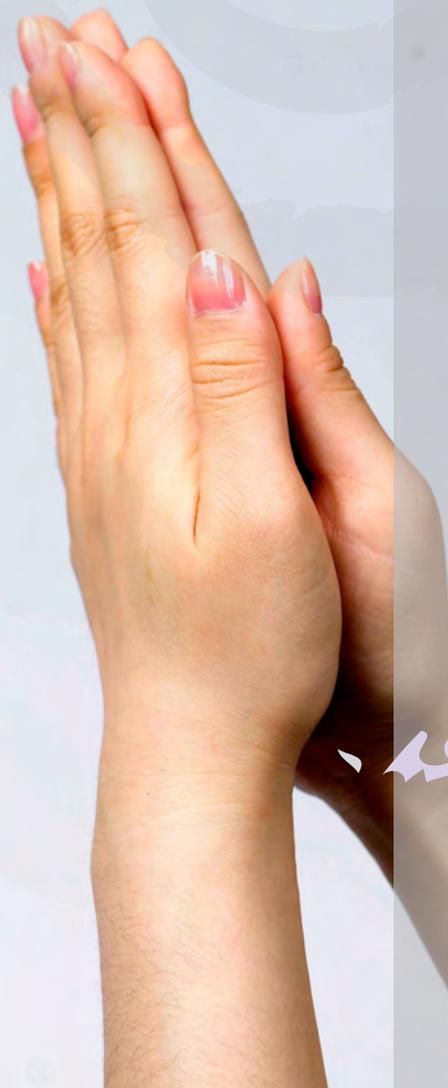




wisconsin conference
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS OR SMALL GROUP STUDY



Think
Greater

This four-session study is a component in the Think Greater! Stewardship Program, produced by and for the churches of the Wisconsin Annual Conference in 2012.

Each week of the study provides objectives, a theme verse for the session, and suggested and optional activities. Each exercise includes estimated duration.

You may select as many as needed to fit the time period of your sessions.

All Bible verses are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

Think Greater! Small Group Study or Class: Notes to Leader

PREPARATION

- Prior to the first session, provide participants with the following questions for consideration. Responses to these questions (and to questions shown at the beginning of each session) will help open discussion of the session theme. (*NOTE: These and other questions related to our relationship with money and with God are taken from the “Money Autobiography” process, as developed by Dan R. Dick and updated for use in the Think Greater campaign in 2012.*)
 - What is your happiest and/or unhappiest memory in connection with money?
 - Does money make you feel happy? Do you wish you had more? Would having less money make you less happy?
- Review each session prior to class time. Choose the exercises and activities you will use, making sure you will have adequate time for follow-up conversation and sharing.
- Prepare any necessary handouts.
- If an exercise requires the use of multimedia equipment, arrange for this before class time, and check that it is in working order before the class begins.

- Make sure the meeting room includes pens or pencils and several Bibles.
- Begin each session with prayer. Use your own or the one provided for each session.
- Greet participants by name, inviting new participants to share their responses to the questions from the opening exercise for session 1.
- Invite one of the participants to read the theme verse for the session.
- Read through the objectives for the session.

Talking about our relationship with money and our spirituality can be stressful. Allow participants to share as they are comfortable, and strive to create an environment in which all who wish to share feel safe doing so. This means inviting those who may need a bit of encouragement and helping those who tend to speak often make space for others to share.

Each session ends with a commitment to making a change that leads to more faithful stewardship. Encourage participants to share these commitments with one another. When we share our commitments to living as more faithful stewards, we are able to help one another, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to transform not only our individual lives but the life of the community of faith and the world in which we live and witness.

Think Greater Living

Session 1: Think Greater! Live Enthusiastically!

THEME VERSE

John 10:9-10: “I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

OBJECTIVES

1. Through the lens of our experience with money, examine what it means to live an abundant life.
2. Explore the concept of a healthy, balanced lifestyle.
3. Commit to making one change that will lead toward more abundant living.

