going to spend too much time because you could look all the stuff up online.

[26 : 01] But ways to prepare for retirement, their high yield savings accounts. I honestly think that probably if we are prudent with our money, most of us should have one of these open.

Funny enough, Sean had not opened a high yield savings account for our church where he was making like 0.03% return for like a couple of years.

And then we finally put into a high yield savings thanks to Steve and the financial advisory team. And we're now making a lot more money on our return, a lot more interest. So you'll get about 3% to 4%. And I think it's helpful to have an emergency fund where you put 3 to 4 or 3 to 6 months of living expenses.

Lord willing, if you have that means to be able to save it in there. It's very, very liquid. It's easy to pull from. CDs, similar concept. It's with a bank.

It's less liquid. But you typically get a higher return just because you promise, hey, I'm going to commit to this year. I'm not going to touch this money. So they'll give you a higher return.

[27 : 02] That risk is also very, very low. And all these banks are typically FDIC insured. So if you put in \$250,000 in one of these banks, that if the bank went under, that they'll promise to return it.

That's the insurance there. Bonds. I really don't know a lot about bonds because I don't have any. So maybe you guys can please. Yeah. So one thing I think is a little bit incorrect here.

Yeah. Is that the lowest risk thing on this list right now is U.S. Treasury. Okay. Sure. Even though it gets better return, it's actually less risk than your high yield.

Okay. In my opinion, than your high yield. That's helpful. If the U.S. isn't going to pay their debts, like, it's like, there's catastrophes happening. So in my opinion, it's actually better.

I would rather buy treasuries than CDs. And CDs is also like, banks go under occasionally. Silicon Valley Bank recently. So that's my two cents.

[27 : 59] Good. I know nothing about finance. So thank you for helping me. But bonds, right, if you know, they're essentially a loan. They're a loan to typically the U.S. government. And you could buy them for various amounts of years of terms.

And you can get a pretty good return and very safe. And then finally, the 401k, 403b, right, IRAs, where you put in money in this investment account. You invest your money in buying certain stocks. You could buy index funds. And that will bring a return, right? If you guys, does everyone know what an index fund is here? I don't know. Okay, great.

I won't get into that. Please. Please. Not really.

Yeah, you can look it up. It's like, yeah. Yeah. I think that's really easy to look up. You could, NerdWallet will be a great place to learn about 401ks and Roth IRAs.

[29 : 06] There are Roth IRAs, traditional IRAs, all different kinds of accounts that will be able to serve your needs. But I do have questions about the ethics of investing, right?

It's kind of a tough question if you think about it. Are Christians allowed to rightly invest in the stock market? Isn't it just like gambling? I think there's a genuine question there.

Do you guys have thoughts? I mean, I obviously have. Maybe I'll just share my thoughts. Actually, one thing that I forgot to mention on this, like this general principle on the bottom. I think the younger you are, you can afford to take more risks because, you know, the market will go up and go down.

But you could ride out those bumps when you're younger. But the older and older you get, I think we should think about making moves to shift away from riskier investments and put it into safer investments so that when you actually need, come to need it and come to pull from it.

So you'll have it available, please. Yeah. Yeah. Again, for the sake of time, I'm just going to keep pressing on. I don't think scripture necessarily encourages investing.

[30 : 12] It doesn't say anything specifically about that. But Jesus does speak about investing in such a way to gain financial returns. Right. In Matthew 25, in the parable, this, I think, suggests that he does approve of wise investments.

And it certainly doesn't mean or it doesn't he doesn't have a completely negative view towards it. So I think it doesn't necessarily condone it or disapprove completely. But I think how we do it matters.

But, yeah, this question to investing versus gambling. And I think there are three differences that could be helpful to distinguish these two things. Right. Risk versus uncertainty in gambling.

Right. The house always wins. Right. If you bet long enough, you are going to pretty much lose all your money. The odds are stacked against you. Mathematically designed against you over time.

Right. But investing, I think, in broadly diversified index funds or, you know, being strategic about those things. It's based on reasoned probability over long time horizons.

[31 : 15] Right. I think it's actually using your brain and trying to be wise with how you're stewarding your money. And historically, the market has grown. Right. It has grown over every sufficiently long period.

