

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



How does God's blessing impact our *trust* in Him?

Consider George Müller (1805-1898), the well-known Christian evangelist who

cared for over 10,000 orphans in Bristol, England. God provided Müller with significant resources for his ministry, including unsolicited donations of food only hours before they were needed. Müller responded in humility to God's faithful provision by repeating, "We can trust in God. I know we can."

Our review of the children's book *Does Money Grow on Trees?* provides real-life biblical stewardship values modeled by George Müller.

In this issue of *Stewardship Spotlight*, we invite you to reflect with us on the transforming power and the peace that passes all understanding as we grow in our walk with God and our trust in His care for our lives.

Serving the Lord with you,



Henry Doorn, Jr. – Executive Director

## Putting Our Trust In The Right Place

A number of years ago, a European visitor spent time studying America. His goal was "to discover the inner workings of America's people." Later, he wrote: "I know of no other country, indeed, where love of money has taken stronger hold on the affections of men."

If the literary style of those words seems a bit old-fashioned, it's because they were written over 150 years ago. That visitor, a French scholar by the name of Alexis de Tocqueville, published his famous study of Americans in 1835.

Not long ago, commenting on de Tocqueville's observation, the chairman of the board of a major corporation said, "Believe me, the rest of the world has finally realized that this is a profound compliment."

But is it? God's Word suggests otherwise. In fact, Scripture says "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10). Why is this so? For one thing, because money is an extension of our own selves. Money translates our labor into a convenient medium of exchange. In a real sense, money is formed from our time, ability, and efforts.

Trusting in our money to care for us, then, is really about trusting in ourselves. Putting our trust in our money makes money our god and is a form of self-worship. Paul reminds us that those who engage in this form of self-worship actually commit violence against themselves. They have "pierced themselves with many griefs" (1 Timothy 6:10).

It's encouraging to note that the love of money—not money itself—is a root of all kinds of evil. So how do we put our trust in the right place? One way, says Paul, is by living a godly life. Godliness is good and holy living rooted in God. When we sink our roots into God, we will trust Him more and be content with what we have.

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

## STEWARDSHIP STUDY BIBLE

We are excited to announce the release of a new stewardship resource by Zondervan. The NIV *Stewardship Study Bible* uses a variety of engaging, easy-to-use features to help Christians become good stewards. Features include profiles of both effective and ineffective biblical stewards; stewardship principles found in each book of the Bible; challenging small group study material; several distinctive devotional plans; along with other pertinent features. To learn more about this Bible visit [www.stewardship1000.com](http://www.stewardship1000.com).

## ASK BARNABAS FOUNDATION

**Q. I feel like we don't have a very good handle on our money, and I know the answer is that we're supposed to trust God more and "budget," but it's just not happening the way we'd like it to. What can we do?**

A. Someone once said that the reason for making a budget is so that you can tell your money where to go instead of wondering where it went. If you're feeling anxious about where all the money is going—and on top of that feeling like you don't have much time to do anything about it—you are not alone.

The good news is that God's Word shows us how to have peace with the money He trusts us with to manage. For example, Proverbs 21:5 says, "The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty." In other words, we need to put a God-honoring game plan together for our money, or we won't have very much of it!

We're all busy, but we simply can't afford not to spend some time making a plan for the money God trusts us with. For example, did you realize that if your annual household income is \$50,000 per year, \$2 million will flow through your bank account during your lifetime? With that much money at stake, we can probably "sacrifice" an episode of *American Idol* to carve out a little planning time with God's money.

One of the most liberating things our family has done to save time on budgeting is to make it automatic. What that means is that almost all of our monthly expenses, giving, and savings are handled by automatic debit and electronic-funds transfer. We use Quicken personal finance software to track noncash spending, and use cash envelopes for things like gas, groceries, clothes, gifts, and so on. Our monthly bookkeeping time, which used to be more than an hour, is now less than 15 minutes.

These simple systems provide a great handle on where every dollar goes and how much you have saved. But more than that, this approach can increase your trust in God and peace with your finances.

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### Christians & Money Conference Expands in 2010!

On April 28, the **4th Annual Christians & Money Conference** will originate at the Prince Center in **Grand Rapids, MI**. For the first time, the conference will be broadcast live to four other remote locations:

**Chicago, IL** – Trinity Christian College  
**Orange City, IA** – Living Water Community Church  
**Wyckoff, NJ** – Cedar Hill Christian Reformed Church  
**Chino, CA** – Crosspoint Church

Pastors and church leaders who attend will walk away with practical ideas and new resources to grow good stewards within their congregations. This valuable conference is co-sponsored by Barnabas Foundation, Calvin Theological Seminary and the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

[www.barnabasfoundation.com/conference](http://www.barnabasfoundation.com/conference)

## Recommended Resource

### DOES MONEY GROW ON TREES?

By Catherine Mackenzie

If you're interested in communicating real-life biblical stewardship values to kids, *Does Money Grow on Trees?* is an excellent choice. Featuring the renowned missionary George Müller, *Does Money Grow on Trees?* tells the story of Müller's incredible transformation—from a compulsive thief to a faith-filled missionary.



Towards the end of the story, Müller repeatedly says aloud, "We can trust in God. I know we can." This statement not only reflects the amazing transformation happening in his life, but also lays the foundation to convey several important stewardship lessons for kids, such as:

- Selfish living breaks relationships with friends and family.
- People can appear OK on the outside but feel miserable inside.
- Trusting God does not guarantee that there won't be difficulties in your life.

An interesting feature of *Does Money Grow on Trees?* is that the story is told in two formats: the left page tells the story for a slightly more advanced reader, while the right side of the page summarizes the left page and tells the story in a single sentence, more suitable for brand new or younger readers.



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