



# **Sermon Series Devotional**

November 12 - December 2

Hinckley First United Methodist Church

# Introduction

Money is not exactly a topic that most people feel comfortable talking about with others. We are not eager to share the details of our paycheck, our IRA, or our giving statements to the local church. That didn't stop Jesus though. During his three years of public ministry, Jesus talked more about money than almost anything else. Jesus called people to relate their faith to the entirety of their life, which includes our personal finances. During this series we will be focusing on the relationship between our faith and our finances. We'll be guided by the Bible and the timeless wisdom of John Wesley who advised people to earn all they can, save all they can, and give all they can.

## Why a Devotional?

A vibrant and authentic faith is not grown merely in one hour on Sunday morning. This devotional will give you the opportunity to engage with God's word on a regular basis as you seek to become more like Christ each day. There is a daily Bible reading plan, as well as reflection questions that are linked with each week of the sermon series. You can use this devotional individually or in a formal or informal small group.

# Daily Bible Reading Plan

November 12 - Worship

November 13 - Luke 12:13-34

November 14 - Prov. 28:19-28

November 15 - Eccles. 5:8-20

November 16 - Exodus 23:1-13

November 17 - Deut. 8:1-20

November 18 - Proverbs 6:6-11

November 19 - Worship

November 20 - 1 Tim. 6:6-12

November 21 - Matt. 6:19-24

November 22 - Matt. 6:25-34

November 23 - James 5:1-6

November 24 - Philipp. 4:10-20

November 25 - Proverbs 13:11

November 26 - Worship

November 27 - 1 Tim. 6:17-19

November 28 - Luke 6:32-35

November 29 - Matthew 6:2-5

November 30 - Matt. 19:16-30

December 1 - Matt. 25:14-30

December 2 - Proverbs 11:24-27

December 3 - Worship

- Begin your time with prayer. Ask God to speak to you, for Jesus to be revealed to you, and for the Holy Spirit to fill you as you read these words of Scripture.

- Slowly, thoughtfully, read God's Word. Pay particular attention to words or phrases that stand out to you. Write them down or take time to memorize them.

- Consider how this Scripture connects with your life today. What may God be inviting you to do, challenging you to learn, or calling you to change?

# Week 1

## Earn All You Can

"We ought to gain all we can gain without buying gold too dear, without paying more for it than it is worth. But this it is certain we ought not to do: we ought not to gain money at the expense of life; nor at the expense of our health... We are to gain all we can without hurting our mind [soul]... We are to gain all we can without hurting our neighbor."

- John Wesley, "The Use of Money"

- Does John Wesley's instruction to "earn all you can" surprise you? What has been your experience about the attitude of the church toward financial success?

- In what ways is "earning all you can" honoring to God? In what ways can "earning all you can" not be honoring to God?

- What is the distinction between the instruction to "earn all you can" and the sin of greed or the lust for more? How do you know where the line is between those?

- Wesley set boundaries on earning all you can. He said it should not come at the expense of life or health, mind or soul, and neighbor. Which of these three boundaries is (or was) most challenging to you?

# Week 2

## Save All You Can

"Having gained all you can, by honest wisdom and unwearied diligence, the second rule of Christian prudence is, 'Save all you can.' Do not throw it away in idle expenses, which is just the same as throwing it into the sea. Expend no part of it merely to gratify the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life."

- John Wesley, "The Use of Money"

- In your perception, what are the biggest barriers to "saving all you can" that exist in your life or in the world today?

- John Wesley advises care in not "wasting" money to "gain the admiration of others" or to "indulge our own desires." Consider how and why you use your money. Do you buy anything to make yourself look good? Is "treating yourself" to something nice a waste? Why or why not?

- Read Matthew 6:25-34. What does this passage add to your thinking about the instruction to "save all you can"? What is to be the motivation behind saving all you can?

- What does contentment mean to you? How are you able to find and practice contentment in your life?

# Week 3

## Give All You Can

"If those who 'gain all they can' and 'save all they can' will likewise 'give all they can,' then the more they gain the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven."

- John Wesley, "The Use of Money"

- What fears or obstacles stand in the way of you being more generous? Is there anything that would help you to overcome those feelings?

- Generosity, John Wesley asserts in the quotation above, is a way to "grow in grace." How do you see generosity as a way in which you grow in grace? Can you give an example from your life?

- In his book *Simple Rules for Money*, James Harnish writes, "John Wesley's rules are not about fund-raising for the church; they are about becoming more like Christ. They are about practicing the spiritual discipline of generosity so that we become generous people whose lives are shaped in the likeness of an extravagantly generous God." How have you seen God's generosity in your life? How do you see your generosity as a response to or an imitation of God's generosity?

- The main character in the Broadway show *Hello, Dolly* states, "Money is like manure; it's not worth a thing unless it's spread around encouraging things to grow." Do you agree? Why or why not?