And so I don't think you're bet you're not betting against a rigged outcome. But you're participating in long term growth in human economic activity. I think there's a difference there. Secondly, the heart.

I think there is something to be said. All right. Our motives matter, of course. I think when we gamble, when we buy lottery tickets, what is our heart posture? What are we really hoping in? It's to get rich quick. Right. We're trying to chase a windfall. But faithful long term investing is, I think, the opposite. It's patient, disciplined stewardship of what God has entrusted to you.

I think there is a way to trade, though, that does kind of feel gambly. Right. Where we are day trading when we're, you know, trading based on or highly speculative trading.

[32 : 16] I think that could take on the spirit of gambling, even when it's a stock. So I think we have to be careful of that in our hearts. And then finally, who you fund.

This is something that I'm just started to think about more and more. It's about where does my money go and what does it actually empower?

I think that's actually something I need to think more about personally. And I want to share some of the things that I'm reading and learning. But if you think about gambling, where's your money going? What are you funding?

You're funding casinos, lotteries that honestly disproportionately extract money from lower income people. I think I read something online that 80% of the money that lotteries make come from 20% of the people.

And those 20% pretty much are the poorest of the poor. And you see just how enslaved people are to the lottery. My parents ran a liquor store for 25 years.

[33 : 22] And I would work there. And we'd sell lottery tickets. And I'm not proud of this, but I'm being honest. But we, yeah, like the type of people that would come every single day to buy lottery tickets by, like, reels and reels of these lottery tickets.

It's incredibly sad. And that's, I think, what you find when you continue to buy into these things. And ultimately, it's a zero-sum game, right? There's one winner, one loser.

I think we have to be wise about where our money is going. But if we are investing, right, I think we are to think about how to use our money supporting companies, buying companies, so that we can

produce goods and services that better the world, right?

It's for the betterment of the world. And so I think there's something there, right? And I thought about this question, too, right? Like, when it comes to the example of playing poker, right?

It's easy to think about gambling as, like, slot machines. Like, oh, there's no brain in it. But with poker, maybe there's, like, some skill involved. Maybe I thought about that. Like, maybe that justifies gambling.

[34 : 29] But in actuality, I think why gambling is wrong and at the heart of it is that it's not productive work. And it gets to the idea of what is God's plan or an idea of work.

And Robert Banks, he has in his book, I think, five or six different categories of what is true godly work, right? Number one, there's redemptive work, where you work in tandem with God in his saving and reconciling actions.

So evangelists, pastors, counselors, peacemakers. But I think there are also aspects of writers, artists, producers, songwriters, poets, actors, that incorporate redemptive elements in their work. I think that's one. Creative work, God's fashioning of the physical and the human world, right? So you see that very clearly in artists, in writers. God gives human creativity.

And I think that you're exercising his domain of work when you exercise creative work. Providential work is using work or using your work to provide, sustain humanity for the rest of the world.

[35 : 37] And so you kind of see that. I think that's pretty clear. Justice work, maintaining justice. Judges, lawyers, paralegals. You see that compassionate work, God's involvement of comfort, healing, guiding, shepherding.

I think doctors, nurses, paramedics, all those kinds of people, I think they uphold compassionate work. And finally, revelatory work, God's work to enlighten the truth. Preachers, teachers, educators, journalists, scholars.

These are all good examples of what is healthy work and what we should actually make money from. But gambling doesn't do any of those things. That's, I think, the main point that I'm trying to make.

So if we are thinking about the power of money, again, I need to hurry up. But the power of money to be able to affect change in this world, I think these are different approaches to investing.

And I want to talk about the center. The second option a little bit longer is value-based funds.

Basically, faith-based funding or investing. And so this is something that's just come up.

[36 : 41] I read this book called The Good Investor. It's by Robin John. And he, along with this guy named Finny Kuruvilla, they started a company called Eventide Investment Funds.

They're actually in Boston. And these guys are incredible. They basically are a management fund, a Christian management fund, where they will choose mutual funds, or hand-picked mutual funds and stocks to put in their ETFs that are aligned with Christian values.

And so these kinds of ETFs that you see, they will naturally screen out anti-Christian values like abortion, pornography, tobacco, weapons. Not just that, but they do their homework.

There's an example in this book where they found out that in the solar industry, the Uyghur people, if you guys have heard of them, the Uyghur people in China, they were oppressed and they're forced into labor.

