

***Responding to the financial crisis***  
***A bible study by Pastor Richard Schwedes***

We are not living in comfortable times, over the last few months there have been substantial changes in financial markets. Many of these changes are outside our control, and most people have been affected by these changes in one way or another.

**Think about or share:**

*How have some of the changes affected you and others?*

In this study we are going to focus on two main issues:  
What does the financial crisis mean for us?  
How do we respond as Christians?

**Where to start**

A starting point for each of us is to be clear about what it means to be a Christian.

Now the reality is this will take more than a life time to fully get our heads around who we are as Christians.

Amazingly people have a wide variety of ideas of what it means to be a Christian.  
*What do your friends and families believe being a Christian is?*

Now not all these ideas are correct, or what God says a Christian is.

Let's have a look at some basic aspects of what it means to be a Christian.

*Read the following*

John 3:15-18

John 10:25-30

Romans 3:19-31

Romans 6:19-23

Ephesians 2:1-10

Titus 3:3-8

1 John 5:11-12

*Think about and share what is God saying about:*

- *His main aim?*
- *Who we are because of Jesus?*
- *What is foundational to be a Christian?*
- *What is most important in our life?*

*Are there any other readings that influence you in your view of what it means to be a Christian, why and how do they relate to the above readings?*

*Read the following:*

Matthew 22:36-40

Mark 12:29-31

1 John 4:7-12

Luke 15:11-32

Ephesians 2:1-10

Galatians 4:1-7

*Think about and share what is God saying about:*

- *Our relationship with Him and others.*
- *Where should our focus be as we live our lives?*
- *What does this mean in relationship to money, possessions, careers, family, etc.?*
- *Is our life about being focussed on God and our relationship with Him or on other things and other goals and using God's help to obtain them?*

### **Christians and difficulties**

Throughout our life we will encounter difficulties. When we are going through difficulties they can feel like the end of the world, they may even feel so heavy that we can't go on, we feel unwanted or we feel one huge failure.

*Read the following*

Romans 8:38-39

Romans 5:1-5

Romans 8:12-17

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Philippians 3:7-11

1 Peter 4:12-19

James 5:7-12

2 Corinthians 4:1-17

*Think about and share what is God saying about:*

- *How we should view difficulties and sufferings?*
- *What the problems we experience are about?*

## **Money and our life**

Some Christians see money as only a necessary evil, which is not how God sees it. Others think that God wants all of us to have lots of money, now if this is what you think please read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and look closely at what Jesus was on about, I can't see how you can draw this conclusion. The two extreme views of hating money and loving money will cause us problems, as God's disciples who are called to bring his Good News into this world.

Money in itself is neither good nor bad. The problem is our attitude to money which can either be positive or negative as we walk with God, other Christians and other people. And this is why money is one of the most popular topics discussed by Jesus and his earlier followers.

*Read the following:*

Matthew 6:19-24

Matthew 19:16-30

Matthew 20:1-16

Hebrews 13:5-6

1 Timothy 6:6-10

2 Timothy 3:1-5

*Think and share about what God is saying:*

- *How we should view money?*
- *What is important?*
- *Where can money be dangerous?*

*Read the following*

Matthew 5:42

Matthew 18:21-35

Matthew 25:14-30

Mark 5:26

Mark 12:41-44

1 John 3:16-20

Mark 14:1-11

1 Corinthians 6:1-4

*Think and share what God is saying about:*

- *How can money be beneficial?*
- *What role money and possessions play in our lives with other believers and non Christians?*
- *How we should view money and possessions?*
- *What are some things we could be doing?*

*Read the following:*

Matthew 17:24-27

Matthew 22:15-22

*Think about and discuss the following.*

*One of our responsibilities is to pay taxes.*

*Do you grudge paying taxes? Often it is because we can't see the benefits of our taxes.*

*However there is another way to look at taxes.*

*God works through governments and other organisations to help people.*

*And the taxes we pay are not so we personally can constantly obtain benefit, but so governments can help people in need.*

*Read the following*

Proverbs 3:5-6

Proverbs 13:10

Proverbs 22:24

Proverbs 19:21

Matthew 7:24-27

Acts 5:29

Acts 16:6-10

Philippians 4:6-7

James 4:13-15

Psalms 33:10

*Think about and share what does God say about:*

- *Seeking advice*
- *Planning*
- *the role God has in our plans*

*Read the following*

Matthew 7:1-5

Ephesians 2:8-10

Matthew 5:14-16

Romans 12:8

James 1:5

1 John 5:11-12

*Think and share what God is saying about:*

- *How we should relate to others, even those who don't seem to deserve help?*

Now there is much more we can discuss about money and the current financial crisis. If you have any questions, queries or concerns feel free to email me [richard.schwedes@lca.org.au](mailto:richard.schwedes@lca.org.au) or talk to your Pastor.

Also think about how this current situation maybe an opportunity to share God's love and His Good News through your life and the life of your congregation.

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Thankyou for taking the time, to further be equipped as one of God's disciples.