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 **TRUSTING HIM**



Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.
PROVERBS 3.5-6

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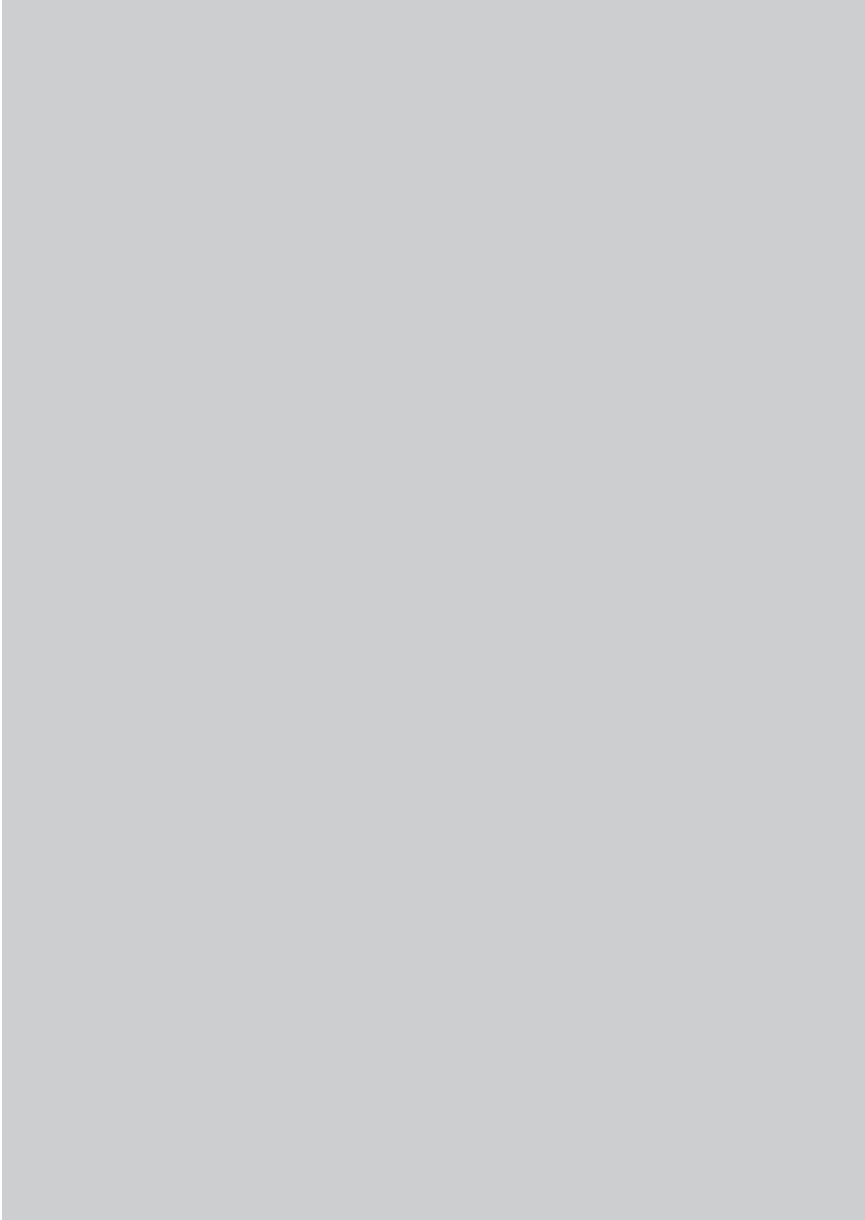
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RESOURCES

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WEEK 01

NOTES FROM THIS SUNDAY'S SERMON:



THE FOCAL POINT

This week's study is based on chapters 1 - 3 in, "The Blessed Life":

Chapter One – The Unexpected Adventure

Chapter Two – God Must Be First

Chapter Three – Life, Not Law

Generosity is defined as, "Liberality in giving or a willingness to give."

Have you ever given something away of significant value? For example, was it a piece of furniture, a car or even possibly a house? Not that the value or the amount of the item is what is most important to God, even though to us, it seems the value or the amount determines our level of generosity and the significance of the blessing.

For many of us, giving something away of this size or significance can be outside of our conventional understanding of kindness, and maybe even out of our comfort zone.