And they found out that 97% of all the wafers and solar panels come from them. And so all the companies that they were invested in, in the solar industry, they started asking tough questions, honest questions about where are you getting these wafers from?

[37 : 51] Where are you getting, what's your supply chain line? And they would make that decision. Okay, you know, these are unethical business practices. So we're going to pull out and we're not going to invest in you anymore.

And these guys are, these guys are solid, you know. And so I think we should really think about what we are investing in as people who are planning for retirement.

Yeah, I'm embarrassed to admit that I've given really little to no thought about where my money is going and what it's being used for. But I think we're called to invest in a way that reflects faithfulness to God, right?

It should align with God's purposes, right? Money makes the world go round. It makes things happen and it makes things stop. But when you choose to invest, we should choose investing things that actually help people, serve people, right?

There's an analogy that he has in here where we shouldn't be the mob boss's wife, right? Where, you know, we see our husband, we know he's doing sketchy things.

[38 : 52] We know he's doing illegal things, violent things. But we get to live a cush lifestyle. So, you know, I'm going to be comfortable. I'm going to be, I'm going to stay hush-hush about it. I think there's something that we need to think about where, what is our money ultimately going to, right?

So, I mean, I don't have a lot of time to talk about it, but I encourage you guys to look into this, right? It's even-tied investment. See what they're about.

They do multiple interviews on Gospel Coalition and they have a lot of people backing them up. And another exhortation, our church is fairly young.

And I know we don't have a ton of money. And it could be easy to think, like, my investments in a retirement fund is a drop of a drop for these companies. But if we really start to think as a global church how we're using our money collectively, there's a massive impact to a building snowball effect that we can have on bettering the world.

And so I think we need to think about not just retirement funds as a means to protect ourselves, but actually how to serve others and use this world, right? And in particular, you guys are very smart.

[40 : 00] Like, we're in Cambridge. You guys will go on to be the movers and shakers. You're going to have great influence. I encourage you guys to think now of creative ways of how to use your money to invest in God's mission.

Not just, maybe not just, like, blindly throw into an S&P; 500 index fund. Todd, he shared this idea of someone who is, this brilliant idea where they created basically a mutual fund where it supports missionaries that go overseas that need to go to closed countries, that they need to start businesses.

They need a cover to go to these places. So they'll start businesses. And that seed money comes from this mutual fund. And people can invest in, and they actually do get a return out of it, right? But they can invest in these things so that missionaries can have a pool of money they could tap into and start a business and be missionaries over there, which I think is so cool.

That's such an ingenious way to think about it, right? There are just so many creative ways that we can think about how to use our money, and I encourage you guys to do that. And so some diagnostic questions.

I think we should ask ourselves, can we invest in these things with a clear conscience? Am I doing this out of faith or out of fear, just wanting to get a better return?

[41 : 13] Am I still prioritizing generosity in the kingdom above financial optimization, right? The reality is that I think these faith ATS do have a lesser return. I think it's like a few points, percentage points below.

But is that really our ultimate goal, is to maximize our profits, to squeeze all of our dollars, right? But is it to actually use our money for good? The option three is individual stocks.

So yeah, if you are of that mindset where you want to use your money for the good of the world, and you don't necessarily trust Finny Kurula or these guys that you want to choose for yourself, you can totally do that.

I think that's another option. It does take a ton of time. That's why these are day traders, and these are people who have separate jobs, and they also work crazy long hours. I think you have to think about whether you actually have the time to do something like this.

It's costly in time. And honestly, you know, when you choose stocks, and not just index funds and kind of forget about it, but when you choose stocks, there's an emotional investment there, right?

[42 : 18] I've seen people get happy randomly because their stocks are doing really well. And then I meet them the next day, and they're really sad because their stocks are doing terribly, right? There is an emotional attachment to the stocks that they choose.

And is that really worth it? Is it worth it? I think we have to ask ourselves that. You're right. Not alone, even other saying, right?

There's the reality that it's really hard to beat the index consistently. Sometimes around 30% to 45% of the index beat, or people beat the index in a single year.

But 90% to 95% of active funds fail to beat the S&P; 500 over 15 years. So it's really hard to beat it, right? Is it worth it? Is it worth it?

