

I GOT IT.

April 9 & 10

MONEY

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INTRODUCTION

It's interesting to think that where we give our focus can change how we live our lives. It's not a revolutionary thought, but when we really stop to look at how differently we live when we focus on Jesus versus when we focus on anything else, we might be surprised! One way we might be able to tell what we're allowing to guide our lives is to look at how we've used our money. Were our financial decisions made out of fear of the unknown or faith in the unseen? Were we overconfident in our self-sufficiency, or were we humbly dependent on the God who's able? Were we focused on what we wanted, allowing skewed priorities to override our attention toward our good Father? In today's teaching, we learn how a shift in focus from ourselves to our gracious God can also shift how we handle our money. Keeping our eyes on the gift of Jesus leads us from being too ridged or too reckless with our finances to instead being responsive to His example of gracious generosity.

DISCUSSION

1. **Read Jeremiah 2:13.** Consider the exchange Jeremiah says God's people made: abandoning the fountain of living water for cracked tanks they put together themselves. Google "cistern," discuss the difference between the two and why they may have been chosen to illustrate this change in relationship.
2. **Read Jeremiah 2:11.** What might exchanging God for other idols –selfishness, fear, desire for control, etc. - do to how we handle our money?
3. Do you feel you're more likely to be reckless with your finances or rigid? What do you think initiated those habits, and what's causing them to continue or stop?
4. How might remembering God's generosity toward us change the way we manage our time, energy and giving?

THINK ABOUT IT

There's no blanket statement to be said about how to manage your money in every situation. Some moments require the discipline of savvy saving, others require the faith of generous giving. Regardless of where we find ourselves, we're more likely to make a Holy Spirit responsive choice when we make a habit of staying in tune with His leading day-to-day and avoiding our tendency to seek out other things as our guide and God. How we handle our money is just one area that can indicate when we get distracted by our idols but can be a primary reminder of how dividing our time and attention to other things will inevitably drain us of the peace, joy and freedom God wants to give us. When we're spending time with God, staying in tune with His Spirit and remembering what a gracious gift Jesus is, we're more able to follow Him with thankful generosity – even through the most difficult times.

DO SOMETHING

1. Keeping our focus on Jesus isn't always easy. Take some time this week to note what things drive you. What do you structure your day around? What's the biggest factor you consider when you make decisions? When you need to be refreshed, what do you go to first? At the end of the week, share what you notice with a trusted friend who will encourage you to shift your focus.
2. **Read 2 Corinthians 8:7-15.** Check your gratitude and your generosity. Make a list of all of the intangible gifts you know God's given you – the ones money can't buy. Then make a list of the tangible gifts – the ones that you have because God's provided financially. Take some time to tell Him how you feel about the lists you've made, and ask Him to help you respond with joyful generosity toward others.
3. Make a move toward learning more about what God says about money. Check out the next Financial Peace University class offered at your campus or online at daveramsey.com and consider if it might be a good next step for you!