The point of focus of this week's study is to understand generosity from God's perspective, and His expectation for us as we live out His purpose for our life. Specifically in the area of tithing, we must acknowledge our role as stewards and not owners, live in obedience to Him, and bring the first of what we make to Him.

CONNECTION TIME

Take a few moments to emphasize the importance of developing further connection as a group. If you have any new people, take time to introduce yourselves, and get to know each other a little better. Have everyone share the following: "What are some of the funniest first names you have ever heard? Where did you get your first name?"

Have 2 to 3 people share:

"Has anyone ever given something significant away because they felt compelled by God to do it? What did this experience mean to you, your family, or the other persons involved?"

01

LOOKING TO THE WORD: Matthew 6:19-21

Robert Morris states the following in “The Blessed Life”, on page 50:

“In Matthew 6, we find the familiar words, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (v.21). I want you to notice that it doesn’t say where your heart is there your treasure will be also...It basically says that your heart follows your treasure. That is why tithing represents a test for every Christian.”

Take a few minutes and brainstorm why some Christians are resistant to tithing, while some Christians are not resistant to tithing.

Resistant

Not Resistant

Throughout God’s Word we are directed to matters of the heart. We are instructed that from the heart, the place within us that holds our values and priorities, we make decisions that reflect what is most important to us. We see this play out in our relationships, work life, hobbies, budget and so much more.

God is consistent throughout the Bible to help us understand what is important to Him and how that should be revealed in our life. Read the following passages, either individually or in breakout groups and make note of how Jesus’ message in Matthew 6:21 reflects the heart of His Father.

Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Exodus 13:12-13

DISCUSSION

Share your insights from the passages above, and then, select two of the four statements below for further discussion. Depending on the size of your group, either remain as one large group or break up into smaller groups for this discussion time. Please feel free to use additional Scripture, quotes from “The Blessed Life”, and your own personal life experience.

- 01 Being blessed means having supernatural power working in you.
- 02 Money is a test from God.
- 03 We need to acknowledge that we are stewards, not owners.
- 04 ‘Tithing is not law’ or from a legalistic mind, ‘tithing is life and comes from the heart’.

WRAP

If you chose to break into smaller groups for the discussion time, come back together as a whole group for this section.

Have someone read the following excerpt from “The Blessed Life”, page 64:

“Those who obey will be blessed. Those who go above and beyond will be blessed even more...Matthew 25:29 says, “For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.” The rewards of good stewardship are great.

God doesn’t change. Tithing remains an extraordinary opportunity for blessing and abundance for those with the faith to trust Him...The blessed life awaits you. However, it begins with a heart commitment to honor, obey and bless the Lord with your tithe.”

Jesus said give your treasure and your heart follows. What impact could occur upon this world if God’s people grasped this principle and applied it to their life? What impact would result to you personally if you applied this principle in your own life?

O1

As you conclude this week's study, someone please share a personal testimony in regard to Matthew 6:21 and the effect that tithing has had on your life and your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reflect on the "Resistant / Not Resistant" list you brainstormed earlier. Identify a point of resistance you may have in your own life and make it a matter of prayer for this week. Next week, several people can share what God has shown you through your prayer time about this point of resistance in your life.

SCRIPTURE TO MEMORIZE AND MEDITATE ON THIS WEEK

Matthew 6:21, "Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be."