Do you think that you're the 5% that will beat the index fund? I think we have to ask ourselves that. And then, let me do this really quickly.

[43 : 15] I throw this as an option to invest in the broad S&P; 500, because I think you can accept an indirect involvement of the fallen world.

What I'm trying to say here is that I think that moral culpability is, if we do accept that we only need to invest in value-based funds, then I think that actually, the natural implication is that we then can't shop at these companies.

We can't really shop at a lot of these companies, unless we fully understand how they're using every single one of our dollars. And I don't think that that's how we should operate as Christians. I think moral culpability isn't contagious in that way.

And again, I could talk about this a little bit more, but I think there is an option for Christians to be able to broadly invest in the index fund.

And they're not necessarily called to total separation. But I want you guys to think honestly and ask yourself, is there better uses of our money? So I'm trying to free you guys up to be able to do that, not overburdening you to do something that you don't need to do.

[44 : 25] So I'm coming up to the end. So Martin Luther, I've quoted in before, but Martin Luther talked about how mankind is like a drunk man on a horse that falls off on the right and then gets back on and falls off on the left.

So when we think about money, and we've talked about money a lot for the past three weeks, we could think about the fear of trying to get it exactly right.

Trying to stay right on the horse, right in the center, being afraid of falling off the left, falling off the right. We're afraid of falling into materialism or falling off into asceticism.

We're afraid of being antinomian, right? Being, you know, just lax and saying that there's, I could just spend my money however which way I want. Or we can fall off the other way and be legalistic and try to look at every single dollar and feel the legal obligation from God to be responsible for every dollar.

We can be recklessly spending, we can hoard, we can be self-reliant, we can presume upon God, we could be in isolation, or we can be in over-dependence on people, right?

[45 : 31] These are all different examples of how we can get it wrong. But I want you guys to have this idea, the key insight is the goal of the Christian life is not to minimize financial sin, but it's to make much of Christ.

And the way that we are going to stay centered on the horse is not by trying, just looking at ourselves and trying to stay on the horse, but it's ultimately looking to Christ and making much of Him. I think that's really a difference.

So it's not about minimizing sin, but maximizing following after God. So some practical exhortations to close. Yeah, I already talked about these, so I'll fly through these.

Make a budget. If you don't have a budget, make a budget. It's massively helpful, especially when you think about being faithful to every single dollar. It could be hard to think about, should I make this one individual purchase, right?

Every single time, asking that question every single time versus setting a budget. Hey, I have \$500 for these kinds of purchases. I think there's a very big difference in how we use our money in that way.

[46 : 39] And then we pray. We pray, pray, pray, pray, pray a lot. Present your budget to God and present your entire net worth before God, as I said, and ask Him what He would do with it. And in that, we're going to be bold at the altar.

Let me close with this last passage in 1 Timothy 6. There's so much we could talk about there.

We don't want to just be rich in money, but we want to be rich in good works. Those are the true riches. And that's ultimately how we store up for ourselves really the best foundation for life.

If you are interested in these topics, there are some books that you can read. All these will be in the church library, so you can sign these out and read for yourself.

This first book, Randy Alcorn, so challenging. This man is such a man of God. He has incredible testimony. Really briefly, he protested at Planned Parenthood abortion clinic, and he was arrested, and he was sued unjustly.

[48 : 07] He was sued for, I think, like \$4.2 million. He obviously didn't have that. He's a pastor. And so what happened was he didn't really give any money to them, but that if there was any money that he made more than minimum wage, they would take from him.

And again, from his conscience, he didn't want to give any money to people who abort babies. And so he just made minimum wage for 20 years.

And then they extended that length, and so he just made minimum wage for even longer, for 30 years or something like that. And it's incredible.

And he writes a lot of books, right? You can justify, hey, I'm making minimum wage. I don't make a lot of money. The book sales that I have, he's massively popular.

I'm going to keep for myself. He gives away \$4.2 million from book sales. That's the kind of man that he is. It's incredibly challenging. The good investor that I talked about already is if you want to think about more ethical investing, how to use your money, this is a really good example.

[49 : 11] And then finally, gospel patrons. I totally did not read this, but Steve, you can speak about this a little bit more if you have any questions. Yeah, if you like it, you should all read it. Amazing.