

c. Why have I made so much money and I have so little saved?

d. Why are we always fighting over money?

→ **Attend FPU this fall.** Statistics and quotes from the class earlier this year:

- We cut up 16 credit cards!
- We avoided \$4,779,000 in new debt that was offered to us.
- We saved \$37,150 in 13 weeks!
- ***People paid off \$55,100 in debt (mostly credit cards!)***
- "It has taught me to pay attention to where my money goes. I no longer am nickle and diming myself further into debt."
- "It helped me realize it is possible to get to a place of not having to use credit cards to pay for basic expenses."
- "Hope! It simply restored hope! A total paradigm shift in the thought process toward money, life and giving."

2. **Are you tithing?** – the Bible is clear that God asks all of us to give back to Him a tithe (or 10%) of our financial increase.

- a. A tithe isn't because God needs your money; God knows our hearts are tied to our treasure, and the tithe is a way we pass the test Jesus spoke about. It's a way of us acknowledging each month that God is our lord, we serve Him first and not our money.
- b. The Bible is also clear that a blessing is associated with us giving back to God the first part of what He's given us on earth. Proverbs 3:9-10:

Honor the LORD with your wealth,
with the first fruits of all your crops;
then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with new wine.

→ **3 Month Tithing Challenge**

- a. Tithing is not something you do once you can afford it, It's a decision... you either trust God with your finances or you don't... there is no middle ground.

3. **Do you view your stuff as a tool?** –

- a. Do you have the perspective that everything you own, all the stuff you've been given and trusted with is something temporary that has the potential to have eternal significance?

→ This week, get together with your spouse (if you're married) or by yourself (if you're single) pray and ask God these questions:

- A. "How can I use what I have to impact God's kingdom?"
- B. "What of the things we have cannot be used as a tool for eternal significance? What should I do with these?"

- It's a test because God wants to see the condition of your heart (loving one another, not lying, not cheating, being faithful to your spouse, are all important and are ways God has called us to live out life) but those alone and not giving God control of your stuff is not enough because your stuff, your possessions, your money is a matter of the heart

13 *No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."*

- **(3) Our money is an identifier of our life, trademark showing who we belong to. It's like a brand.**

Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

- Money leads → your heart follows. Ex. Buying stock in GM
- \$\$ is a test that shows us who we serve first, Is God first in our life? Or is money first in our life?
- How you manager your money shows "Who do you belong to?" "What value system do you follow?" "How do you set your priorities?"

14 *The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.*

- They were uncomfortable by what Jesus was saying. Perhaps like some of you who are uncomfortable sitting here listening to this.
- If you're thinking "I won't have any fun this way!" "What about the stuff I want?" "I can't do this because..." "I won't do this because..."

Illustration: Becoming a parent... telling a boy about girls... before and after.

Interview: Danny & Amanda

- No generous person I've ever met that lives the lifestyle Jesus is talking about here has ever told me they regret it. They discover the great amount of Peace, Joy, Sense of Contentment.
- Living this way is also good for you financially. No one has ever gone broke following God's principles of finances. → People consume their way into financial ruin, people don't think generously into financial ruin.

Next Steps – Ways to Respond

1. **Lost with your finances?** – don't know God's principles in this area, feel out of control. If you ask questions like:
 - a. Where did it all go? How did I get into this much debt?
 - b. Why do I constantly feel so much financial pressure, regardless of how much money I make?

- Another ?? **“What of our stuff we have now cannot be used as a tool to impact God’s kingdom? What if we sold it and got something that can be used for God’s kingdom?”**
- Jesus perspective: “You have a little bit of time and a little bit of opportunity, use it to make an eternal difference.”

-----optional start-----

Matthew 6:19-20 *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.*”

- Examples at LC:
 - Family holding a VBS for the neighborhood kids in their garage and basement
 - Couple using their \$ resources to buy video equipment
 - People using their cars to transport people to the Joyce Meyer conference
 - Group of individuals that gave up their evenings for an entire week to reach out to inner city kids from the Boys and Girls Club @ our LifeKids summer camp
 - 4 families that used their homes to host Ugandan orphans for several nights
 - 25 individuals taking one week of their vacation time and money to travel to another country to share God’s love and Jesus Christ
 - Couple giving money to help a family that is going through financial difficult times

-----optional end-----

- What would it look like if you went home and asked, “How can I use ... my house... my car... my apartment... my boat... my money... “ to have an eternal significance?

