

FROM THE DIRECTOR



What would you say is *essential* for daily living?

In *Becoming Money Smart*, Max Lucado writes: "In 1900, the average person

living in the United States wanted 72 different things and considered 18 of them essential. Today, the average person wants 500 things and considers 100 of them essential."

He goes on to describe our culture's "obsession with stuff", pointing out that the itch for things such as approval, applause, status, and stuff has a "growling stomach" that can derail us from God's intended design for our lives.

In this issue of *Stewardship Spotlight*, we invite you to grab a cup of coffee and reflect with us on what is essential from God's point of view. And how becoming money smart, living like no one else, and adopting an upside-down-turn-around lifestyle can give us lasting joy as we follow the Lord together.

Serving the Lord with you,



Henry Doorn, Jr. – Executive Director

Choosing an "Upside-Down-Turn-Around" Lifestyle

In his book *The Pursuit of Happiness*, David Meyers tells us that when researchers asked, "What hampers your search for the good life?" the top answer was, "We're short of money."

Most people think that improving their financial situation by 10 to 20 percent will increase their happiness. The problem is, that bit of common wisdom is wrong. Research shows that once a person's basic needs are met, money has little to do with his or her sense of well-being. The Irish are happier than Americans even though Americans are much more affluent. Swedes are happier than Canadians even though Canadians on average make more money than their Scandinavian counterparts.

Remarkably, more extra cash doesn't make us happier!

So what does correlate with happiness? It's the attitude of which Paul speaks in his letter to the Philippians: contentment. When we are content with our income, we are much more likely to be happy. The old saying is true: Satisfaction isn't so much getting what you want as wanting what you have.

Continued on back

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Lifestyle *Continued from front*

Musician Ken Medema sings a wonderful song called "Pockets" about Alice, a little girl who cannot run and skip. It's not because she is sick. It's because she has a dress covered with pockets filled with all her stuff. Alice carries her stuff with her everywhere. One day, Alice goes to a fair and rides the "upside-down-turn-around machine." When she does, all that stuff falls out of her pockets.

Of course, Alice is in tears. All her stuff is gone. But then she learns that without all that stuff weighing her down, she can run and jump and skip like never before. Alice learns a new way of looking at life when she's upside down.

Following Jesus can feel a lot like riding the "upside-down-turn-around machine"—but as we do, we discover God's life-changing gift of joyful freedom as we learn to be content in every situation.

Source: "The Joy of Generosity" devotional series developed by Barnabas Foundation and available at www.barnabasfoundation.com; adapted from the HomeLink series written by Pastor Bob Heerspink and released by Faith Alive Christian Resources (www.faithaliveresources.com).

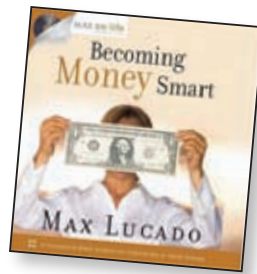
Recommended Resource

BECOMING MONEY SMART

By Max Lucado

A personal finance book by Max Lucado?

It's true. Max Lucado—named "America's Pastor" by *Christianity Today* magazine and "The Best Preacher in America" by *Reader's Digest* has written a book on biblical financial stewardship! Lucado has written more than 50 books with 28 million copies in print—none of which are even remotely about money. So why a book on money? *Becoming Money Smart* provides an engaging platform for Lucado to address one of the central issues of our walk with Christ, sharing stories and insights as only he can do.



There is much to love about *Becoming Money Smart*. The first thing readers will notice is Lucado's trademark pastoral style. Because he is not associated with finance, there is something disarming about this book, conveying a person-to-person feel as Lucado effortlessly weaves biblical truth with human interest anecdotes. *Becoming Money Smart* is an easy 63-page read, divided into four ready-to-use lessons. From the moment you pick up the book, you realize the intent is not to simply give you passive reading material, but rather an engaging experience, with interactive Bible studies that correspond with four audio messages recorded by Lucado.

This book is highly recommended and a great encouragement to all who read it. Having said that, *Becoming Money Smart* would not be a good choice for people looking for help on the mechanics of budgeting, or in-depth perspective on mortgage loans, car insurance, taxes, credit cards, investing, etc. You won't find those topics covered here. What you will find is the heart of a pastor, with a special gift for communication, drawing your attitudes and actions about money closer to the heart of God.

ASK BARNABAS FOUNDATION

Q. I heard a Christian financial counselor say, "If you live like no one else, later you can live like no one else." Is that really an appropriate goal for Christians?

A. It depends. The statement you quoted could leave people with an incomplete—and even inaccurate—picture of what God calls us to do with our money.

It is true that the Bible calls us to "live like no one else." One of the many examples is found in Romans 12:2, where we are called to "not conform any longer to the pattern of the world."

The 18th-century Reformer John Wesley noted that when people become transformed by Christ, they become more diligent in their work and more frugal with their money. The good news, Wesley pointed out, is that this process often leads to a growing measure of prosperity. The bad news, he said, is that prosperity often causes believers to become self-sufficient and self-centered.

So what do we do if God uses our "living like no one else" to bless us financially? The answer is found in 2 Corinthians 9:11: "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion."

God offers us an amazing journey of financial freedom when we "live like no one else." And as we walk by faith along this path, may our hearts become more in tune with God's heart—for his glory and the eternal joy of others.



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