OPENING (5-10 MINUTES)

- **Money Autobiography:** Ask participants to give their names and to share their response to the opening questions:

- What is your happiest and/or unhappiest memory in connection with money?
- Does money make you feel happy? Do you wish you had more? Would having less money make you less happy?

- Opening prayer. Use your own or the following (1–3 minutes):

Lord God Almighty, We accept your gift of abundance. Guide us as we study and learn to trust in your abundance. In the name of Jesus the sheep gate. Amen.

- Ask one of the participants to read the theme verse.
- Read the three objectives.

DEFINE “ABUNDANCE” (10–20 MINUTES)

Read the definition of abundance: “The state of

having a copious quantity; plentifulness of the good things of life; prosperity.” —New Oxford American Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 2005, ebook 2008

(NOTE: Select one or both of the following exercises, as time allows.)

Feelings and Attitudes about Money (10–15 minutes)

Put the following words on whiteboard/chalkboard or other display:

power security hope pleasure love
identity prestige comfort anxiety gift
protection need value burden tool

Ask participants to select the words that describe their feelings and attitudes about money.

Money and the Meaning of Life (15–20 minutes):

Distribute the handout (see page 15). Give the participants a few minutes to complete it and then discuss their answers in groups of 4 or 5. Invite reports back to the entire group.

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD (15–20 MINUTES)

Share this View of Stewardship:

Stewardship is a sense of indebtedness to God for all we have. We must constantly rely on God for sustenance and grace. Wesley understood the moral command behind “good” stewardship as a quality that gives back to God, not for personal merit but out of responsibility and gratitude. Faithful stewardship extends beyond the use of money. Wesley expected the totality of the Christian life, in speech, conduct, and influence over others, to reflect the same careful consideration of the gifts that God gives to each person.

—The Wesley Study Bible, Abingdon Press, 2009

Explore What the Biblical Witness Tells us About Stewardship. (Invite participants to share in reading the following.)

The Old Testament describes the steward in practical terms as both responsible and accountable for the affairs of the master's household. Passages such as Genesis 43 & 44 and Daniel 1 describe the role and function of the steward. Isaiah 22:15-21 tells us that the steward is ultimately accountable to the master for actions taken. And, in the words of Douglas John Hall from *The Steward* (Wipf & Stock, 2004):

“The passage also tells us a good deal about the qualities that are implied, generally, in the stewardly office. They are such attributes as humbleness of spirit, lack of pretension and ostentation, and parental behavior towards those for whose welfare the steward has responsibility.”

New Testament writers use the image of the steward metaphorically to describe our relationship with God. As stewards of God's mysteries, we are compelled, called, inspired and moved to care for the community and the world. We are accountable only to God, but completely so. Through the gift of God's love in Christ we have the authority to respond to the world in need. We will be held accountable for our response.

For example, Luke 12:48 tells us that,

“Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more.”

First Corinthians 4:1-2 provides the most direct statement of the metaphorical role of the steward:

“Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.”

These words from 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 help us to remember whose household we are managing.

“Let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours, and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's.”

And, finally, 1 Peter 4:7-11 reveals for us the nature of the mysteries for which we are responsible. They are no less than the Gospel story, the means of grace, our God given gifts and talents, our relationships, the words we speak and the work we do.

“The end of all things is at hand; therefore keep sane and sober for your prayers. Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another. As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever Amen.”

“Stewardship: Living the Balanced Life.”

Distribute the handout (see page 16). Ask participants to consider the elements that contribute to a balanced life and their lives in relation to these elements.

OPTIONAL EXERCISE (20–30 MINUTES)

View an excerpt from the movie, *Millions* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0366777/>) and discuss the values of the family depicted in relation to abundance.

LIVING OUR STEWARDSHIP (10–15 MINUTES)

When we share our commitments to live as more faithful stewards, we are able to help one another, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to transform not only our individual lives but also the life of the community of faith and the world in which we live and witness.