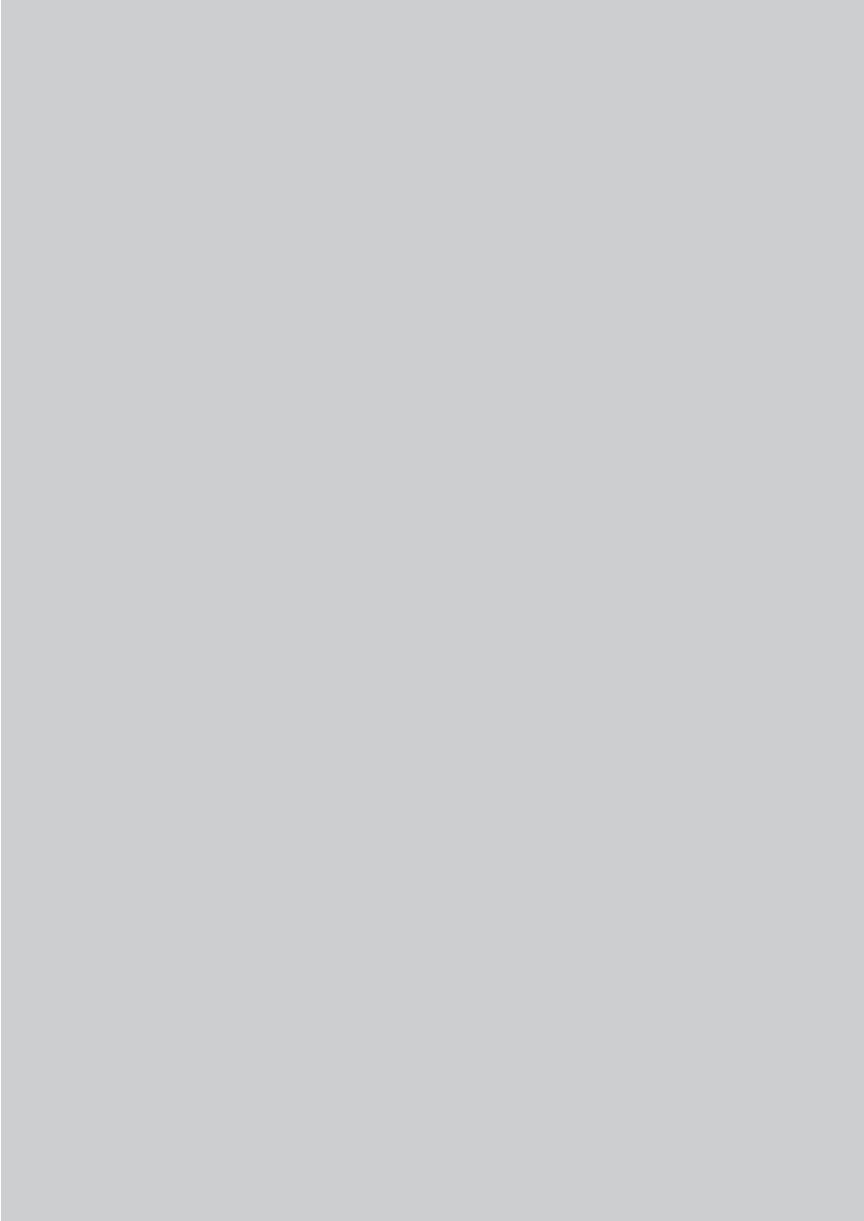
NOTES

O1

NOTES (cont.)

WEEK 02

NOTES FROM THIS SUNDAY'S SERMON:



THE FOCAL POINT

This week's study is based on chapters 4 - 6 in, "The Blessed Life":

Chapter Four – The Principle of Multiplication
Chapter Five – Breaking the Spirit of Mammon
Chapter Six – It Takes a Heart Transplant

We learned last week that generosity is defined as, "Liberality in giving or a willingness to give."

The point of focus of this week's study is to understand that there are two paths that can be travelled. One path comes from the Spirit of God. This path is marked with points of obedience and peaks of generosity. The second path is littered with potholes of selfishness and acts of disobedience.

The Scriptures we will work through in this study note the blessings that come upon us when we give liberally and purposefully, denying the aspects of money that make us afraid. This fear and lack of trust results in us closing our hand in selfishness, making it impossible to receive the blessings that God has to give us.

CONNECTION TIME

Take a few moments to focus on developing further connection as a group. If you have any new people, take time to introduce yourselves. To get to know each other a little better have everyone share the following: "If your friends and/or family were asked, what would they say drives your life?"

Last week we brainstormed a list of points of resistance to tithing for some Christians and a list of reasons why many followers of Christ are not resistant to tithing. You were asked to identify a point of resistance you may have in your life and to make it a matter of prayer this past week.

Have 2 to 3 people share:

What did you discover this past week in this time of seeking God about this?

LOOKING TO THE WORD: Matthew 6:24

Robert Morris states the following in “The Blessed Life”, on page 76-78:

“Jesus clearly suggests that it is possible to serve mammon instead of serving God, but He goes even further: Jesus states it is impossible to serve both at the same time.

