

Is it Right for a Christian to Receive Money from Someone Involved in Illegal Activities?

This is a serious and relevant question in today's world, especially for believers in ministry, church leadership, or even just in everyday Christian living. Can a Christian accept money from someone whose income is derived from illegal activities like drug trafficking, robbery, or fraud?

Biblically answer is no.

1. Participation in Sin by Association

Accepting money from someone involved in sinful or illegal work makes you a participant, even if indirectly. The Bible is clear that believers are called to be holy and separate from wickedness:

Ephesians 5:11

"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."

When a believer receives money from an unlawful source, they are no longer exposing evil—they're benefiting from it.

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2. You Can't Separate the Fruit from the Tree

You cannot claim to disapprove of someone's sinful lifestyle and at the same time receive the benefits of that lifestyle. Jesus used the imagery of trees and fruit to show that what comes from a corrupt source is also corrupt:

Luke 6:43-44

"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit."

If the "tree" (the person's source of income) is bad, then the "fruit" (the money they earn) is also bad. You can't accept one without endorsing the other.

3. God Rejects Sacrifices from the Wicked

Scripture makes it clear that God is not interested in offerings or sacrifices that come from unclean hands. No matter how big the amount, if it's gained through evil, God detests it.

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Proverbs 15:8

“The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.”

Proverbs 21:27

“The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable—how much more so when brought with evil intent!”

Deuteronomy 23:18

“You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of the Lord your God to pay any vow, because the Lord your God detests them both.”

This shows that God is not only concerned with the act of giving but also with the source and the heart behind the giving.

4. Repentance Comes Before Giving

If someone involved in illegal work wants to support the church or

give to a believer, the right step is to first repent—to turn away from that lifestyle and receive Christ fully.

Only after their heart and life have changed can their resources be considered clean. As Jesus said, when the tree is made good, the fruit will also be good.

2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

This means their source of income should reflect their new life in Christ. Honesty, integrity, and righteousness are marks of a true believer.

5. Spiritual Consequences of Accepting Unclean Money

Many people who accept money from criminal or sinful sources often find that it brings more harm than good. That’s because the money comes not only with physical value but also with spiritual baggage—often tied to greed, deceit, oppression, and even demonic influence.

1 Timothy 6:10

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

This verse doesn't just speak of the love of money—it highlights how chasing or benefiting from unrighteous wealth can lead people into spiritual ruin.

As Christians, we are called to live in holiness—not just in our words and actions, but also in the sources of our resources. Whether you are in ministry or not, it is never right to accept money earned through illegal or sinful means. That includes tithes, offerings, or donations.

Instead, call the giver to repentance and encourage them to seek lawful, honest work that reflects their new identity in Christ. Only then will their giving be a blessing, both to them and to others.

May the Lord give us discernment and integrity in all areas of life—including the money we receive.

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Come, Lord Jesus!

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