



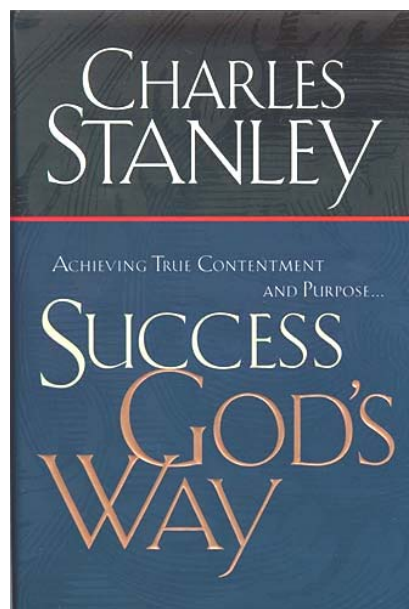
DEAN WELCH - TEACHER

CHASING THE WIND!
[WHAT ABOUT MONEY?]

WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

OCTOBER 22, 2006

FROM THE *MASTER WORKS* SERIES STUDY OF:



CHASING THE WIND!

[WHAT ABOUT MONEY?]

In today's world, how do we measure success, generally? (MONEY) Yes. Many of us have adopted the slogan I saw on a bumper sticker the other day: "He has who the most toys wins!" It seems that anxiety, pressure, ulcers, stress are as common as khaki pants and golf shirts. What is it about money. Dr. Stanley opens Chapter 7 of his book, Success God's Way, by saying that a pervasive deception in our nation today is that success equals wealth. Is that true? How about you? How do YOU feel about money? How many of us have wondered what it would be like to win a lottery or a sweepstakes? Maybe we've even felt a little envious of those huge cash prizes. (Even though we tell ourselves we would surely tithe if God let us win.)

I read an article in the newspaper recently about a couple who won \$48.6 million in a lottery several years ago. After winning, the woman said, "We had one month of good times—and three years of misery." It changed their lives. The woman said, "I'd trade it all for a normal life. It's not worth it. Health and happiness is what I want."

The woman, Lynette Nichols, is a recovering alcoholic and tranquilizer abuser. She has had three pacemaker operations since her big lottery win. Jimmy Nichols, her husband, writes, "More bad than good came out of this." Jimmy filed for divorce several months after the big win, and legal bills have topped over \$200,000 on both sides.

As we continue with Week Four of our study from Dr. Stanley's book, Success God's Way, today we ask the tough question: "What About Money?" Remember the quote made famous in the Tom Cruise movie several years ago—Show me the money. SHOW ME THE MONEY. We still laugh at that even today, but is this what your Christianity is saying? Is money the driving force for WHAT you do and HOW you do it?

How much money is needed to make you happy today? How much money would it take to make you content? 50,000.00 - 100,000.00 - 1 million - 100 million Not to long ago the Powerball was over \$200 million. People all over the country were buying tickets. What is the draw to buy a chance at becoming a millionaire? Is it so that all their wishes for a happy life would come true, but remember what your mother always said money can't buy happiness.

Then of course you always have the guy who tells you that you may not buy it, but he would like to rent it for awhile. The world tells us that if we make enough money all our troubles will be easy to take of. Maybe that is why rich people never have any trouble right? Today there are men playing baseball, football, basketball or Corp. heads that will make millions of dollars a year, yet still they are not content or happy with it.

Open your Bible to **MATTHEW 6:19-21 (NLT)** and let's start with these verse from Jesus' Himself, from the Sermon on the Mount.

¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Now skip down to **verse 24:** *²⁴"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.* In other words, Jesus says that we can't serve God and money! Now, turn to **1 Timothy 6: 10**, and let's listen to Paul's instruction to young Timothy for the church—as well as instructions for us today. *¹⁰"For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows."*

How many times have you heard someone say I don't need to be rich but I just want enough money that I do not have to worry

about anything? Then I would be content and happy. If I didn't have to work I could help people all the time. Or I just want a nice car or a house that is paid for, then that would be enough. Have you ever noticed the old saying the more you make the more you spend is pretty true most of the time. We always want more. A nice old car will get you to the church building just fine, but a new Buick would be even better, or maybe a Lexus would do. How about a BMW, or a ROYAL ROYCE?

Do you let money dictate if you will help someone? Do you qualify the poor or needy with words like "they are not that bad off I have been there and I got out of it without anybody helping. I worked hard for this money and I want to buy something for me. Let someone with more money or time can help them I am too busy right now. (**MAN AT OFFICE YESTERDAY WANTING BUS MONEY**)

Turn to **DEUT 8:17-18 (NLT)**. *¹⁷You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." ¹⁸But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.* Listen to these words from **1 SAMUEL 2:7**, *"The Lord sends poverty and wealth..."*

Are you aware that more verses of Scripture are devoted to finances and money, and our proper use of them, than there are verses about heaven? WHY is that, do you think? God knew that money was a practical matter that would require our attention on a daily basis. It's a vital part of our lives. From cover to cover, the Bible reminds us to work diligently and honestly, and that we be generous and righteous in our handling of money.

Solomon, the richest man in the world, made this observation: *⁵Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.* A "modern philosopher" said it this way: "That money talks, I'll not deny, I heard it once, it said, 'Good-bye.'" If you recall, we studied Solomon a few years ago in a Bible study from Dr. Chuck

Swindoll's book, *Living on the Ragged Edge*. If you do not remember what Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes, I urge you to sit down and re-read that book today or at least this week. He took a year off and decided to find out what real living was about and as he traveled around with wine, women and song, he kept a journal for us—it's called Ecclesiastes. You know we often hear, it takes one to know one. Well, Solomon knew about money and wealth. Listen to this.