He says that you will love the one and hate the other. You will be loyal to one and despise the other. According to Jesus, there is no middle ground - no half and-half...

*‘Mammon’ is an Aramaic word that essentially means “riches”...
...At the heart is an attitude that says: Man doesn’t need God. We’re self-sufficient. That is what the spirit of mammon tries to tell us: You don’t need God. Trust in riches! Mammon says to take; God says to give. Mammon is selfish; God is generous.”*

As a group consider the following statements and record your responses from the viewpoint of a heart that is focused on Mammon and the perspective of a heart led by a spirit of generosity:

When you see a need that someone has:

Mammon’s Response is:

Generosity’s Perspective is:

When you consider your situation of life:

Mammon’s Response is:

Generosity’s Perspective is:

When someone tells you “Wow, you have a beautiful house!”:

Mammon’s Response is:

Generosity’s Perspective is:

LOOK TO THE WORD: READ JOHN 15.1-17

What behaviors are evident in a person that is led by the spirit of mammon versus someone that has embraced an attitude and lifestyle of generosity?

God is consistent throughout the Bible to help us understand what is important to Him and how that should be revealed in our life. Break into two groups and read and discuss the following passages and identify how Jesus' message in Matthew 6:24 is reflected in these passages.

Group One – Luke 6:30-35

Group Two – Deuteronomy 15:7-15

DISCUSSION

Select two of the four statements below for further discussion. Depending on the size of your group either remain in two groups or come back together as one large group.

Please feel free to use additional Scripture, quotes from “The Blessed Life”, and your own personal life experience.

- 01 Giving is not a get-rich-quick scheme; it is a lay-down-your-life challenge.
- 02 A properly focused heart is more excited about the giving part than the receiving part.
- 03 Our attitudes toward possessions have a powerful ability to expose the true nature of our hearts.
- 04 You always receive back more than you give.

WRAP

If you haven't already come back into one group, do so now as you finish this section.

Have someone read the following excerpt from "The Blessed Life", pages 109-110:

"With God's help, we must develop a liberal or generous heart. Now I am not using the term "liberal" in the political sense. I'm talking about liberality – the practice of being generous and free with our material possessions.

Look once again at this verse about giving to the poor from the passage in Deuteronomy 15:14, "You shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. From what the Lord has blessed you with, you shall give to him.

We may not have threshing floors or winepresses nowadays, but we are still called to give liberally from that which God has blessed us. We are not to be stingy in our giving; we are to be generous. That's why we must cultivate a liberal heart.

This goes against the grain of our fallen natures, but it is perfectly consistent with the new natures we received when we gave our lives to Jesus. Often I say, "I was born selfish, but I was born again generous...I must come to trust that God will take care of me if I'm a generous giver."

Why is giving a challenge? What is it about removing something from my possession and placing into someone else's possession that can cause such anxiety?

Someone share a testimony of what you experienced as you dealt with something like this. What happened when you finally gave it?

In your quiet time this week, identify places in your life where the spirit of mammon is leading you. Seek God in this, reread the Scriptures from this lesson, and follow the direction of the Holy Spirit on how to move to a spirit of trust in God, and ultimately, a life of generosity.

Consider this prayer,

"Dear God, please forgive me for being selfish, prideful and covetous. Lord I ask you to break the spirit of mammon off of me, my family and my descendents. And help me, from this day forward, to be a generous, extravagant giver to the kingdom of God. In the name of Jesus. Amen."

