

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

If money could talk, money would say, "I actually can make you happy (if you manage me well)."

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:14-30, Psalm 24:1-2

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. This discussion may be challenging for people, so make sure the icebreaker is lighthearted. Also, make sure to acknowledge that nobody is perfect with their money. No one is immune from making stupid consumer choices or making frivolous purchases. Have lots of grace and have fun with this conversation. Managing money well is a joy; have fun while discussing it.
2. This discussion is grounded in the theological understanding that anything we possess occurs within a larger awareness of God's ownership of everything. God is the ground of all reality, and everything belongs to God, including our individual lives.
3. What does the phrase "the love of money mean?" A simple way to define it would be the common impulse to believe that a little more money will make us content.
4. Suppose we also understand that God is good and intends for humans to govern wisely and work toward the flourishing of God's creation. In that case, it is compelling, comforting, and inspiring to recognize that we get to oversee and steward what belongs to God. We are at home in God's good world like a kid in his parent's castle.
5. How could managing our money well make us happy? For one, there is pleasure and satisfaction in anything that is managed well. Ask any employee who works in an environment with wise leadership and management. Second, when our habits align with our values, happiness is the result. So, when our money, a powerful tool in our society, is aligned with what we value most, that brings satisfaction. One of the best predictors of happiness and joy is meaning. When we find meaning in something bigger than ourselves and our money is connected to it, that brings satisfaction and joy.
6. When it comes to money, it does tell us what we value the most. Values can be aspirational or actual. An aspirational value is what we want to value but is not yet true of our behavior, family, or organization. Actual values are the behaviors that reveal what is really most important to us. Wherever we are spending our money will tell us what matters to us most. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." – Matthew 6:21. You could put it like this: "Where your investment is, there your heart will be also." Where are you investing your life?
7. Get the group thinking about how they can grow in their managing of money. There are tremendous resources available to anyone who would want to grow in managing their money well. COMMUNITY regularly offers the CAP money course. Keep an eye out for it this fall. There are also many tracking and budgeting apps available, like Mint, which can be found at www.mint.com.