

Balanced
Week 4: A New Line Item
September 6th, 2020

OPENING PRAYER

Have someone in the group invite God's Holy Spirit into our presence. Pray for your encounter with God's Word. Ask God to open your heart and mind to some new understanding and especially to a new way of life.

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

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|------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| ~Safe Group | ~Silence | ~Sharing |
| ~Confidentiality | ~No Cross Talk | ~Self-Aware |
| ~Listen | ~No Fixing | ~"I" Statements |
| ~Pause | ~No Rescuing | ~Handle Conflict
Biblically |

INTRODUCTION

Standard household budgets include line items for...

...living expenses.

...food.

...insurance.

...entertainment.

...savings.

...emergencies.

But do we have a line item for...giving?

While few households think they are downright selfish, giving tends to be an afterthought. If you have some extra at the end of the month, then you can exercise some generosity and give some of your money away. *"Sure, I've got a couple extra bucks to support some charitable cause or to give to my church."*

But more times than not, most of us don't feel we have enough at the end of the month. This is because our lifestyles tend to chase our incomes.

Now, there are certainly those that have a lot of extra cash at the end of the month. But the truth is, most of us have some “extra.” We have more square footage, more cars, more clothes, more food, and more discretionary income than most of the world. This becomes increasingly evident whenever we’re around people who have a lot less than we do.

The problem is not the extra. The problem is our *view* of the extra. Until we understand why we have so much, we’ll never know what to do with it. Jesus told a story about a man who answered the *why* question all wrong. He told us the story so we could get it right.

Read *Luke 12:13-21*

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PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Giving Plan

This week, you’ll work on the Giving Plan. You’ll assess your current giving and develop a long-term plan for investing the money God has given you to help others.

Continue to Track Spending

You will continue to write down your purchases for the week. Eventually, you will come back to these, put them in categories, and then use them to analyze your monthly budget.

WEEKLY GROUP DISCUSSION:

So far we’ve looked at where money comes from. To do that, we’ve had to answer the “who” question: Who does our money come from? The

question we need to ask now is a little more uncomfortable. It's the "why" question: *Why* do we have so much?

DISCUSSION STARTER

What did you find helpful as you worked through the Giving Plan? Were you surprised at how much or how little you currently spend on helping others?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- **Do you consider yourself to be rich? Why or why not?**
- **Why is it so difficult to recognize greed in the mirror? What are some signs?**
- **What prevents us from sharing what we have with others?**
- **When have you been able to meet someone else's needs? How did that feel?**
- **Why is it important to be a consistent and percentage giver?**
- **What steps can you take to consistently practice generosity with your finances?**

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Pray for one another, for those that might be absent and for prayer requests.