

## The Big Financial Plan

(a true story)

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He's not with us now. He died several years ago. He was, by all counts, a self-made multi-millionaire. He was not a manufacturer, or a technological mover and shaker. He bought and sold businesses. Big businesses. And he was a Christian, and gave liberally to his church and community projects. He was by any measure a genius in his field. But, when he died at 68 years and 19 days, he was headed to bankruptcy.

For my part, I'm neither a prophet nor a discerner of the mysteries of life. Still, my guess is that this man brought about something of his own demise; because, you see, he had a plan—a Big Financial Plan—that somehow never got off of the ground. I remember like yesterday when he first shared it with me.

"In my business," he told me, "there is the potential for making a lot of money. I've been thinking about this, and my calculations are that when I get to 100 percent of a certain amount, I can give to the LORD's work 60 percent of the total, and use the other 40 percent as foundation for starting over. This could replicate into huge sums for the spread of the Gospel." To me, this seemed an infallible scheme that could only accrue to the Glory of God.

The years passed and my friend continued to grow wealthy. He owned exquisite automobiles, and bought some for others. He lived in a huge house with a tennis court and swimming pool. Our paths crossed somewhat infrequently, but always pleasantly. His name seemed to be everywhere. And all this time, he continued to give liberally to spiritual enterprises.

Then one day we met spontaneously, and he said to me, "Do you remember that plan I had about making enough money to reach a goal that would enable me to give 60 percent to the LORD's work?"

"I sure do," I replied.

"Well," he said, "I think I'm there!" But, as I excitedly rejoiced over his having achieved such a milestone, he interrupted my joy by saying, "--but, you know, if I were to use *all* of this money as a foundation for another project, I would have *even more* to give than I have now." I knew in that very moment that he had been bitten by the materialistic bug. And sadly, the project never reached his original goal. Why on Earth would he say that? Because as his financial watchdog once said, "There's never enough."

*Then 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."*

--Luke 12:15