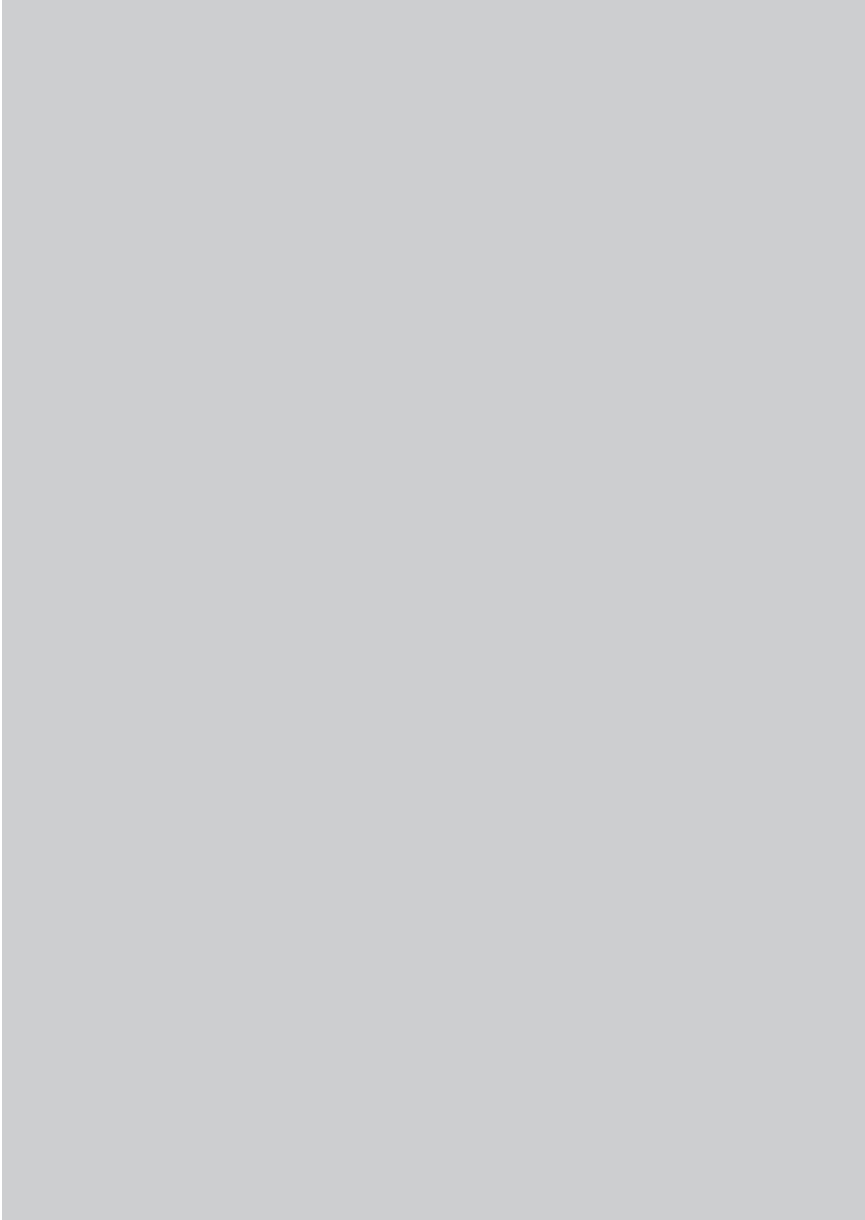
SCRIPTURE TO MEMORIZE AND MEDITATE ON THIS WEEK

Luke 6:38 “Give and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

NOTES

WEEK 03

NOTES FROM THIS SUNDAY'S SERMON:



THE FOCAL POINT

This week's study is based on chapters 7 - 9 in, "The Blessed Life":

Chapter Seven – Do the Right Thing

Chapter Eight – The Gift of Giving

Chapter Nine – God Rewards Good Stewardship

Week Two's study directed us to Jesus' teaching on the focus of our life; it is impossible to concurrently pursue Him and the riches of this world.

The point of focus of this week's study is that God stands ready and willing to provide all of heavens help if we will take a step of faith and begin. We are expected to live out what God has gifted and equipped us each to do, to literally be found faithful in giving, serving, and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone. At BattleCreek, we often articulate that as, "Tulsa, Pryor, America and the World." Our mission statement says, "To glorify God by helping...ALL PEOPLE...of ALL AGES...ALL the TIME, Advance in their journey with Christ."

CONNECTION TIME

Take a few moments to focus on developing further connection as a group. If you have any new people, take time to introduce yourselves. To get to know each other a little better, have everyone share the following: "As you have gone through this study what is one thing you have uncovered that you hope God will do in your life?"

Last week we were challenged to identify places in our life where the spirit of mammon is present, to seek God, pray and follow the direction of the Holy Spirit about it.

Have 2 to 3 people share:

What did you discover in your life and what did God challenge you to do?

