

## Money Matters

From the Theology of Work Bible Commentary on Hebrews

The book of Hebrews offers a deep foundation for understanding the value of work in the world. It offers practical help for overcoming evil at work, cultivating a life-giving attitude toward money, and finding faithfulness and joy in workplaces where Christ's love often seems in short supply.

The original readers of this book faced major financial pressures. Among other persecutions, some of them had their possessions plundered. They accepted this cheerfully because they knew that they “possessed something better and more lasting” (Hebrews 10:34). The letter encourages them to persevere in this attitude and to avoid the love of money.

“Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, ‘I will never leave you or forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5).

This verse promises us that we can have confidence in God's protection and provision. This doesn't guarantee, however, that we will enjoy lives of material prosperity. Jesus never promised an easy life. Our hard work may not be rewarded in this life with wealth or luxury. The point of Hebrews 13:5 is that the Lord will provide all that we need for a life founded on

faith. Plenty of faithful believers experience severe financial hardship. They suffer through faith, not for a lack of it.

Hebrews 11:35–38 reminds us of Christians who have experienced all manners of suffering, including torture, mocking, flogging, imprisonment, and destitution. The promises God made to them were fulfilled, not through earthly comforts, but through the same means God’s promises were fulfilled for his Son—through resurrection from the dead. “Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him” (Hebrews 5:8-9).

The book of Hebrews operates with a transformed economic vision, that our needs are met in the advance of God’s kingdom, rather than in our personal prosperity. Therefore, if we have nothing, we do not despair; if we have enough, we are content; and if we have much, we sacrifice it for the sake of others.

The warning against the love of money does not stem from a discovery that God’s kingdom in creation, the material world, is somehow less spiritual than God’s kingdom in heaven. It stems, rather, from the startling awareness that in a fallen world, the love of money creates an attachment to the present order that stands in the way of our working toward the transformation of the world. If money is the chief reason we take a job, start a company, run for office, join a church, choose our friends, invest our resources, spend our time, or find a mate, then we are not living by faith.