



Money: a sore subject?

Money used to be one of my least favorite things to talk about. It's such a personal topic. "That's my business, not yours," I thought. I didn't want people to ask me about how I managed money. (Maybe that was because I knew I wouldn't like the answers I would give.) And me talking with other people about their money? I'm one that doesn't like confrontation, and the very topic of money is viewed by some as a confrontational one. For that reason, I used to be hesitant as a pastor to bring up the topic of financial stewardship.

So I confess that I was a little nervous two weeks ago. As Pastor Bater and I began the recent in-home Bible studies on stewardship, I wasn't sure what reactions to expect. Would some people be offended that we were talking about money? I feared that many people would be. After all, as we noted right at the beginning of each Bible study, this is a hard time for many people. Many are out of work, just about everybody has had to cut back on spending, and lots of people are hurting.

What actually happened? The vast majority of the people who attended the Bible studies enjoyed them. Was there some discomfort in talking about finances? Sure. However, people told me—some of them sounding rather surprised!—that they really appreciated talking about finances from a spiritual and Biblical perspective.

I said that talking about financial stewardship used to be one of my least favorite things. But it's not anymore. In fact, I came out of each of the recent Bible studies feeling uplifted and encouraged.

What has made me more comfortable talking about managing money? What has transformed my attitude? A few factors come to mind:

- **God talks about money a lot in the Bible.** There's no escaping this. In the Old Testament, as God spoke to his covenant people, he freely talked to them about how to manage what he entrusted to them. Later, Jesus spoke freely to people about their money and possessions. I've come to realize that the reason God speaks about money is simple: he knows that there's a close connection between our money and our priorities. A look at the money we spend will reveal what's important to us. In short, if God speaks often about money in the Bible, then I as a Christian should not shy away from the topic.
- **Everything we have is really God's anyway.** That's a radical statement, but it's true. "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it," the psalm-writer says (Psalm 24:1). "What do you have that you did not receive?" the apostle Paul asks (1 Corinthians 4:7). I must answer, "Well, nothing. Everything I have has been given to me by God. Maybe through my hard work, but still it's all a gift from him." You see the inescapable logic: If all that I have is really God's, and if I'm merely a caretaker and manager of it all, then God has a right to tell me how to manage his things. Realizing that has made me more open to hearing what the Bible says about stewardship.
- **The Bible does not make laws and requirements about what to do with my money.** This is liberating! No church can strong-arm me into giving more. No one can make a law that says, "Give this much." Instead, as we discussed in our Bible study, the Bible takes a far different approach. In the Scriptures, God says, "Look at what I've given to you. Look especially at Jesus, who gave up his life for you. Look at the never-ending, vibrant life I give you through my grace. Listen to some basic instruction on managing the money I entrust to you. Then let my grace do its work in your life." My giving to God is not motivated by requirements or rules. It's motivated by the grace of God.
- **God can bring blessings to many people through my money.** We can look right in our own congregation to see this happening. People are being reached with the good news. God is touching hearts with his love. The work we do through our national church body is also bearing fruit. The opportunities are many for God to make a lasting impact with every gift that is given. True, we don't always see that impact with our own eyes. Yet God promises that every gift honors him when it's given from the heart of one of his children.

Some of you might have purposefully not signed up for one of the recent Bible studies. When you found out that stewardship was the topic, you thought, "No, thanks." You probably had good reasons. Maybe you've been burned in the past by improper approaches to encouraging giving. Maybe you're struggling financially, and any talk of money is heartbreaking right now.

I see where you're coming from. So if my encouragements ever come off as heavy-handed, please let me know. At the same time, however, I don't want to stop encouraging people to address *(continued on top of page 2)*

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this area of their lives with God. For the reasons I listed above, this is something good to talk about.

Let me make this offer, which I know Pastor Bater will echo: If anyone who missed the recent Bible study would like to go through it privately with us, we will arrange a time to do so. Or, we can mail or email the material to you, to work through on your own.

I'll also mention again **two opportunities** coming up.

1. During our in-home Bible studies, we offered some simple forms to help families plan their offerings for the coming year. One option was to write down your offering plan and seal it in an envelope. **On Sunday, November 21, those who wish may place their offering plan on the altar.** Why? As a simple reminder, just between each of us and our Lord, of our plan to give grace-motivated offerings to him. The offering plans will remain sealed and returned in one year.
2. **A special offering is being gathered,** over and above our regular offerings. Some members of Prince of Peace have offered to match \$1 for every \$2 given in this special offering. They will donate up to \$7500, in order to encourage us. So if we, working together, contribute \$15,000, they will add \$7500 to that total. The offering will go to the Prince of Peace general budget, to help us catch up on bills and commitments we are behind on. Our goal is to complete this special offering by the end of 2010.

Note that no one is required to do either of these things. If you don't wish to participate, simply say, "No, thanks," and move on. That's okay! These options are being offered simply as opportunities. You are free in Christ either to use them or not to use them.