His base annual income in gold alone was in the neighborhood of \$100 million ... not to mention his export-import trade lines and limitless "perks" that came with being king. The throne he sat on was carved ivory overlaid with beaten gold, and his furnishings literally defy exaggeration. We're talking filthy rich. The man's spread—which included parks, a zoo, a wonder-of-the-world temple, his personal residence which was more like a museum than a home, lavish resorts, and riding stables—would make the Taj Mahal look like the local bus depot. Allfuecnce personified. You and I, honestly, cannot comprehend the immensity of his wealth.

If you have the time, read **1 KINGS 10:4-8** in the Applied Bible to see how impressive he was to the Queen of Sheba, who traveled all the way to visit him personally just to see if all she'd heard was true.

Recently, I read the results of a informal survey where eighty men were asked if they were having financial problems. All eighty men answered, "Yes." One man responded with, "I don't have any problems money can't solve." How many of us have at least thought the same words?

In 1923, an important meeting was held at the Edgewater Hotel in Chicago. In attendance were eight of the world's most powerful financiers:

1. the president of the largest independent steel company
2. the president of the largest gas company
3. the greatest wheat speculator

4. the president of the New York Stock Exchange
5. a member of the president's cabinet
6. the greatest "bear" on Wall Street
7. the head of the world's greatest monopoly
8. the president of the Bank of International Settlements

By all accounts these men had ascended to the upper reaches of success. They had discovered the secrets of making money. As they left the hotel, life took them in different directions. What happened to them? Only 25 years later...

1. The president of the largest independent steel company, Charles Schwab, died bankrupt, having lived on borrowed money for the last five years before his death.
2. The president of the largest gas company, Howard Hopson, became insane.
3. The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cotton, died abroad, insolvent.
4. The president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, went to Sing-Sing Penitentiary.
5. The member of the president's cabinet, Albert Fall, was pardoned from prison so that he could die at home.
6. The greatest "bear" on Wall Street, Jesse Livermore, died a suicide.
7. The head of the world's greatest monopoly, Ivar Krueger, died a suicide.
8. The president of the Bank of International Settlements, Leon Fraser, died a suicide.

So, what does that story tell us? The same thing Dr. Stanley is telling us and exactly what Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes. Turn in your Bible to **Ecclesiastes 1:2** and listen as I read from the New Living Translation. ²*"Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "utterly meaningless!"* That's it in a nutshell! That's why the title on the board today is so appropriate—Chasing the Wind.

Turn with me to **Luke 12:13-21**. Jesus is speaking to his disciples in these verses, although thousands of people have gathered around to hear him also. Luke 12, starting in verse 13:

¹³"And someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." ¹⁴But He said to him, "Man who appointed Me a judge or arbiter over you?" ¹⁵And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." ¹⁶And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a certain rich man was very productive. ¹⁷And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' ¹⁸And he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take you ease, eat, drink and be merry." ²⁰But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' ²¹So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Notice the story unfolds as a dialogue between Jesus and a guy who feels he's getting ripped off. Look again at verse 13: *...Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me."* Now how's that for a rather practical place to begin? "The folks have died. My brother is the executor of the estate and he's taken it all, or most of it. Tell him to divide it with me." Jesus responds--not to the actual statement-- but to the motive behind it: *"Man who appointed Me a judge or arbiter over you?" And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed..."*(vv.14-15).

To illustrate how the love of money (greed) leads to a false view of life Jesus told this parable of the rich fool that we just read. "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my

barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" Do you understand the point Jesus made with the parable? Greed leads a person to have a warped view of himself. It leads to sinful self-centeredness, sinful self-reliance, and a life directed toward pleasure instead of service.

The rich fool is really saying, "I'll just plow it back into the company! Sound familiar? "I'll build it bigger. We'll just have another office. We'll just go public. We'll make this one of the largest going." The implication is clear: "... because that's going to bring satisfaction!" It doesn't right now, you understand; but he keeps hoping...he keeps enlarging...keeps feeding his ego. "Why, I've got a winner here! There's a market for it." Or the common rationalization, "This'll meet needs. My family will be happier because they'll have more things to enjoy. So naturally I'll tear down all those things and build more and more. I'll store more and more so I can enjoy (?) more and more." But then he goes a step too far:

And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to me; take you ease, eat, drink and be merry" (v.19).

"All these physical things are going to satisfy all my deep, soul-level needs, right? WRONG! Nothing physical touches the soul. Nothing external satisfies our deep needs within. Remember that! That solely belongs to God. He alone can satisfy us in that realm. If God isn't in first place, you can't handle success!

Once again, Dr. Stanley reminds us that money is just a means of keeping score and determining who is the best from the world's viewpoint—not God's. We tend to consider it the measure of success. [How many employees will leave a job they love for a job they hate because it pays more?](#) In the minds of many your salary is a reflection of how important and successful you are. To

this way of thinking Jesus says, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Greed leads to a false view of life.

Have we been influenced by this kind of thinking? Has the love of money that surrounds us corrupted our hearts? You don't have to be a movie star or a professional athlete to begin thinking that life is measured by money. Subtly Satan sifts us through the culture in which we live filling our hearts with greed. To set our thinking straight we need to hear reminders like this one from **1 John 2:15-16**, *"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world -- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does -- comes not from the Father but from the world."* **Psalm 119:37** offers this prayer, *"Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word."*

And then, back to Solomon, we have this warning from **Ecclesiastes 5:10**, *"Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income."* To counter our culture's way of thinking that money is everything, we need to regularly hear and read God's law about the importance of money and wealth and STUFF. We need to hear warnings from God's Word to be on our guard against the love of money, or greed, and to follow the words of Christ from **MATT 6:33 (KJV)** that we keep mentioning in this study: *"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."*