

Upgrade Your Finances (Part 1)

Life Group Agenda for the week of June 5th through June 11th

WELCOME (15 min) – Welcome everyone. This is a time for us to focus outward on our relationships with one another. Share the Goals and 1 Guideline. This week, we are beginning a new series titled, “Upgrade.” Let’s **stop and pray** for our church at this time.

WORSHIP (15 min) – This is a time for us to focus upward on our relationship with the Lord. Prepare a creative worship time that can be enjoyed by Children as well as adults/teens (*you will be releasing the Children to their Kids Slot time after the worship*).

WORD (45 min) – This is a time for us to focus inward and discover what the Lord is saying to us individually and collectively through His Word. **This week’s truth to be shared: Financial struggles keep many people from experiencing God’s great plans for their lives. Trusting God with our finances is the only way we can fully experience God’s plans.**

If you had all the money in the world and could use that money to change the world, where would you start? Would you build orphanages in Africa for those whose parents had died of AIDS? Would you correct the troubling state of our nation’s educational system? Would you invest in technologies or research with the potential to improve the world for all? Most of us have probably never even approached this question. For many of us, this question is irrelevant – we gave up a long time ago the prospect of having any significant wealth or the opportunity to benefit others through such wealth. We see the obstacles before us as financial, when in reality they are obstacles of faith.

We often fail to see the connection between our finances and trusting in the Lord. We routinely spend excessively on garbage like fast food, entertainment, and material items. We rationalize, “It’s not that I don’t trust God – I even tithe! I just want some Popeyes!” Now, there’s nothing wrong about eating fast food, enjoying entertainment, or purchasing material items. However, if we’re not careful, the legacy we leave will be one of empty packets of ketchup and mall receipts.

If we will trust God with our finances, He will help us to build a legacy that will inspire future generations to place their faith in the Lord. Few of us will become millionaires or billionaires, but we can still have a hand in God’s great works by trusting Him with our finances. Our finances will either keep us from experiencing God’s plan for our lives or they will enable us to experience God’s plan for our lives. This will be determined by how much we trust God with our finances.

INTRODUCTION: What would be the difference in your spending if Donald Trump signed a blank check to you or if Pastor Dennis did?

Allow 5 – 7 minutes for this question.

OBSERVATION: Read Proverbs 3:5-10. What are the tangible results of trusting in the Lord?

Spend about 5 – 7 minutes on this question.

Seldom does Scripture point to tangible results for vague or abstract commands such as trusting in the Lord. Here, the reader is told that this trust will bring health to one’s body, nourishment to one’s bones, overflowing barns (for those that don’t work on a farm, that’s a good thing), and vats will overflow with, uh, grape juice.

UNDERSTANDING: Notice the direct connection between trusting God and health and wealth. Why should we expect trusting in the LORD to bring us health and wealth? Does it have anything to do with supporting televangelists? How does this work?

Spend about 10 minutes on this question.

The problem with the health and wealth gospels we hear from so many televangelists is that they actually elevate health and wealth over the trusting of God. Studies have shown that religious involvement can indeed increase a person's life expectancy. To be clear, this Scripture is not promising to give us health and wealth despite our habitually making poor decisions with our health and finances. By trusting in the LORD, we keep from making poor decisions with our health and finances in the first place. This is not God's promise to "undo" our unsound financial decisions as much as it is His promise to steer us toward sound financial decisions like saving, tithing, and forming a budget.

UNDERSTANDING: Do you find it easier to trust others with big things or with small things? Do you consider your finances to be a big thing or a small thing? If we consider God trustworthy, what keeps us from actually trusting Him with our finances?

This initial question may seem fairly cut and dry, but dig a little deeper. I would trust almost anybody to keep one of my children alive – that's a relatively big thing. Most folks won't mess that one up. However, when it comes to the small, daily decisions and actions that are part of raising my children in the ways of God, I trust very few people. This begs 2 questions: 1) Do I more easily trust others with bigger or smaller items? And 2) Are my finances a bigger or smaller item in this case? Most of us would easily consider God very trustworthy. If that's the case, why are we so resistant to trust him with items that seem, by comparison to the other things we trust God with, fairly small? We trust God with our personal safety, with our salvation, and many of our big decisions. Why is it so hard to trust Him with our finances?

APPLICATION: How do you actually go about trusting God with your finances? What steps must you take to decisively trust Him with your finances?

Spend about 10 minutes on this question.

Challenge people to be specific without necessarily divulging private details of their finances. Search for answers that correspond with the week's sermon, such as developing a budget, saving, tithing, or reducing debt or excessive spending.

PRAY: Ask God to transform the way you see your finances and to give you the courage to trust Him with your finances. This will ultimately empower us to fully experience God's plans for our lives.

WITNESS (15 min) – This is a time for us to focus outward on our ministry to the world.

- ❖ Share any praise reports from your FRAN list that you've been praying for.
- ❖ Sunday, June 26th – I Want to KNOW Lunch
- ❖ Don't stop... SERVE LIKE CRAZY, plan your Life Groups next serve event.
- ❖ Make Shared Ministry Assignments and then Fellowship together.

(Now is the time to welcome the children back into the group and let them share something about what they've learned. Have a brief time of prayer with the whole group before fellowship).