LOOKING TO THE WORD: Matthew 24:45-47

Robert Morris states the following in "The Blessed Life", on page 156-157:

"Just prior to the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, Jesus, in talking about His unexpected return, asks a very pointed question: Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

03

What a question! "Who then is a faithful and wise servant?" Jesus is asking the same question today. He says that when the master returns, He wants to find His servants doing a good job with the things He has entrusted to them. When the Lord returns, will He find you being a good and faithful steward? Are you doing the best with what God has given you? Do you know where your money is going every month? Are you tithing, giving, witnessing and praying?"

As a group, share the differences between Ownership and Stewardship and record your responses:

Ownership

Stewardship

Do you recognize your role and responsibility in God's kingdom? As a steward, what has God placed into your care and what are you accountable to accomplish with it?

If you were God, what would you expect as a return on what has been entrusted to you in regard to your gifts, talents, abilities, life experience and even your finances?

God is consistent throughout the Bible to help us understand what is important to Him and how that should be revealed in our life. Depending on the size of your group, either choose one of the passages below and work through it, or divide into two groups, have each group take one of the passages, and work through the discussion statements in the next section. In your group(s), identify how Jesus' message in Matthew 24:45-47 is reflected in these passages:

Romans 12:6-16
1 Corinthians 3:8; Ephesians 2:8-10

DISCUSSION

Share your insights from the passages above, and then, select two of the four statements below for further discussion. Please feel free to use additional Scripture, quotes from "The Blessed Life", and your own personal life experience.

01 If you're going to live the lifestyle of a giver, you're going to have to make the lifestyle adjustments that allow you to give.

02 People, who have the gift of giving, don't want to be a Band-Aid. They want to be a cure.

03 We can't help others if we don't care for what God has given us.

04 Poor stewards lose resources. Good stewards receive more.

WRAP

If you chose to break into smaller groups for the discussion time, come back together as a whole group for this section.

Have someone read the following excerpt from "The Blessed Life", pages 157-158:

"Jesus said, "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (Luke 16:11) This shows us that God actually uses money to test our hearts; money tests our

stewardship and our trustworthiness. It's sobering to think about, but every day, God sees the purchases we make and the money we give. The test is our handling of money. The outcome of that test determines whether He can trust us with true riches or not. That's why, for the Christian, money is more than just a means for buying things. Jesus spent 30 percent of His time teaching on money for a reason.

As Matthew 6:21 shows us, God knows where our heart is by where our treasure is. If your testimony is "My heart is in the kingdom of God," your checkbook will either validate or refute that claim. It's likely that God thinks much more about stewardship than we do. I say that because it's woven throughout the fabric of the Bible.

As we've seen, the first instructions God gave Adam and Eve were stewardship related: Be fruitful, multiply, care for this Garden and leave that one tree alone! (See Genesis 1:28; 2:17)...We can't help others if we don't care for what God has given us. If we're not good stewards, it's going to limit our ability to help people and to advance the kingdom of God."

Do you agree that poor stewardship can keep us from being effective in the Kingdom? We know that God uses imperfect people to advance His purposes, but can you think of an example from Scripture, in which God elevated a person who was irresponsible with their gifts, talents and finances?

Someone share a testimony of an obstacle, that you allowed to come up in your life, that became a barrier to you accomplishing God's purpose in your life, and how when it was removed the results that were realized?

Who would ask the group to pray about an obstacle that you have that is hindering you from a life of true stewardship?

In your quiet time this week, read and meditate on Psalm 139:23-24. Ask God to show you any obstacle(s) you have in your life that is hindering more from being placed into your life for you to steward and use for the Kingdom.

If you have never taken NUCLEUS at BattleCreek, consider registering for the next study. It is a 6-week study that meets once a week to help you understand who you are and how God has gifted you. As well, you can identify a place of service at BattleCreek that best matches your gifts, talents, abilities and personality. There is information available at www.tcabc.com or you can call the church as well.

