

FELLOWSHIP NOTES ~ January 30th, 2022



Part 4: "Invest with God"

Luke 12:20



How to be Rich Toward God

1. Guard against greed – Lk. 12:13-15
2. Trust God explicitly – Lk. 12:16-18
3. Practice generous living – Lk. 12:19
4. Invest with _____ – Lk. 12:20 (2 Peter 3:10; 1 Timothy 6:7; Matthew 6:19-21; 2 Corinthians 9:6)

Being Willing to Share (generosity) = Investing with God = Becoming Rich Toward God

Available Resources

In Fellowship Café

Books: Master Your Money by Ron Blue
Smart Money Smart Kids by Dave Ramsey

Free At the Tower near the Welcome Center / Online on our Website

Articles: Trusting God When Life Hurts – A 31-Day Prayer Scripture Guide
8 Ways to Trust God When Money is Tight

Growth Group Study Guide for January 30th – February 5th

NOTES:

- 1.) Financial Peace University will be offered on Wednesday evenings beginning February 9th. The cost to participate is \$60 which gives you access to all the materials by Dave Ramsey. Sign upline at www.fellowshipnorwalk.org.
- 2.) For next Sunday read the last chapter, chapter 4, in our companion study, Rich Toward God.

Getting Started

Group Discussion: This week's memory verse is 2 Corinthians 9:6. Read it, then restate the spiritual principle in your own words here in a dozen words or less and share with the group: _____

Digging Deeper

1. In our companion book, Rich Toward God, on pages 46-47, read the two passages from 1 Timothy 6:6-10 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19 and see if you can count the number of spiritual commands/principles found in these two passages. Which one do you like the best?
2. In Rich Toward God, on page 48 read from the top of the page ("Increasing Your investment") down through the fourth bullet point.
Which of the four suggestions have you used at some point in your life and how were you blessed by it?
3. In Rich Toward God, on page 49, read the equation and the paragraph underneath it. How would you explain the equation and its implications in your own words?
4. One of the primary obstacles the enemy seeks to lure us into in order to keep us from being rich toward God is adopting the world's attitude and practices toward debt instead of God's found in the Bible. Let's look at what the Bible says about it. Although the Bible says debt is not a sin, it also is not presented as a normal way of life in the Bible either. Debt is something that must be used with extreme caution and much prayer due its potential for enslaving people in financial bondage. Let's look at some reasons why debt needs to be treated cautiously and not carelessly. Note: As you read through each reason, feel free to stop and discuss questions or comments anyone may have.

Read Proverbs 27:1. What is the point of this verse?

Reason #1. Debt presumes on the future. When people commit themselves to payments over a period of time, they are presuming that there will be no pay reductions, no loss of job, and no unexpected expenses. According to this verse, that is an improbable assumption.

Reason #2. Debt lowers future standards of living. Money that is borrowed today must be repaid over time along with interest, which means that those things purchased with credit will cost more "tomorrow" than they did today. Therefore, the standard of living will have to be adjusted to compensate for the added expense.

Reason #3. Debt focuses on facade decisions rather than real-life decisions. Debt encourages people to make decisions based on whether they can afford a monthly payment, rather than on whether they can afford the total cost (purchase price, operational expenses, and finance charges) of the item. Debt makes it too easy to say yes to low monthly payments while ignoring the real cost of items.

Reason #4. Debt leaves people at the mercy of the power of compound interest. If consumers pay the minimum monthly payment on a \$1,000 debt at 19.8% rate of interest and never charge anything else on that account, it will take 8 years to pay back the \$1,000 and they will pay \$2,023 for the privilege of charging \$1,000. In some cases, items charged on nationally accepted bank credit cards can cost upwards of 8 times the original purchase price of the item by the time the bill is paid off.

Reason #5. Debt can delay God's plan. God said that he would provide for His people's needs (Philippians 4:19). Debt allows needs to be met now, from a means other than through God's provision. Debt provides instant gratification, at the expense of financial freedom, rather than waiting on God's perfect plan and His perfect timing.

