



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

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**Proverbs 13:22** *“A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, and the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.”*

The inheritance. Everyone would love to have that rich uncle who just happened to leave his estate with you. To have been born in the family of the Rockefeller’s, the Kennedy’s, or today, Bill Gates’ family, can bring dreams of selfish spending on fleets of cars, and homes in different cities and shopping sprees to foreign destinations. Oh, the fun, we may think. Be careful. Don’t forget Ecclesiastes and the vanity of vanities, and the striving after the wind

Instead of talking about the receiving end of the inheritance, we need to devote some attention to the giving end of the inheritance. That’s how this verse is directed. Before the younger generation among us shouts a hearty “AMEN,” they need to be thinking about what they will leave to others. Children’s children are simply grandchildren in our words today. I’m getting several lately. Three now and rumors of more to come. Love the grandkids. Their cute faces and innocent ways can melt any heart.

Now some thoughts about money. Some are uncomfortable with this subject. Maybe it’s because they need help. Others do not feel that it belongs in a discussion at church. How wrong they are. Jesus talked more about money than He did Heaven. Have you noticed how much Luke alone deals with money: the rich ruler, the story of the good Samaritan, Zaccheus is called very rich, the farmer who wanted to tear down barns and build larger ones, the rich man and Lazarus, the prodigal son. Money issues are important. They are important to God. Families that live paycheck to paycheck are putting themselves on the brink of disaster. Far too many have a massive hole dug called debt. They begin to wonder if they will ever get out of that hole. Joseph prepared Egypt for coming disaster. During good years they stored up so when lean years came, they not only survived, but they helped others. Many only spend more in the good years and panic when the lean years come. Too many view the church has the solution to their problems when many of their problems were caused by poor management not famines. The current stats about personal debt and personal saving is scary. There is a huge waterfall that many are facing but they do not realize it. They will have to hope that their children’s children will bail them out of the messes they created.

These current trends reveal that many are not good stewards. This is more than not good, it’s not Biblical. God expects and wants us to be good stewards. More than that, we are showing that we are not in the position to help others. The story of the good Samaritan wouldn’t work today because the Samaritan would be maxed out on his credit cards and he couldn’t help out. We are crippling the good we can do because we don’t have any money. We are also showing that we haven’t learned contentment. Paul told the Philippians that he learned the secret. Most haven’t gotten that yet

Money problems strain marriages. Those problems keep us up at night. We become filled with worry because we don't know what we are going to do. The way things are, most hope to work until they are 80. What if you can't? What if they don't want you? What then? In too many homes, husband and wife are not on the same page and too often one doesn't know what the other is doing financially. It's a real mess.

I hope I have painted a dark picture for you. This is what is going on today. This is happening among God's people. Bankruptcy isn't a solution. It's running from your obligations. When you use a credit card, you are promising to pay that back. If you don't have that intention, you are living dishonestly. You are lying. Leaving something for our children's children...are you kidding? Most have nothing to leave. Period!

Congregations need to teach Biblical principles about money. This is a spiritual issue. We've had our heads stuck in the sand for far too long. It's time to be honest, open and Biblical.

Three principles to consider:

**1. Make money without neglecting your soul.** Money buys a house, but not a home. Money will buy a fine dog, but only love will make him wag his tail. Money isn't everything. Jesus said, "What does it profit if a man gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?" What good is it? There are no U-haul's pulled by the hearse. How much will you leave? Everything. All of it. If we spend all of our time making money, but it causes us to lose our soul, it has been a poor endeavor. Tell your boss when you are interviewing for a job that you want Sunday's off. Missing worship for very long affects your soul. Before long, you'll get used to it. Then, you'll like it. Then, you'll think that you don't need it. Your faith will starve and your choices will hit bottom. It's ok to make money, but feed your soul. And do that often.

**2. Save money without ignoring others, especially the kingdom of God.** Don't horde, nor become a miser or tightwad. God is generous. Be that way. Be helpful to others. Save. Have a plan. Stick to it. Work that plan. Don't count on others to be your retirement. You save. Invest. Get smart with money. Don't waste it. Help the young preacher. Be there for others.

**3. Spend money without it defining your life.** Don't think you are a big shot because you live in a big house or drive a nice car. Remember that you are a sinner that needs Jesus. We all are. Side by side in the cemetery lie the rich guy and the poor guy. In life so different, in death, the same. It's ok to have nice things if you can afford them. You should not have to apologize to others, especially brethren, especially preachers, that you bought a new outfit, a new car, or took a nice trip. We ought to be thankful that you can do that. Don't be jealous when others do and you can't. Don't feel less of a person or a Christians because they do and you don't. Our lives are not defined by what we have but who has us—Jesus.

A side point here. Often, Christians will use another Christian to have some work done. They often expect a "discount" because we are Christians. If he wants to give you a discount that's his business, but don't expect, nor ask for it. That's tacky and trashy. I'd rather give a Christian more because I know he won't misuse the money.

Giving to my children's children. I want to do that. It must be more than a dream. There has to be a plan that gets a person from point A to point B. Without that plan, this becomes nothing more than wishful thinking.

Money—what an important topic. May God bless you to use it wisely. May it not become the very item that keeps you from Heaven.

Roger Shouse