10-12 *“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly [temporary] wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?”*

- **(2) How we manage our resources is a test of our trustworthiness and commitment to God**
- God is looking for people that are trustworthy with: “a little” “their possessions” “their wealth” “that which doesn’t even belong to them”

Illustration: Man who leaves home and pays 3 guys \$10,000 a month each and asks them to send \$1,000 to his wife

- **God watches how you use your little bit of temporary stuff that is not even yours → determines how He will bless you, the responsibility He gives you, the role He has you play and the treasures you have in heaven (not a salvation issue)**

- Manager asks, “How can I use my **limited amount of time** and **limited amount of opportunity** to **provide for my future?**”

5-7 *“So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?’*

" 'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied.

"The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.'

"Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?’

" 'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied.

"He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.' “

- I’m sure the individuals are very appreciative – now owe the manager, in debt to him
- Manager is using his time and opportunity while he still has authority to make these deals
- Manager appears to be the bad guy – wasting even more of his master’s resources

8a *“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly.”*

- The manager took advantage of his time and opportunity to ensure he has something in the future
- Jesus’ point not clear – is He telling people to be dishonest like the manager? Who are they in the story? ... Jesus explains the parable.

8b *For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light*

- People of this world = wysiwyg, this is all there is, those that don’t think about what happens after death, those that don’t expect there to be a heaven
- People of the light = those that know the truth, us, people who believe in God, those that think about eternity and what happens after we die

9 *I tell you, use worldly [temporary] wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.*

- **(1) God sees all of your stuff as a tool that can be used for God, a tool that has eternal significance → temporary stuff has an eternal consequence**

Illustration: Video from Schindler’s List

- What would happen if the next money conversation you had at home was, **“How could we use more of our stuff to have a kingdom impact?”** (very different than the typical \$\$ conversation that results in fights, disagreements, or conflict)

8/24/08 – The Generous Life

Last week we talked about serving vs. being a servant. We learned that the revolutionary call Christ gives us is not a call just to volunteer or serve occasionally, but it is a lifestyle of using what God's given us to serve others. As Courtney and I did the studies each day this week, we examined our own lives and ways that we can live out the lifestyle of a servant that God has called us to. We wrestled with evaluating how we've been using our time, how we make our decisions, how we set our priorities and how we're using our resources.

To be revolutionary we must make good use of what God has given us. Jesus was always purposeful with His time and the opportunities He had. Today we're specifically going to look at God's perspective on our possessions and money.

There are more than 500 verses in the Bible concerning prayer and nearly 500 verses concerning faith, but more than 2,000 verses on the subject of money and possessions. Jesus talked about money in 16 of his 38 parables. Clearly, from the Bible's perspective, to answer Christ's revolutionary call we must understand God's perspective on money and possessions. **There's a connection between our faith and finances. We may try to divorce the two, but God sees them as inseparable.**

I know some of you get uneasy when you hear money talked about in church, and some of you have already decided to tune out the rest of this service. Some of you think that God's perspective is "God wants all your money." No that's not true... if He wanted it He would just take it. Some of you think the church wants all your money... no, not true either. The local church is God's bride on the earth, we depend on God for provision and moving us forward not asking, or manipulating, or begging people for money.

It's important you understand God's perspective on your money and possessions because it directly impacts YOU. No one has ever gone broke following God's principles in the area of money. God has a better financial plan for our lives than any of us or your financial advisor could ever create on their own. **Today is not about what we want FROM you, it's about what we want FOR you.**

There is tremendous peace, joy, contentment and blessing that goes along with handling money God's way. We want you to experience these in your life.

Luke 16 – Parable of the Shrewd Manager

1-2 *"Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'"*

3-4 *"The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg— I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'"*