

## I. ME

- A. Series
  - 1. Who we can become when we let Jesus transform us
  - 2. Measure our progress
  
- B. Last week
  - 1. Selflessly serving- Am I leading the way in serving others?
  - 2. Can change your life... but you don't want to do it.
  - 3. Really won't want to do this week
  
- C. This week... **Faithfully Investing- Am I trusting God by generously giving away a percentage of my income?**
  - 1. Generous- giving up my own wealth to help others.
  - 2. Can change your life but you really aren't going to want to do it.
  - 3. I'm going to ask you to give your money away.
  
- D. Why?
  - 1. Not b/c I want a 4<sup>th</sup> jet...Not b/c my kids are getting hungry
  - 2. B/c I want you to have the best life possible and giving away some of your money to the right places can bring joy, contentment, and peace...
  - 3. In fact, **nothing grows your faith like regular giving.**
  - 4. And I want you to have those things b/c I love you.
  - 5. **THANK YOU to generous givers.**

## II. WE

- A. Money is weird isn't it?
  - 1. Makes people so uncomfortable.
  - 2. I can talk about parenting, marriage, how you act at work, even what God has to say about sexuality and most people would be ok and pretty comfortable.
  - 3. Talk about money and things get weird.
  - 4. Why?
  - 5. Money has a strange power over us... at least here in the US.

- B. What we do to get it.
  - 1. Work hard in school (13-17 or more yrs)... why? Good job.
  - 2. Stay at a job that makes you miserable, ruins your health, steals your time and energy from those who matter most... why? Good money.
  - 3. Break the law. Lie. Ruin relationships... why? Money.
  - 4. Money is a top reason for divorce.
  
- C. When we have it we just want more... when we don't have it we're depressed... and just want more.
  
- D. We think it's the gateway to happiness.
  - 1. "Money doesn't buy happiness... but the things it buys will make me happy."
  - 2. We know it's not true... celebrities being miserable.
  
- E. But we still devote our lives to it.
  
- F. There's nothing wrong with money.
  - 1. It's like a hammer... use it correctly and amazing things can be done... build hospitals, schools, churches, help people.
  - 2. Use it incorrectly and it can damage you and those around you.
  
- G. God understands the tremendous influence and power money has in our lives.
  - 1. He makes a big deal about how we use it.
  - 2. 1/10 verses in the Gospels are about money and possessions
  - 3. Bible- 500 verses to prayer. Less than 500 to faith. Over 2000 to money and possessions.
  - 4. Jesus talked about money more than heaven and hell combined.
  - 5. Half of his parables are about money or possessions.
  - 6. Why such a big deal?
  - 7. He knows... **if you don't control your money, it will control you.**

H. One of Jesus' stories about money is in **Luke 16:1-13**

1. In it he talks about the proper use of money and the attitude we can have about it that will change everything.

### III. **GOD**

#### **A. V. 1**

1. Manager- In charge of running the business dealings of the master.
2. Could charge interest that he then kept for himself.
3. Wasn't his money but was in charge of using it for his master.
4. Was messing up

#### **B. V. 2**

1. "You're fired."

#### **C. V. 3**

1. Oh crap.

#### **D. V. 4**

1. Doesn't sit and whine, blame others, get angry.
2. Sees the error of his ways and makes a plan.

#### **E. V. 5-8a**

1. He learned his lesson... his greed has gotten him into trouble.
2. He doesn't cheat the master out of his money...
  - a. Most good scholars (the ones that agree with me) say that the manager is giving up his cut of the interest in order to help out the debtors.
3. He realizes that generosity- giving up his own wealth to help others... will benefit him more in the long run than grabbing and hoarding every last penny now.

### **F. 8b-9**

1. Even people who don't claim to know God know how to manage their money well and use it to benefit others.
  - a. The charities started by people who don't yet know Jesus.
2. How much more so should those whose mission it is to share the love of Jesus, use their money to help other people?
3. And not just help their physical needs now, but use their money to make an eternal difference... to bring people into the family of God.
4. What could be a better investment?
5. **Use your temporary resources for eternal good.**
6. **You can't take it with you.** The extra entertainment, luxuries, are nothing compared to the rewards in heaven.

