

## Getting Rid of Worldly Thinking About Finances

Message 1 of 4 in the series: "Pulling Weeds"

### A. If we want to live fruitful lives, we need to make sure that we don't allow weeds to grow up that will choke out the good things God wants for us.

"When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father."

John 15:8 (NLT)

"The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is **crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life**. And so they never grow into maturity." Luke 8:14 (NLT)

### B. We need to get rid of worldly thinking that can choke out God's perspective on our finances.

1. The world thinks there is no God and that the goal is to accumulate as much wealth and pleasure as we can during our lifetimes.

"And if there is no resurrection, 'Let's feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!'" 1 Corinthians 15:32b (NLT)

"A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. He said to himself, 'What should I do? I don't have room for all my crops.' Then he said, 'I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. And I'll sit back and say to myself, "My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!"' But God said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for? Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.'

Luke 12:16-21 (NLT)

*Note:* A life of hoarding and consuming eventually leads to despair. "There is another serious problem I have seen under the sun. Hoarding riches harms the saver. Money is put into risky investments that turn sour, and everything is lost. In the end, there is nothing left to pass on to one's children. We all come to the end of our lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day we were born. We can't take our riches with us. And this, too, is a very serious problem. **People leave this world no better off than when they came. All their hard work is for nothing—like working for the wind.**"

Ecclesiastes 5:13-16 (NLT)

2. God's Word tells us that we are stewards of God's things in this world and that our goal is to use the resources He has entrusted to us for His purposes and His glory.

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last - **dividing it in proportion to their abilities**. He then left on his trip. The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money. **After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money.** The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, 'Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.' The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!' The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.' The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!' Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, 'Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate. I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.' But the master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn't plant and gathered crops I didn't cultivate, why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.' Then he ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. **To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance.** But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" Matthew 25:14-30 (NLT)

- God created everything and therefore owns everything.
- God entrusts each of us with some of His things according to what He knows we can handle.
- God rewards those who faithfully manage His things to bring Him glory.
- God punishes those who selfishly waste the resources they have been entrusted to manage.
- There will be an accounting, and excuses will not be accepted.

### C. Two things we can do to help us align with God’s perspective on our finances:

1. We can pray about our finances asking God to give us wisdom in managing His resources.

“If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.” James 1:5 (NLT)

- We can ask God to provide for our needs. “Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

“And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.” 2 Corinthians 9:8 (NLT)

- We can ask God to show us what financial attitudes and behaviors we need to change. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)

- We can ask God to give us contentment. “Two things I ask of you, Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.” Proverbs 30:7-9 (NIV)

“But godliness with contentment is great gain.” 1 Timothy 6:6 (NIV)

2. We can get help from other Christians.

- We can give each other wise financial counsel so we can be good stewards.

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” Proverbs 15:22 (NIV)

“Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.”

Proverbs 21:5 (NLT)

“Walk with the wise and become wise...” Proverbs 13:20a (NLT)

- We can hold each other accountable.

“As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.” Proverbs 27:17 (NLT)

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### Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus once described the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life as “thorns” or “weeds”? (Luke 8:14)
2. Read Matthew 25:14-30. The idea of financial accountability to God makes many people feel uncomfortable. How does this story make you feel?
3. Now read Luke 12:16-21. Why do you think Jesus often taught about money using stories?
4. Nearly 3000 years ago, Solomon said a life of consuming and hoarding eventually leads to despair (Ecclesiastes 5:13-16), but our world’s entire economic system seems to be based on constantly getting more. Why don’t we believe what Solomon said?
5. Discuss the following financial concerns we can pray for:
  - We can ask God to provide for our needs. (Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 9:8)
  - We can ask God to show us what financial attitudes and behaviors we need to change. (Psalm 139:23-24)
  - We can ask God to give us contentment. (Proverbs 30:7-9, 1 Timothy 6:6)

How often do you pray about these things?

6. Read Proverbs 13:20, 15:22, & 21:5. Who do you talk to about finances? Why is it difficult for most of us to talk about money with anyone?

7. Proverbs on money to consider:

“Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all.” Proverbs 22:2 (NIV)

“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender.” Proverbs 22:7 (NIV)

“My child, if you have put up security for a friend’s debt or agreed to guarantee the debt of a stranger—if you have trapped yourself by your agreement and are caught by what you said—follow my advice and save yourself, for you have placed yourself at your friend’s mercy. Now swallow your pride; go and beg to have your name erased. Don’t put it off; do it now! Don’t rest until you do. Save yourself like a gazelle escaping from a hunter, like a bird fleeing from a net.” Proverbs 6:1-5 (NLT)