Invite each participant to reflect on the lessons from this time together and to commit, in writing, to making one change that will lead toward more abundant living. Invite each person to share his or her commitment with the group.

Session 1: This is the change I commit to make that will lead me to more abundant living:

Name:

Date:

Action Taken:

What has Changed:

1 week

1 month

6 months

PREPARE FOR SESSION 2 (2–3 MINUTES)

Together, read through the questions in the “Opening” of session 2 and choose three of them for reflection. Each person should prepare to share responses at the next session. Close with Prayer (1–2 minutes)

Think Greater giving

Session 2: Think Greater! Give Wholeheartedly!

THEME VERSE

Matthew 6:19-21: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

OBJECTIVES

1. Explore the meaning of generosity through the lens of our experience with money.
2. Examine the difference between “earthly treasures” and “treasures in heaven.”
3. Commit to taking one action that will lead toward living a more generous life.

OPENING (10–20 MINUTES)

- **OPTIONAL:** Play the song “How Much Is Enough?” by The Fixx (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xcuGBQWswg>) as participants enter the class. (NOTE: This activity could be used later in the session. See Optional Exercise.)
- Greet participants by name and invite new participants to consider their responses to the questions that opened session 1.
- Open with a prayer of your own or use the following:

Gracious Lord, You provide all we need to live full and giving lives. Help us to learn from your generosity—in our sharing today and in our actions in the world. We pray in the name of Jesus the Christ, who gave all for the sake of your kingdom. Amen.

- Ask a participant to read the Theme verse
- Read the objectives.

- **Money Autobiography:** Choose three or more of the following questions and ask the participants to share their responses.
 - Are you basically generous?
 - What was the most wonderful gift you ever received?
 - What was the most precious gift you ever gave?
 - Do you clearly understand how charities that you support spend your money?
 - Do you clearly understand what the church does with your money?
 - Do you like to buy things for other people? When you eat out, do you pick up the check? For whom are you most likely to buy things?
 - Do you tend to be on the giving end or the receiving end more often in your life? How do you feel about it?
 - If you have money, and another person has financial need, will you offer assistance?
 - The New Testament is clear that our individual wealth is to be used for the common good. What does this mean to you? Does anyone have a legitimate right to your wealth besides you?

JESUS AND MONEY: SCRIPTURE EXPLORED (15-20 MINUTES)

Jesus talked much about money. Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables were concerned with money and possessions. In the Gospels, an amazing one out of ten verses (288 in all) deals directly with the subject of money. The Bible offers 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 verses on faith, but more than 2,000 verses on money and possessions. —Howard L. Dayton Jr., *Leadership 2*, no. 2 Spring 1981: 62

The parables we explore in this study, and the others in which money and possessions play a principal part, are not about money alone. Through them, Jesus teaches us about the relationship between faith and possessions, and the spirituality that is the fruit of that relationship.

Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

Jesus provides a corrective to the assumption that we are all called to give away all we own and live in abject poverty. Zacchaeus is outcast—Jesus embraces his company. Zacchaeus gives away half of his wealth out of joy and freedom. Jesus never calls him to do this, or to give more. This is the lesson of true stewardship—giving out of our abundant joy in the love we have received from God in Christ.

Ask participants to read the passage in parts. You will need: narrator, Zacchaeus, Jesus, the crowd

Narrator: He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him,

Jesus: “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.”

Narrator: So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said,

Crowd: “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.”

Zacchaeus: “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.”

Narrator: Then Jesus said to him,

Jesus: “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

Ask participants to discuss this parable in groups of 4 to 5, reflecting on the following questions:

- What does this Scripture passage tell us about God?

- What does this Scripture passage tell us about humans?
- What does this Scripture passage tell us about the relationship between God and humankind?
- How does this change your understanding of generosity?

After the small groups have had the opportunity to discuss the questions, invite them to share their learning with the entire group.

