



Theme: Investing in Life **"Meaningful Investing"**

 You also can get these Meditation Moments each day directly on your phone. Just text "**med moments**" to **970-426-0700** to receive the **daily Meditation Moment** each morning and start your day grounded in faith and peace.

Weekly Memory Verse:

6 Remember this — a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. – 2 Corinthians 9:6

Meditation Moments for Monday, October 20 – Read **Deuteronomy 8:10-18.**

Deuteronomy, set just before Israel entered the Promised Land, warned about how humans tend to view prosperity. We're tempted to believe that everything we have or achieve came solely from us – our hard work and innate talent. But when Israel forgot that "the LORD your God" is the ultimate source of human talent and energy in verse 18, the result is spiritual and then military failures followed. Not just Israel, but all of us, need to "remember the LORD your God!"

 "Bless the LORD your God in the wonderful land that he's given you," said the text. Yet the Promised Land didn't fall magically from the heavens. In the same way that Summit's vital ministries don't "just happen" without any human effort. How can you keep a healthy balance, praising God while thanking God for giving you a responsible part to play in doing God's work?

 Deuteronomy looked forward based on God's actions in the past. In the desert, God gave Israel manna for food in Exodus 16:13-21, water from a rock in Exodus 17:1-7, and everything else they had to have to reach Canaan. In what ways has God provided for your needs? It will be helpful to reflect on the difference between "needs" and "wants." For example, the Lord's Prayer asked for "our daily bread," not "our daily luxurious 5-course meal."

Prayer: *Creator God, let my giving grow from my inner recognition of your creating and sustaining power in my life. Thank you for life, for strength and for talents. Amen.*

Tuesday, October 21 – Read **Proverbs 11:24-28, 22:9 and 16**. Proverbs gave varied views on money, which take some work to find. Words like wealth, wealthy, riches and rich, show up around 50 times in the book of Proverbs. The words poor and poverty occur approximately the same amount. We can't just pick one or two favorite proverbs. It's good to remember that a single proverb doesn't fit in every circumstance. According to the book of Proverbs, neither poverty nor wealth is given high status in God's eyes, except as they are connected to the pursuit of wisdom.

 In Proverbs 11:25 read, "The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed." Some read this line that the generous person will be rewarded with wealth. Does life always work that way, money-wise, for generous people? It might be helpful to think of this like a river that stays fresh if the water runs, as opposed to a pond where water stagnates. When you give generously of yourself (your time, means, love, spiritual gifts), what non-financial rewards have you received? How have you been, "refreshed" when giving to others?

 The Contemporary English Version of Proverbs 22:16 is possibly one of the best translations of this text. "Cheat the poor to make profit or give gifts to the rich – either way you lose." Given that it often seems to pay off financially, what kind of poverty or loss do you think the Israelite sages were saying resulted from kowtowing to the wealthy?

Prayer: *Lord God, you care about my money, not so much because of what it says about my bank account as because of what it says about my heart. Keep my heart growing more generous. Amen.*

Wednesday, October 22 – Read **Genesis 28:20-22 and Malachi 3:10**. God met tired, scared Jacob in a dream, and Jacob, like his ancestor Abram in Genesis 14:18-20, pledged to return 10% of everything he gained to God. The prophet Malachi urged later Israelites to use the same guideline. Figuring a tenth was different in Genesis' and Malachi's more cash-free times. But returning 10% of what God gives us is still a wise Biblical guide for how to respond to God and keep life in perspective. Many Christ-followers make it a spiritual practice to give 10% of their increase to their local church.

 Do you calculate what you give to your local church as a percentage of your increase, not just what's handy in your purse or wallet, with 10% as a baseline goal? If yes, great. Reflect on why you choose your tithing practice. If not, what percentage of your income can you begin to give to the congregation that nurtures your relationship with God? If you give, can you increase the percentage? What could you do differently, if necessary, to build towards this practice?

 In 1897, Johnson Oatman wrote a hymn whose chorus said, "Count your blessings, name them one by one; Count your blessings, see what God hath done." What are some meaningful blessings in your life? Even if we are going

through something tough in life, most of us can find one or two things that have blessed us. After you count the blessings one by one, write them down. Put the list where you can see it and maybe add to it daily. Offer God your thanks.

