

Kingdom Economics

by Cisca Ireland-Verwoerd

We are Kingdom people. When we were saved, Jesus rescued us from the domain of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of light. This Kingdom is not a piece of land on the globe but a sphere of influence where God reigns and people live in obedience to His rule. Living the Kingdom way does not come naturally; we have to learn how to lead this new kind of life. That is why Jesus spent much of His time preaching about the kingdom of His Father, teaching with stories and illustrations as well as the example of His own life.

God's realm is totally different from the world around us. In fact, Kingdom wisdom seems foolish to the world. In God's kingdom the first shall be the last, little children are the model citizens, and people are not regarded according to their ability, income, gender, or race. We are to put the King and His kingdom business before the care of our own livelihood. This Kingdom is truly upside down.

Kingdom laws are summed up in one word: love. The air we breathe is grace, and the national characteristic is holiness. God's highest goal for His people is freedom—freedom to love Him and freedom to love each other.

With freedom the goal, Jesus had a lot to say about how Kingdom people should deal with money. He said it is impossible to love money and serve God at the same time. He warned that money can easily turn into a very powerful idol. In fact, according to Jesus, a rich person may find it almost impossible to enter the Kingdom—and compared to the days of Jesus, when most people had just enough to live on for the day, nearly all of us who read this are rich. We are told not to create for ourselves a nest egg where a crashing stock market, a runaway bank manager, or a creative bookkeeper can destroy it. Instead, we are to store up treasures in heaven. In the Kingdom, the little bit a poor person gives with joy is more valuable than the rich person's big donation given only out of duty. We are instructed to give freely to anyone who asks and to lend without asking back. Instead of collecting more "stuff," Kingdom folks share with those who have less.

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The people in the world live under a system of buying and selling. This is an exact science that keeps precise score of who owes how much to whom. The philosophy of scarcity lies behind it: there is not enough to go around, so everyone looks out for himself or herself. In contrast, the people of God's kingdom live in the gracious freedom of giving and receiving. No need to keep tally, first because God in His amazing grace has forgiven all our debts and asks that we do the same with each other; second because God has all the possessions on this earth at His disposal and there is enough for everyone; and third because we are to look after each other's interests. All we ever owe one another is love. God said He will take care of the rest, and He will.

How can we learn to live in the financial freedom that God promises? The main principle is the foundation of all Kingdom living: trust in God. Have faith that He will do as He said not just for salvation and sanctification but also for every second, inch, and dollar of life. Trust God unconditionally and single-mindedly—and then trust Him some more. Practically speaking, our instructions concerning money are simple: invest it in the Kingdom. That is, give it away generously, and share with others. These two things—trusting and giving—will ensure that money does not determine whether and how we serve God. Then we are truly free.

When we want to be serious about going deeper with God, our finances are a good place to start. Let's rediscover what Jesus meant by His kingdom stewardship principles. Step by step, the Holy Spirit will teach us how to obey, both individually and together as a local church and denomination, to the glory of God.

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