BATTLE FOR THE HEART: GOD VS. MAMMON (15–20 MINUTES)

Distribute the worksheet (see page 17). Have the participants complete the handout in small groups of 4 or 5. After they have had time to prepare responses, invite the entire group to discuss the impact of culture on our relationship with money and our understanding of generosity.

OPTIONAL EXERCISE (15–20 MINUTES)

(NOTE: If you choose to use the song “How Much Is Enough?” as an optional activity, insert it here and follow the playing of the song with a discussion of the insights offered as related to the concept of “enough.” Ask participants to answer the question posed by the song’s title.

LIVING OUR STEWARDSHIP (10–15 MINUTES)

When we share our commitments to live as more faithful stewards, we are able to help one another, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to transform not only our individual lives but also the life of the community of faith and the world in which we live and witness.

Invite each participant to reflect on the lessons from this time together and to commit, in writing, to making one change that will lead toward more generous living. Invite each person to share his or her commitment with the group.

Session 2: This is the change I commit to make that will lead me to living a more generous life:

Name:

Date:

Action Taken:

What has Changed:

1 week

1 month

6 months

**PREPARE FOR SESSION 3
(2-3 MINUTES)**

CLOSE WITH PRAYER (1-2 MINUTES)

Together, read through the questions in the “Opening” of session 3. Each person should prepare to share responses at the next session.

Think Greater *Loving*

Session 3: Think Greater! Love Unconditionally!

THEME VERSE

Luke 10:25-28: Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

OBJECTIVES

1. Examine the two great commandments through the lens of our experience with money.
2. Explore what it means to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.
3. Commit to taking one action that will lead you toward a more loving life.

OPENING (5–10 MINUTES)

- Greet participants by name and invite new participants to consider their responses to the opening questions from session 1.
- Opening prayer. Choose your own or use the following:

Loving Spirit, teach us to love as you love. Teach us to become and to share your love in the world. Through the self-giving love of Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.
- Ask a participant to read the theme verse.
- Read the objectives.
- **Money Autobiography:** Use the following questions to start discussion:

- How do you feel when you are approached on the street by someone asking for money?
- Two-thirds of the world’s population lives below the poverty level. How does this make you feel?

IN THE WORLD OR OF THE WORLD? (10–15 MINUTES)

Hand out the worksheets (see page 18). Ask participants to work on it in groups of 4 or 5. After they have had time to discuss, ask if any would share their learning.

JESUS AND MONEY: SCRIPTURE EXPLORED (15–20 MINUTES)

The parables we explore in this study, and the others in which money and possessions play a principal part, are not about money alone. Through them, Jesus teaches us about the relationship between faith and possessions, and the spirituality that is the fruit of that relationship.

The Rich Young Ruler (Luke 18:18-30)

There are different versions of this story in three of the Gospels. Mark does not identify him as a ruler; Matthew says he is young. But in all versions of the story, Jesus loves the man and recognizes his slavery to his wealth. Jesus never says wealth is evil, or that the man is evil—only how sad it is when wealth gets in the way of our relationships with God. Worldly wealth can be an obstacle to discipleship. We cannot grasp God without letting go of money.

Ask the participants to read the passage in parts. You will need: narrator, young ruler, Jesus, Peter, crowd.

Narrator: A certain ruler asked him,

Young Ruler: “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Narrator: Jesus said to him,

Jesus: “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother.’”

Narrator: He replied,

Jesus: “I have kept all these since my youth.”

Narrator: When Jesus heard this, he said to him,

Jesus: “There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

Narrator: But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. Jesus looked at him and said,

Jesus: “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

Narrator: Those who heard it said,

Crowd: “Then who can be saved?”

Narrator: He replied,

Jesus: “What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.”

Narrator: Then Peter said,

Peter: “Look, we have left our homes and followed you.”

Narrator: And he said to them,

Jesus: “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.”

Ask the participants to reflect on the parable in groups of 4 or 5.

- What does this Scripture passage tell us about God?
- What does this Scripture passage tell us about humans?
- What does this Scripture passage tell us about the relationship between God and humankind?
- How does this change your understanding of loving God and neighbor?