Money—it doesn't need to be a sore subject for Christians. Let's talk about it, with God's grace in our hearts and his Word in our ears.

Board for Spiritual Welfare —Mel Steiger

How do you witness to your neighbor?

We all have neighbors, friends, relatives, and sometime even family members who do not attend worship services of any type. Surely this frustrates us. We would love to have them come to church with us, or attend another Bible believing church. What do we do about it? I am sure that we hesitate to bring the subject up so as not to offend them. When the subject is approached gently, lovingly, or diplomatically, we may find that such discussion is welcome.

There needs to be guidelines established to discuss most any controversial thing in a productive manner. These rules should be addressed and agreed upon at the beginning of the discussion. Two major rules are: 1) it cannot be allowed to get emotional ,

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and 2) the discussion cannot be personal. These rules are good for most any discussion where the opinions differ.

A discussion that is getting emotional should be deferred or terminated. It is unlikely that any progress can be made when it is emotional. It should be suggested that we should talk about this another time, or we need to look up some reference data and discuss that to clarify a point. Sometimes having both parties find more data to support their point is helpful.

Keeping a discussion non-personal means that we do not refer to something as "yours", "you", or "my". Critical comments referred to as "your church", "my church" creates a confrontational position that is likely to initiate an emotional response. Experience has shown that referring to an object such as "The Bible says in John 3:16..." or referring to a speech such as "Mr. Jones said..." may help keep the discussion on a platonic level.

Be humble in presenting your points with leaders such as "As I understand it,...". Avoid hard-nosed statements unless you can give the reference from where the statement comes from. Be willing to find additional data or references to illustrate your point.

Keep it friendly, keep smiling, maybe inject some humor, compliment the opposing points where you can, and be willing to discuss it again at another time and place. We pray that the Lord will guide us in these discussions and

Board of Education Report—Matt Rohrer

Every year, the Family Bible Hour children at church select a new Mission Project to send their offerings to. This year they chose **New Beginnings**, a home for mothers in Denver, Colorado. This home is almost solely funded by donations from churches in our church body and provides a place for young, single mothers who have no home to live, grow in faith and learn to parent responsibly.

Our Family Bible Hour children would like to invite everyone to be a part of this gift to New Beginnings. There is a display in the church hall small boxes on it that are available to take home and put spare coins in.

When the boxes are filled (or at the end of the mission project next May), they can be dropped off in the office where they will be counted and sent in with the children's offerings to this ministry.

For young children who want to participate, we have baby bottles available (in the office) they can use for their spare change. More information explaining New Beginnings ministry can be found on the display. If you have any questions, please speak with Angela Gavin, Matt Rohrer or Robyn Smith.



Trustee Report : Kent Carbon, Chairman

Expect to see the church roof repaired in early November. It's taken a while to get all elements organized, but it will finally be shingled and ready for the winter season.

Thanks to everyone involved in maintaining our lawns and flower beds—the entire exterior of POP was kept in great condition this past summer. It was lots of work with many hours and many people getting involved and giving their time. We hope everyone is pleased with the appearance of our wonderful facility—but get ready—snow removal is next and we will need help, so you may be approached by a Trustee sometime this winter.

Trustees want to let the congregation know about a policy concerning “borrowing” church chairs and tables. Because we are becoming a larger church and requests are getting more frequent, we ask that all requests to use any chairs and tables go through the chairman of the Trustees. There is a equipment log in the church office to sign these items in and out to keep track of them. If chairs/tables are used for a church-sponsored function, there will not be a charge, but if they are used for a private party, yard sale, etc., a fee of \$1.50 per chair and \$6 per table is asked for to help compensate for wear and tear of these items. We lose many chairs and tables each year due to breakage because the equipment is getting older. It is costly to replace them and transporting to and from church accelerates the wear-and-tear process. These charges were discussed and found to be well-below rental costs. We hope our members understand and appreciate that the money charged will go toward replacing and keeping enough chairs and tables available for use at church.

As always, bring the Trustees ideas and suggestions you have for maintaining and improving our Lord's house. We are interested in your ideas and helping if someone has a project they want to undertake.

Principal's Update — Jeff Sell

I love Black Friday. I subscribe to a newsfeed that alerts me to the deals that are offered, get email updates and could probably get texts on my phone as well. I can't wait for the Thanksgiving Day newspaper to arrive because it is plump with advertisements for discounted merchandise. In my younger years I loved to find a good buy and make plans to go to the store to score the prize.

Are you one of those people who look forward to great deals the day after Thanksgiving? Have you waited in line on Black Friday to get the perfect gift for Christmas? Every year the news has stories about dedicated people camping out in the cold and waiting in long lines just to have the chance to buy the perfect present---an item that will likely grow old by the start of the next year.

