Marriage Enrichment



Lesson Topic: Finances and Stewardship

Week One Homework

Understanding what Scripture has to say to us as believers about our finances and money is very important. There are over 2,350 verses devoted to the topic of money (two times as many as faith and prayer combined!). In fact, about 15% of Jesus’ recorded words are related to this subject. Billy Graham has said “If a person gets his attitude toward money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area in his life.”

If you are to have a proper relationship to money, you must first understand its intended purpose as a tool given to us by God to allow us to exchange goods and services and to further the mission of the church. Money itself is morally “neutral”, but how and where you spend your money is an indicator of what you value and the status of your heart towards God. It has the potential to be used for good or it can become an instrument of power, worship, deceit and destruction.

**Scripture Memory Verse**:

“The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,” Psalm 24:1

**In the Word Together**

Read and discuss the following verses with your spouse:

1. What does 1 Chronicles 29:11-12 tell you about how you are to view your time, talents (abilities and spiritual gifts) and treasure (money and possessions)?

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1. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-8: What kind of attitude are you to cultivate about your money and possessions?

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You learned in Large Group that all that you have has been provided by the Lord. Therefore, you should strive to have heart of gratitude and that choice to be grateful leads to contentment. “Gratitude is the attitude that sets the altitude for living.” You are called to worship the Provider, not the provision. In what ways do you struggle to be content with what the Lord has given you? As you think about your “wants” versus your “needs”, how can you honor the Lord as a married couple by practicing contentment with what you have and setting realistic expectations?

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1. Jesus gives some insight about how you are to view your money as you potentially increase your wealth throughout your life. Read Luke 12:15-21, 34: How are we to view our wealth and use the wealth that the Lord provides for us?

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1. God has a very different view than the world regarding riches. Read I Timothy 6:9 –11, 17-19. Do you think that these verses are implying that Christians should not pursue wealth? In what ways can those that are not wealthy have the “love of money” described in verse 10? What are some specific examples of how the “love of money” can be dangerous to us as believers today (whether we are wealthy or not)?

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**Talk About It Together:**

Discuss the following questions with your spouse and write down your shared responses. Please remember that transparency and openness in your marriage is developed by creating and being a safe place for your spouse to express his/her thoughts.

1. What was modeled for you by your parents in your home growing up in regards to finances? Were any of these ways that your parents handled their finances patterns that you learned and brought into your marriage (these may be good and/or bad patterns)?

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1. Is there a couple that you really admire as far as how they handle their finances? What do they specifically do well together in regards to their finances that you would like to emulate?

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1. Are you generally on the same page with your spouse in regards to your finances? In what ways have you successfully brought your two different backgrounds and views on finances together as a couple to have the same views and goals?

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1. In what ways do you have different views and goals in regards to your finances? Is one of you more of saver or spender than the other or are you about the same? If your finances are a source of unresolved conflict, consider seeking wise godly counsel from someone (such as your mentor couple) to help you work this through with your spouse to have “oneness” with your finances in a way that honors the Lord.

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1. On a scale of 1-10 (1 low and 10 high), how would you rate your oneness in the area of finances? What can you resolve to do as a couple to improve the oneness in your marriage in regards to your finances together? Please be prepared to share your answer to this question during Breakout Time.

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1. In what ways could you grow in honoring God more with your finances (both personally and as a couple)?

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**Apply What You Learned:**

* Plan some extended time together to have a more focused discussion about your finances and your goals as a couple to achieve oneness in your finances - including the following areas:
	+ Do you spend more than you earn? Are you “living your wage”? What can you do individually and as a couple to cut back spending or increase your income?
	+ What are your plans for saving and investing? Are you saving now?
	+ How much debt do you have together? Do you have a plan to reduce your debt (if you have any)?
	+ What are your financial expectations and goals as far as lifestyle and material possessions (owning a home, certain cars, travel, paying for college etc.)?
	+ Do you have a budget? How do you track your success in achieving you financial goals?
	+ Are you tithing? What are your plans for giving/tithing?
	+ What are your career plans?
	+ What are your plans to financially prepare for children and their future?
	+ Do you pray about a financial decisions together?
	+ Do you have a monthly meeting to discuss your finances? If not, make a schedule.
* If you have not set up a financial plan or budget, begin putting something together this month. If you need help with this, seek the counsel of your Small Group Leaders and consider the free resources available online (suggested websites are listed below in the “Additional Resources” section).
* Sign up for Financial Peace University as the next step in developing oneness in your finances and developing a debt reduction plan.

**Recommended Additional Resources:**

* Read “*Your Money Counts*” by Howard Dayton
* Use the many resources available online through the Financial Peace University website at *www.daveramsey.com*
* Larry Burkett wrote a large number of books on the topic of money. Consider one or more to read as a couple:
	+ “How to Manage Your Money”
	+ “Using Your Money Wisely”
	+ “Investing For the Future”
	+ “Debt Free Living: How to Get Out of Debt (And Stay Out)”
	+ “The Financial Planning Workbook: A Family Budgeting Guide”
	+ “Money Matters”

**Breakout Time – Come prepared to talk about the following:**

1. Following up from your goals from last month, what have you done to come together more in your marriage in regards to you relationships with family, friends and co-workers?

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1. What has the Lord taught you in your personal times with him this past week? What are you reading and how many days were you in the word and prayer?

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1. From Question 5 from “Talk about it Together”: On a scale of 1-10 (1 low and 10 high), how would you rate your oneness in the area of finances? What can you resolve to do as a couple to improve the oneness in your marriage in regards to your finances together?

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1. How is the Lord leading you to pray this week for your spouse and your marriage specifically in regards to your finances together?

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