

The Truth About  
**MONEY**  
**LIES**

RUSS CROSSON  
WITH KELLY TALAMO



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## TRUTH DEFINED

 Before we look at some of the common lies about money and how they impact our lives, it's critical that we unpack the concept of truth.

*What is truth?* Truth is that which is fact, a reality that's certain, genuine, correct, and immovable. It's honest, solid, and never artificial. It never changes. It is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

*Where does truth come from?* This is where it gets interesting. At first glance there appear to be hundreds, if not thousands, of "truth sources" to choose from. But in reality there are only two that we can look to: the world and God's Word, the Bible. Both will shape our thinking. One will conform us to a system where we'll think and act like everyone else. The other will renew our minds and empower us to think and act like children of God.

The cold, chilling truth is that when it comes to our money, many of us choose to get our truth (facts and reality) from the world. And that shouldn't surprise us. After all, we're inundated by the world's way of thinking through a constant media bombardment, including Twitter, iPhones, iPads, laptops, magazines, news shows, and

500-plus cable channels on every topic imaginable. Media sound bites, regardless of their source, accuracy, or validity end up defining reality for us. Often we don't even take time to check out the source of a media "fact." Is it reliable? Is it accurate? Have I checked this against any other source? As more and more of our "facts" come from media, is it any wonder that our framework for thinking is being influenced by the world? And this is especially true about money issues.

What do media voices tell us about money? That we only go around once so take on debt and buy whatever you want. Live your life with the gusto you deserve. The world says work is bad (TGIF), so hurry up and earn a bundle so you can quit working, retire, and enjoy life. The world says taxes are a problem and budgets are restrictive. We're bombarded with the "fact" that it's okay to overspend because we can always pay off debt with cheaper dollars later. Keep money close to the vest and never talk about it. Make sure we leave our children a big pile of money so they don't have to go through what we went through. On top of all of this, we're never encouraged to give our money away to good causes. Instead we're told that our next purchase will bring us happiness.

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Truth-based decisions ultimately  
produce the best results.

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It's our contention, however, that in order to experience absolute freedom, especially in the area of money, it's imperative that we get our truth from God's Word. Jesus said to God, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17). The apostle Paul told us that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). And David put it all so well when he told the Lord, "The sum of Your word is truth" (Psalm 119:160). If we take the

Word of God and add it all up, it amounts to absolute truth! In light of that, wouldn't it be wise for us to get our facts and reality about life from the God of the universe? From the One who cannot tell a lie and who offers us the truth to live by through His Word?

We all have a system of beliefs (a "truth system," if you will) that affects every decision we make. That truth system is either built on what comes from the world or what comes from God's Word. There's no middle ground. And what we believe will always play out in the way we live. Let us illustrate.

The world has little or no fear of being in debt. For decades the world has told us that the way to get ahead is to borrow. In other words, use other people's money to get what we want. But the Bible (truth from God's Word) flatly contradicts that. It says the borrower becomes the lender's (the master's) slave. As long as we're able to make our payments, everything seems fine because the master is quiet. But the truth is that we're really in bondage. And the moment we can't pay, the master calls in his chips. With the present rash of mortgage foreclosures and the increase in personal bankruptcies, we're seeing the impact of the bondage of debt as tens of thousands of families feel the exacting hand of their debt masters.

I (Russ) have been in the financial business 30 years, and I've noticed an interesting shift. It used to be when people were asked if they had debt they would say, "No—except, of course, my home mortgage." Now they say "no" even while having multiple mortgages, auto loans, and typically owe on a credit card or two. *How can that be?* Did the definition of debt suddenly change? No, but *perception* has changed. We have regressed so far in our thinking that we no longer call "debt" debt!

The world says, "Everybody has a home mortgage so that's not really debt. Everybody has a car loan so that's not really debt. We

can make the payments so we're okay." But our interpretation of debt doesn't change the facts. We, the borrowers, are still slaves to the lenders.

We know intuitively that truth-based decisions ultimately produce the best results. But truth-based decisions often appear to be "no fun" in light of many competing alternatives. And who wants that? Who wants to take the fun out of life? I would really enjoy a (new car, new computer, new boat, vacation, bigger house) now, so why not get it right now? The answer is "Don't do it." Why? Because *decisions based on truth will ultimately allow us to experience peace of mind and abundant life*: Jesus said, "I came that [you] may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Few of us would place more value on "fun" than on "peace of mind," but we make our decisions quite to the contrary. We make some of our decisions based on flat-out lies, even when deep down in our hearts we know better. And this is especially true in the area of finances.

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We are free to accept or reject the truth. We are just not free from the consequences.

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It's no accident that the New Testament focuses so much on financial matters. Believing a worldly lie about money clouds our minds to the truths in God's Word. It takes our focus from our eternal God and places it on temporal things. And it shifts our affections from the God who loves us to that which has no lasting value.

There's one more problem with financial lies. Financial lies can take a long time to recover from. We can get into debt overnight, but it will take years to get out of it. One swipe of a credit card can be a five-year setback, and one bad investment can take a lifetime



to right. The first half of John 10:10 describes Satan's true role in preventing abundant life: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." Have any lies in the financial area of your life destroyed any abundance in the life you now live? Of course they have. That's their purpose. That's what they do.

When it comes to learning the truth and avoiding lies about money, it's wise that we prepare for battle. We're up against some very formidable opposition. First John 2:16 says, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world." In addition to the world, our very own flesh is working against us. This is why it's so important to understand the truth from God's Word. Only *His truth* will set us free.

Feeling overwhelmed? Don't be. That same Word full of truth tells us, "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). God has made it clear that for every lie that ensnares us, there's a corresponding truth to set us free. God has made His Word clear and simple! So, in keeping with our lie/truth theme:

**THE LIE:** "There are unlimited uses of money."

**THE TRUTH:** "At the end of the day, anything you do with your money will fit into one of five categories."

I know you're probably thinking that's crazy. There's got to be a lot more than that, right? No. Every credit card swipe, every check, every use of cash, every dollar that flows from your hands will fall into one of these five categories:

- Living or lifestyle expenses
- Charitable giving
- Income taxes

- Debt repayment
- Savings or investments

And guess what? The great deceiver produces lies for each of these categories! And if he decided to take a vacation, the lies wouldn't disappear. We're perfectly capable of making them up ourselves. In fact, as long as we're breathing, we can lie to ourselves about how we use our money.

Over the next several chapters we'll unpack the most pervasive lies in those five areas. Our format is simple. We'll tell a story, identify the lie, and then state the truth from God's Word. Your application of God's truth is what will set you free.

So how about it? Are you ready for the truth about money lies? Remember, you are free to accept or reject the truth. You are not free from the consequences if you choose to reject truth. Choose wisely and freedom awaits!