Solomon, in Ecclesiastes chapter 2 said:

¹⁰ I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;
I refused my heart no pleasure.
My heart took delight in all my work,
and this was the reward for all my labor.

¹¹ Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done
and what I had toiled to achieve,
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;
nothing was gained under the sun.

*I remember some of the gifts my
parents gave me over the years, but I
will remember that gift for eternity.*

Something that I take so much delight in is actually a meaningless activity without lasting significance. As hard as I try, I can't really justify my priority imbalances. For example, I subscribe to a daily devotion, but often they remain unread in my inbox until I purge them all because they are taking up too much space. I can stand in line early in the morning to get a cheap gift, but can't get out of bed on Tuesday mornings for an early morning Bible study at the coffee shop. I would rather read a magazine article than pick up a Bible and read for the same amount of time. I think you get the picture.

At last year's closing ceremony, I asked the school families in attendance to imagine that if today were their last day on the earth, what would they want their child to know about before they died? I gave them each a piece of paper and they proceeded to list important things to them. I then told people to put up their hands when I called off an item that was on their list. The following were typical responses:

- To be smart
- To have lots of wealth
- To have lots of friends

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Ladies' Night Out!



BUNKO!

**Friday, November 12 at 7PM
at the home of Sarah Sell
3436 Downhill Road**

**Bring a wrapped gift (no more than \$2)
or a white elephant item for a prize
and also a snack or appetizer to share.**



Girls! Girls! Girls!

Girl Pioneers is a group for girls (1-8th grade)
They will meet on:

Tuesday, November 2
6:30-7:30PM

We are **COOKING** (and eating) so come hungry!
Bring a rolling pin if you can!

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- To contribute to society in a meaningful way
- To be happy

Then, I mentioned Jesus. I thought that this was going to be a no-brainer. I mean, after all, they were sending their children to our school. Certainly there would be a strong breeze in the church as hands whipped up in unison. However, the reaction was like that of a comedian telling a not so funny joke—you know, the microphone screeches and the comic asks, "Is this thing on?" I could use one hand to count the number of hands that went up when I mentioned wanting to see their child know about Jesus as the Savior of the world!

So, it is. We often focus on the here-and-now and go after things that simply won't last.

One of my "jobs" that you have called me to do as a principal is to encourage our church members with school-aged children to send them to our school. Currently about 30% of our eligible congregational children attend our school. For various reasons and certainly with much thought and prayer, many families have decided to send their children to alternative schools around the valley. Not knowing all the situations and extenuating circumstances behind all the decisions, I am certainly not judging anyone. However, I would be negligent if I did not point out the awesome blessing of having a school such as ours.

While a good secular education is important, it only goes so far. Children may do well in their careers, but they will be missing the whole point of this life if their training only includes this side of eternity. As parents, our #1 job is to pass on to our children that Jesus loves them and the whole world and that he has taken the sins of everyone away. We are to instruct them, on a daily basis, in the truths of His word and train them so that when they are old they will not turn from it. You may already do that at your home, or you may be like my parents were. I grew up in a home with Christian parents that didn't take the time to instruct us with the Word every day. Our mom tried to have devotions with us, but gave up after one time

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when my sister and I laughed through the devotion. My dad didn't do any formal training using the Bible because he was never taught by his parents.

You need not send your children to our school to train them in God's word. However, it needs to get done. You can take all the trips to Fiji you want, drive the most exotic car around, have the tallest house in the neighborhood, dress the part of royalty, be entertained by everything that life offers, give your child the most rounded upbringing possible, but if you don't teach them about Jesus, you end up like Solomon in the verses above.

Money can be a big obstacle when one thinks about our school. It takes a huge commitment and sacrifice for most people to send their children. My parents ran into the same wall. However, God provided a way. I still remember asking my dad why he sold the woods that were across the road from our home. After all, he loved to watch the trees grow and take us on nature walks as a family. He answered me in a matter-of-fact way, "Your mother and I did it so we could send you and your sister to a Christian school." The sacrifice was great, but not as great as the reward of knowing that his children were being given the rock-solid foundation that would carry them past this life. I remember some of the gifts my parents gave me over the years, but I will remember that gift for eternity.

Our School Board is currently looking at ways that would allow more of our families to take advantage of the blessing in our midst. Families with children in our congregation should look for a survey coming out asking for your opinions on our school's ministry so we are able to make informed decisions related to our school. And remember, Black Friday is nice, but we have a far more important task as parents on which to focus: bringing our children up to know their Savior. I pray that our school would be able to assist you in this monumental task.

NEEDS:

#1: Our stock of paperback Bibles we give to guests and visitors is very low. If you are interested in donating a case of Bibles (\$65) or want to give toward the purchase of a case, please speak to one of the Pastors or ask in the office.

#2: Winter's here and we need cans of coffee to keep our coffee pot perking! Drop off any donations in the kitchen.

Thank you.