Discussion: As you think about this point, what would a Christian miss out on if they habitually purchased things on credit (or even practiced impulse buying) instead of praying about needs and waiting for God to provide?

Share with the group a time when you prayed for God to meet a financial or material need and you waited for His provision and He met your need.

Note: If your group is finding it hard to come up with examples, perhaps Reason #5 is one that needs to be discussed more in depth so that everyone can fully understand it and begin to practice it.

Reason #6. Debt clouds the line that separates wants, desires, and needs. Needs are necessary purchases such as food, clothing, shelter, medical coverage, transportation, etc. Wants involve choices about quality of goods, discount shopping versus specialty shopping, lobster versus chicken or a new car versus a good used car, and so on. Desires are those things that can be purchased only after all other obligations are met and only if there are surplus funds available to purchase them. Debt allows desires to become wants and want to become needs.

Reason #7. Debt encourages impulse buying and overspending. Unrestricted debt assumption and credit cards have allowed people to buy immediately beyond the means to repay, without sacrificing needs and necessities.

Reason #8. Debt teaches children that the world's method of managing money is normal. Debt causes children to have a casual regard for using credit cards, obtaining loans and mortgages, and keeping vows to pay their bills. For this reason, there are children who have graduated from college by borrowing for education expenses and living to the limit of their credit cards. They have never considered paying cash for transportation or anything else and have begun adult life with so much debt that they have to work for years just to pay for the debt accumulated during their college years.

Wrap-up: Debt-free living is the best way to live. The blessings of becoming debt-free go far beyond the financial area. They extend to the spiritual and material realms as well. No one who is financially bound can be spiritually free.

5. Q & A on Borrowing and Debt

#1. *What does the Bible say about borrowing?* Read Proverbs 22:7.

When you borrow money, it's a promise to repay. Literally, borrowing is making a vow. God requires that we keep our vows. Psalm 37:21 says, "The wicked borrows and does not pay

back." Therefore, if we don't want to be counted among the evil, we are to repay everything that we owe. The Bible shows us that we're to be cautious about borrowing. It should not become a lifestyle that is a normal means of operation.

#2. Is it Scriptural to use credit cards?

Credit cards are not evil, and they're not the problem. The problem is the misuse of credit cards. Most children see their parents use credit cards to buy things, but very few see their parents writing out the checks to pay the credit card bills. Therefore, children grow up thinking that everything and anything can be theirs just by getting and using cards. A couple of simple guidelines will help when using credit cards. 1.) Never use your credit cards to buy anything that is not in your budget. 2.) Pay your credit cards off every month with no exception. 3.) The first month you're unable to pay the credit card bill, destroy it. Using these guidelines will keep you from having credit card debt.

#3. How do you define debt?

Basically, it's an obligation to pay that cannot be met. When you borrow money, we traditionally say, "You're in debt". But if you're able to make each payment, you aren't in debt. When you can't pay what you've promised to pay, then you're in debt.

#4. Read Romans 13:8. Does this verse mean I can never owe anything?

This command is not directly referring to money. The thought is, "don't let people do something for you unless you're willing to do even more for them". If the command had been for Christians to never borrow money, God would have made this clear. Borrowing or lending are not scripturally prohibited. We need to be careful not to build a doctrine out of a single verse but take Scripture as a whole.

#5. Is a lease actually the same thing as a loan, particularly where a lease for an automobile is concerned?

A lease is basically no different from a loan. When you sign a lease, it's a contingent liability and an obligation to pay. In general, the economics of a lease are usually bad and actually more costly than a loan. Leasing a car that you couldn't afford using other methods of payment doesn't avoid the problem.

#6. If God doesn't want Christians to go into debt, does that make a home mortgage wrong?

God's Word doesn't prohibit borrowing. It's almost certain that most couples will have to borrow for their first home. If so, always make sure that the asset of your home is worth more than what you owe. If you borrow to buy a home, make a commitment to pay it off as rapidly as possible, or at least to reduce the mortgage to the point where the house is worth more than you owe.

Wrap-up

As you take prayer requests and pray for one another, be sure to pray for each other's finances/financial needs. Ask God to help everyone in your group to adopt God's principles of financial management.