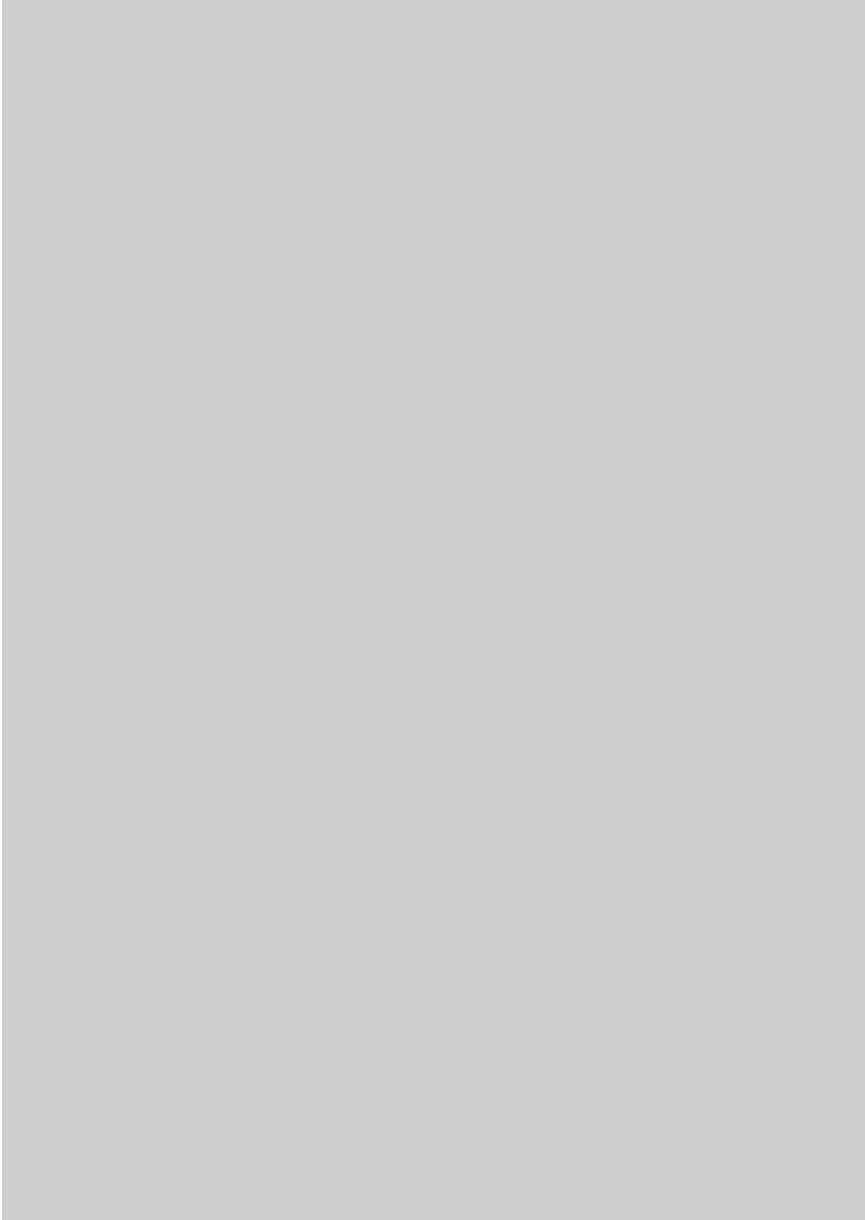
SCRIPTURE TO MEMORIZE AND MEDITATE ON THIS WEEK

Hebrews 11:6, “And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him.”

NOTES

WEEK 04

NOTES FROM THIS SUNDAY'S SERMON:



THE FOCAL POINT

This week's study is based on chapters 10 - 12 in, "The Blessed Life":
 Chapter Ten – Need, Greed or Seed
 Chapter Eleven– God Rewards Generosity
 Chapter Twelve – Guaranteed Financial Results

We have discovered in this study that generosity is defined as, "Liberality in giving or a willingness to give." Also, that Jesus taught us that there is a distinct choice that is made between serving the spirit of mammon, "an Aramaic word that means riches", or living a life of generosity where we are stewards of what God places into our care. Additionally, once we make the choice to be an obedient steward, there are decisions we must make and actions we must take in our finances, calendar, and life to truly experience the blessed life.

The point of focus of this week's study is understanding that once you give and you give cheerfully, God is willing and more than capable to make all grace abound to you. The outcome of that promise is that what God gives to you will be sufficient for all things.