After the small groups have had the opportunity to discuss the questions, ask if any are willing to share their learning with the entire group.

OPTIONAL EXERCISE (30–45 MINUTES)

View an excerpt (we recommend the entire dinner scene, including the general’s speech on grace) from the movie *Babette’s Feast* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0092603/>) and discuss the lessons of unconditional love learned through the sacrificial generosity of a stranger.

LIVING OUR STEWARDSHIP

When we share our commitments to live as more faithful stewards, we are able to help one another, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to transform not only our individual lives but also the life of the community of faith and the world in which we live and witness.

Invite each participant to reflect on the lessons from this time together and to commit, in writing, to making one change that will lead toward a more loving life. Invite each person to share his or her commitment with the group.

Session 3: This is the change I commit to make that will lead me to living a more loving life:

Name:

Date:

Action Taken:

What has Changed:

1 week

1 month

6 months

PREPARE FOR SESSION FOUR

Distribute the handout “Keys to Faithful Stewardship: The Means of Grace” (see page 19). Read through it and ask the participants to prayerfully consider the relationship between the means of grace and stewardship and to prepare to share their insights and ideas at the next session.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Think Greater

Session 4: Think Greater! Beyond All Expectations!

THEME VERSE

John 14:12: “Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.”

OBJECTIVES

1. Examine the concept of doing “greater works” than Jesus through the lens of our experience with money.
2. Explore ways in which faithful stewardship contributes to the fulfillment of our mission and helps to transform the world into the kingdom of God.
3. Commit to taking an action you have never considered before.

OPENING (5–10 MINUTES)

- Greet participants by name and invite new participants to reflect on the opening questions from session 1.
- Open with a prayer. Choose your own or use the following:

Mighty and Loving God, open our hearts to receive your grace. Open our minds to accept the truth of your grace and to trust in your will for our lives. Open our hands, our mouths, and our community, to become your grace, to live as faithful stewards of your grace in and for the world. In the name of Jesus the Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

- Ask a participant to read the theme verse.
- Read the objectives.
- Use one or more of the following questions to start discussion:
 - How has your relationship with God been influenced by your relationship with money?

- In what ways does money create an obstacle to faithful Christian discipleship? In what ways does money make discipleship easier?
- In what ways is money a spiritual issue? What can you do to improve your relationship with money? In what ways can God help you with your relationship with money and material wealth?

KEYS TO FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP: THE MEANS OF GRACE (10–15 MINUTES)

Using the handout distributed at the end of session 3 (see page 19), ask participants to discuss their responses in groups of 4 or 5. Ask the groups to share their responses with the entire group. Use these questions to guide the larger discussion:

- In what ways do the means of grace deepen our trust in and knowledge of God’s will for our lives?
- What will have to change in our individual and shared practice of the means of grace in order for us to do “greater works” than the works of Jesus—to live as disciples who transform the world into the kingdom of God?

JESUS AND MONEY: SCRIPTURE EXPLORED (15–20 MINUTES)

The parables we explore in this study, and the others in which money and possessions play a principal part, are not about money alone. Through them, Jesus teaches us about the relationship between faith and possessions, and the spirituality that is the fruit of that relationship.

The Widow’s Offering (Luke 21:1-4)

Jesus does not prescribe behavior—he comments on the spiritual life of individuals through their relationship with money. Sacrifice is a critical part of discipleship. Giving involves the whole person; the amount is not the point.

Ask one of the participants to read the passage:

He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.”

Ask participants to discuss this parable in groups of 4 or 5, reflecting on the following questions:

- What does this Scripture passage tell us about God?
- What does this Scripture passage tell us about humans?
- What does this Scripture passage tell us about the relationship between God and humankind?
- How does this change your understanding of giving beyond all expectations?

After the small groups have had the opportunity to discuss the questions, invite them to share their learning with the entire group.

