

Growth Group Homework

For the week of November 10, 2013

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, *Financial Freedom*, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. Larry gave us a great definition of financial freedom this weekend. Can you think of times in your life when you were caught up in one or both of the negative behaviors Larry said financial freedom would liberate us from?

What has helped you gain freedom during times when you were engaged in these negative behaviors?

2. Which of the following messages about money and financial security did you learn from your family growing up?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money can't buy you happiness | <input type="checkbox"/> The best part of having money is helping others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial security is the most important goal in life | <input type="checkbox"/> Debt is always bad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money is the root of all evil | <input type="checkbox"/> Debt is okay for things you really want |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wealth is a sign of God's favor and approval | <input type="checkbox"/> Never buy anything unless it's on sale |
| <input type="checkbox"/> He who dies with the most toys, wins | <input type="checkbox"/> Saving for the future is very important |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend we heard about the practice of "giving off the top." This kind of giving is both an act of thanking God for his current provision AND a way of trusting him for future provision. Unfortunately, throughout history many of God's people have given to his work primarily out of what's left over rather than off the top. What surprises you about God's attitude toward this practice in Malachi 3:7-12?

What are some of the biggest challenges people face when "giving off the top" instead of giving out of their leftovers?

2. Many people look to financial security to provide a sense of comfort and protection from life's ups and downs. They believe that money can be a hedge against the trials and tribulations of life. As we heard this weekend, often times the sense of security that money provides is just an illusion. How could the following passages help us experience a greater sense of security than money or possessions can provide?

Psalm 46:1-3

Lamentations 3:19-24

How can God's care and faithfulness affect how we live life on a daily basis?

3. Solomon was one of the wealthiest and wisest kings of all time. His take on financial freedom is summed up in Ecclesiastes 5:19 where he wrote, "Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God." How do you reconcile this attitude with what James wrote to rich people in James 5:1-5?

How could the rich people James is addressing have benefitted from Paul's words to the wealthy in 1 Timothy 6:17-19?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Based on this week's sermon and homework, is there anything you need to change or do in your life to experience more financial freedom?

2. Looking at the "10-10-80 Plan" Larry presented in the sermon, is there something you could do now to better bring your budget into alignment with it?

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Malachi 3:7-12

7 Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord Almighty.

"But you ask, 'How are we to return?'

8 "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?'

“In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the Lord Almighty. 12 “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty. [NIV]

What are some of the biggest challenges people face when “giving off the top” instead of giving out of their leftovers?

2. Many people look to financial security to provide a sense of comfort and protection from life’s ups and downs. They believe that money can be a hedge against the trials and tribulations of life. As we heard this weekend, often times the sense of security that money provides is just an illusion. How could the following passages help us experience a greater sense of security than money or possessions can provide?

Psalm 46

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamoth. A song.

- 1 God is our refuge and strength,
 an ever-present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
 and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
- 3 though its waters roar and foam
 and the mountains quake with their surging. [NIV]

Lamentations 3:19-24

- 19 I remember my affliction and my wandering,
 the bitterness and the gall.
- 20 I well remember them,
 and my soul is downcast within me.
- 21 Yet this I call to mind
 and therefore I have hope:
- 22 Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed,
 for his compassions never fail.
- 23 They are new every morning;
 great is your faithfulness.
- 24 I say to myself, “The Lord is my portion;
 therefore I will wait for him.” [NIV]

How can God's care and faithfulness affect how we live life on a daily basis?

3. Solomon was one of the wealthiest and wisest kings of all time. His take on financial freedom is summed up in Ecclesiastes 5:19 where he wrote, "Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God." How do you reconcile this attitude with what James wrote to rich people in James 5:1-5?

James 5:1-5

Warning to Rich Oppressors

1 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. 2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5 You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. [NIV]

How could the rich people James is addressing have benefitted from Paul's words to the wealthy in 1 Timothy 6:17-19?

1 Timothy 6:17-19

17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. [NIV]

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