CONNECTION TIME

Take a few moments to focus on developing further connection as a group. If you have any new people, take time to introduce yourselves. To get to know each other a little better have everyone finish the following sentence: "If I could do anything I wanted to, I would _____."

In your quiet time during week three, you were to read and meditate on Psalm 139:23-24.

Have 2 to 3 people share: What did God show you and what are you doing about it?

If one of the areas of your life that came up were finances and you would like to find some support, you need to know there are several resources at BattleCreek to help you. Two of those resources are CROWN and Financial Peace University (FPU). You can get more information about both of these ministries, on the church website or by calling the church office.

LOOKING TO THE WORD: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Robert Morris states the following in “The Blessed Life”, on pages 162-164:

“It would be impossible to write a Bible-based book on giving without spending some time in 2 Corinthians 9...Paul was about to send a couple of his helpers to the Corinthians to collect a special offering that they had said they wanted to give to the suffering Macedonian church. Paul says, (my paraphrase), ‘guys, you’ve said that you want to give a generous love offering, and I’ve been bragging on you to the other churches. Don’t embarrass yourselves (and me) by not following through!’

Paul writes: Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.’

This is the same truth Jesus communicated in Luke 6:38...this promise is given not to create our motivation for giving but to free us from fear and show us the reward of giving.

Paul also says, ‘decide in your heart how much to give.’ You are the only person on earth who can decide what the right level of giving is for you. It’s between you and the Spirit of God. God is not looking for tithes, offerings and gifts that are given ‘reluctantly or under compulsion.’ The blessed life is an outgrowth of ‘cheerful’ giving.”

What do you do to purpose in your heart what you should give?

What can you do to make it possible for God to do a work in your heart?

God is consistent throughout the Bible to help us understand what is important to Him and how that should be revealed in our life. Read the following passages, either individually or in breakout groups and identify how Paul’s message in 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 is reflected.

John 2:5; 12:1-8

DISCUSSION

Share your insights from the passages above, and then, select two of the four statements below for further discussion. Please feel free to use additional Scripture, quotes from “The Blessed Life”, and your own personal life experience.

01 You have to start where you are.

02 Wherever you find generosity, you will find selfishness battling for control.

03 It's not the amount; it's the heart.

04 We were all born ‘takers’; we are born-again ‘givers’.

WRAP

Why is God searching for hearts that are completely His?

As we conclude this study together, there is a question we must each answer, “Am I selfish or am I generous?” As you evaluate and search your own heart, as you consider all that God has placed into your life – salvation, family, possessions, work, hobbies, gifts, talents, abilities, friendships, absolutely all that you have – do you act as a steward or do you respond as an owner?

How will God know your answer to those questions?

Have someone read the following excerpt from “The Blessed Life”, page 205:

“Giving when the Lord leads, helping people know the love and goodness of God, keeping the focus on God rather than on things, being generous and allowing God to do a work in our hearts are the keys to making our journey on earth an adventure of joy and purpose. These are the keys to the blessed life.”

As you finish this study, please have a few people share a testimony of what God has done in their hearts.

Finish with a time of prayer for one another and for our church, as we seek to apply these principles to our lives and advance in our journey with Jesus Christ.

04

SCRIPTURE TO MEMORIZE AND MEDITATE ON THIS WEEK

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

NOTES

NOTES (cont.)

RESOURCES

Questions about Advance or Community Groups:

Church Office: 355-3699

Chris Campbell, Advance Pastor
ccampbell@tcabc.com

Fonda Cole, Community Group Coordinator
fcole@tcabc.com

Support Ministries:

Pastoral Care or Counseling
Vic St. Clair, Team Leader
Vic_StClair@yahoo.com

Premarital Counseling
Pat and Alan Gates
activemarriage@aol.com

Financial Stewardship Courses
Al and Glenda Baugher, Team Leader
glenda7032@cox.net

Personal Financial Money Coaches
Rick Teague, Crown Money Map Coach Coordinator
CROWN@tcabc.com

Benevolence
Jessica Smith, Missions Coordinator
jsmith@tcabc.com

Job Assistance Ministry (JAM)
Jim & Dianne Choate, JAM directors
JAM@tcabc.com

Food and Clothing Assistance
Julia Leinen, Safe Harbor Coordinator
Jleinen@gmail.com