LIVING OUR STEWARDSHIP

When we share our commitments to live as more faithful stewards, we are able to help one another, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to transform not only our individual lives but also the life of the community of faith and the world in which we live and witness.

Invite each participant to reflect on the lessons from this time together and commit, in writing, to taking one action he or she has never taken before that will lead toward more faithful stewardship—to imagining and accomplishing “greater works” than the works of Jesus! Invite each person to share his or her commitment with the group.

Session 4: This is the new action I commit to taking that will lead me into more faithful stewardship of God’s gifts of grace and the power to transform the world into the kingdom of God:

Action Taken:

1 week

1 month

6 months

What has Changed:

CLOSING (15–20 MINUTES)

Invite each participant to share an update on one of the commitments made in the course of the study. As each person completes his or her sharing, celebrate with these words: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (see Matthew 25:21).

When all participants who wish to share have done so, offer a prayer of thanksgiving and encouragement for the shared work of healing our relationship with money and deepening our relationship with God. You may use the following:

Gracious and Loving God, your act of loving creation graces us before we even know you. You give yourself to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ to show us how to love the world. You fill us with the power of your Holy Spirit, to inspire and guide us toward faithful stewardship of your love, your living, your giving, and your grace. Let the lessons of our time together lead us to shine your love in and through the world, that by our stewardship of your gifts, we may transform the world into the loving creation you envision for us and for all people. In the name of God the Creator, Christ the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit that sustains us, we pray. Amen.

Session One:
Live Enthusiastically!
Money and the Meaning of Life



(Circle the statement in each row with which you most strongly agree.)

Money is a means to an end

Money is an end in itself

It is wiser to save for the future

It is wiser to spend now while you have it

God will provide

God helps those who help themselves

God's blessings are material

God's blessings are spiritual

God is the owner, we are the caretakers

We are the owner of what God gives us

Giving is a matter of personal choice

Giving is a mandate to God's people

Money management is a spiritual issue

Money management is a secular issue

Wealthy people are entitled
to their wealth

Wealthy people have a responsibility to
share their wealth

Wealth poses no problem for faithful discipleship

Wealth is a hindrance to faithful discipleship

Poverty is a virtue

Poverty is a curse

God favors the wealthy

God favors the poor

SESSION TWO: **Think Greater**
Give Wholeheartedly *giving*
The Battle for the Heart: God vs. Mammon

What are some of the cultural symbols and images that represent “the good life?”

What are some of the “things” of this world that you are attached to? What “things” would you have a hard time letting go of?

What is your deepest yearning? What is the greatest desire of your heart?

How does this yearning/desire relate to money?

If you received a check for \$500,000 in the mail, no strings attached, what would you do with it?

Session 3:
Love Unconditionally
In the World or Of the World?

**Think
Greater**
loving



How do your values and beliefs relate to God's will for your life?

How does your day-to-day life reflect/not reflect your values and beliefs?

What are the barriers to living more fully in God's will?

What would help you overcome those barriers?

Keys to Faithful Stewardship: The Means of Grace

In order for our faith to have a positive impact on our relationship with money, we require three (at least) essential ingredients for success: prayer, scripture, and Christian community.

Prayer — It takes courage to bring our worldly wealth into the realm of our prayer life. To do so is to acknowledge that our faith does indeed impact our relationship with money. If we seriously pray about the way we relate to money—the way we get it, spend it, keep it, give it, and desire it—we will find that our money behavior changes.

Scripture — Reading more than a page or two of any gospel will bring us in contact with a biblical teaching about money. Repeatedly, the challenge to examine our money relationship is placed before us. An honest and open reading of Scripture will not allow us to deny the relationship between faith, money, and spirituality.

Christian Community — Money has become the new taboo of our age. Money is power, a tool for judging self and others, a badge of honor and accomplishment, and a source of security. For these reasons, it exerts an enormous hold on our lives. To discuss money openly, to share this intimate truth, is to shatter the hold money has on us, and places us back squarely under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. No one can have two masters. The more money consumes us, the less there is of us for God.