Prayer: *O God, it's easy for me to thank and praise you for the obvious blessings I enjoy. Give me the vision to value what one writer called the blessings brilliantly disguised as problems or challenges. Amen.*

Thursday, October 23 – Read **Luke 12:13-21 and 32-34**. Jesus used this parable to get his listeners, which includes us today, to think about how far ahead our saving plans reach. For the rich man storing his large crop, the sad answer was, “Not nearly far enough.” That was why Jesus included the startling statement that, “one’s life isn’t determined by one’s possessions.” Yes, age changes our working life and may end it—but God’s reality goes well beyond that. This life, and whatever material goods we enjoy in it, will end. Only God offers eternity.

 A man asked Jesus to tell his brother to give him a bigger share of an inheritance. But Jesus spoke sadly of, “those who hoard things for themselves and aren’t rich toward God.” His wry story said what we work, and sometimes fight, so hard for does us no good when we die. Has your desire for material goods ever blotted out relational or spiritual concerns? What helps you make sensible provisions for material needs without letting the stuff you think you “own” end up “owning” you?

 When Jesus called his followers a “little flock,” they were. That was no reason to fear. God generously “delights” in giving those who follow the gift of God’s kingdom. In Matthew 6:27, Jesus added that worry doesn’t help. Have you ever spent time and energy worrying about things that never happened, as it turned out? How does worry differ from wise foresight or planning? Instead of worrying, what are more practical ways to meet life’s tasks?

Prayer: *Loving God, in fall foliage or spring flowers, every morning and every evening, you delight in giving to me. Keep my generosity growing, even though it will never match the scale of yours. Amen.*

Friday, October 24 – Read **Matthew 19:16-26**. Jesus called a rich young man to reset his priorities. He couldn’t do it. He went away disappointed. He seemed to want to follow Jesus, but he didn’t do it because he wanted all his earthly possessions even more. Like many of us, Jesus’ disciples thought earthly riches always meant God had blessed the owner. Jesus shocked them when he said, “It will be very hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.” Very hard, but not impossible as, “All things are possible for God,” according to verse 26.

 This story poses a question many of us would rather not wrestle with: “Are any of my possessions so precious to me that, if I had to, I’d choose them over Jesus?” But bravely facing that question can set you free! How will you strengthen your trust in God, and let God guide you in accurately valuing God’s gift of eternal life, and faithfully using your earthly possessions for God’s purposes?



God did NOT tell many affluent Bible characters, such as Abraham in the Old Testament, or Lydia the seller of royal purple cloth in the New Testament in Acts 16:11-15, to sell all they had. What do you believe was the heart issue Jesus knew the wealthy young man needed to address? What was the central obstacle that kept him from responding to Jesus' call?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you offer me heaven's riches. Give me a heart that can accurately assess the treasure of your kingdom, and value it properly against all other claims. Amen.*

Saturday, October 25 – Read **2 Corinthians 8:1-15 and 9:1-15**. Due to persecution, and probably local conditions like drought, Christians in Jerusalem faced severe poverty. Paul had invited the Christians in the cities of Greece to give to an offering he would deliver to the Jerusalem Christians, as he writes about in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and Romans 15:25-26. Clearly the specific “work of grace” Paul urged the Corinthian Christians to “be the best in” was generous giving to the offering for Christians in Jerusalem. Paul ultimately focused on Jesus, who gave us a transcendent model of self-giving to bless others. He reported that believers in other places found it a “privilege” to join in giving. He was confident the Corinthians would feel the same way.



Few of Paul's readers could just take their offerings from “petty cash.” While the financial position of some who lived in Corinth seems to have been relatively more secure than that of the believers in Jerusalem, we do know that more than 90% of the general population of the Roman Empire lived at, near, or below subsistence level. Paul saw having more than others as a reason to share, not as a cause for hoarding. Whatever your situation, do you see giving as a privilege that moves you to be as generous as possible?



Scholar William Barclay wrote in his commentary on Corinthians that, “The New Testament is extremely practical...It never forgets that something new and wonderful enters the life of the [person] who accepts God's command as his law. But the rewards the New Testament envisages are...not the wealth of things, but the wealth of the heart and the spirit.” When has being generous enriched your heart and spirit?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you gave yourself to change me for the better. I want that change to include counting it a privilege to join in giving for others, echoing your work of grace. Amen.*