### **G. V. 10**

1. **Generosity requires a change of ownership.**
2. **It's not our money. It's God's.**
3. It's not our money to be hoarded... it God's to be used/managed for him.
4. It's a huge, sacred responsibility.

H. God uses money as a test.

1. If you manage what he gives you well (you use it for eternal good), then he will trust you with more.
2. How have I used the wealth he has given me?
3. Have a been faithful? If not, how can I expect him to give me anything more?
  - a. Would you reward a manager who squanders your investment and ran your business into the ground?

## I. God rewards faithful managers with true riches.

1. **Not Prosperity Gospel**- Richer you are the more holy you must be. Or if you have enough faith God will give you nice cars and houses.
2. No, God is saying there is a direct relationship between what I do with my (his) money and the spiritual depth in my life.
3. How I use it, spend it, save it, give it... directly affects the amount of spiritual blessings God can trust me with.
  - a. **Prov. 11:24-25**
  - b. **Luke 6:38**
  - c. **2 Cor 9:6**
4. Might seem strange... but if you're feeling spiritually dry, going through the ups and downs of that spiritual rollercoaster... check your bank statement and calendar.
  - a. Do you spend everything... money and time... on yourself, your family's comfort and entertainment, or have you used what God has given you for others?
5. **Inconsistent giving produces inconsistent living.**
  - a. If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?
  - b. "When I have \$ \_\_\_\_\_, then I'll be generous." No you won't.

## J. V. 13

1. Who's your master?
2. Jesus said you have to choose- you can either love God or love money. Not both.
3. The best way to **prove** you don't love money... **give it away**.
4. If I live for my money it becomes my master. If I give my money, it becomes my servant... I'm telling it what to do when I use it wisely.

## IV. YOU

- A. So how do we do this? Just give our money to everyone?
  1. No that would not be a wise investment.
- B. If you want to make an eternal difference in the lives of your neighbors give to a good local church.
  1. When you give to the local church... you're making an investment in the eternity of your community.
  2. The local church is Jesus' chosen instrument to bring hope and the message of eternal life to the world.
  3. So Liz and I have chosen that our main place to give is our church. B/c we believe in what it is doing and we believe that God will use it to reach and save our neighbors.
  4. It's the wisest investment we can think of.
- C. How much?
  1. I said percentage at the beginning.
  2. B/c if you pick a percentage and make writing that check the first thing you do when you get paid, it makes it much easier to follow through.
  3. **Great Advice- Give first. Save second. Live on the rest.**
  4. 10% is what we were raised with... called a tithe... but if it's your first time... any percentage is great. Maybe with a plan to increase it a percentage or so a year.
  5. Leadership of Crosscreek believes in this so much that... Crosscreek tithes 10%. Saves 10%. Operates off the rest.
    - a. B/c we want to be a church that trust God and that God can trust.
  6. Requires sacrifice... personally (cable, cars, entertainment) and as a church (salaries, equipment, etc.)
  7. But its worth it b/c of the spiritual blessings and the good that comes from it.
  8. And God always takes care of our needs.
    - a. Stories of provision.
    - b. Personal
    - c. Church

**V. WE**

**A. 10 things that would happen if American Christians gave 10% after taxes...**

- 1. Finance 5 million grass-roots, micro-enterprise economic development projects per year in poor countries worldwide**
- 2. Finance 1 million new clean water, well drilling projects per year in the poorest countries**
- 3. Prevent and treat malaria worldwide**
- 4. Provide food, clothing, and shelter to all refugees in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East**
- 5. Eradicate polio worldwide**
- 6. Quadruple the budget for Habitat for Humanity**
- 7. Sponsor 20 million needy children worldwide, providing them food, education, and healthcare.**
- 8. Quadruple global Christian medical mission work**
- 9. Quadruple the total resources being spent by all Christians globally on mission to tell unreached people about Jesus' love for them.**
- 10. Triple the resources being spent to translating, printing, and distributing Bibles in the native languages of the 2,700 people groups currently w/o a Bible in their language.**

**B. It's not our money. It's his.**

1. Let's use it to love the people He loved enough to die for.
2. Let's faithfully invest and give away a percentage of our income to change the world for eternity.