

**Monday, November 4.** Have you seen *Mythbusters*? *Mythbusters* designs experiments to test commonly held beliefs: Would a bull really cause destruction in a china shop? Is it possible to teach an old dog new tricks? Is shooting fish in a barrel really easy? Is it better to run in a straight line or in a zigzag if a crocodile is chasing you? Some of the results are obvious, but other results are completely contrary to what is expected. It seems that there are plenty of things that we believe that are way off base. Same goes with Christians and money. *Myth #1: An increase in money increases satisfaction.* The more you get, the happier you get. The more you have, the more peace you have and the simpler life becomes, right? The truth is that an increase in money increases stress, not satisfaction. The Bible has been saying this all along. **Read Ecclesiastes 5:10-12.** Numerous national surveys confirm this: After your basic needs are met, more money and more stuff only bring more stress. The "more money = more satisfaction" myth is busted. We all know this deep down inside, but for some reason, we seem to fail to act on it. We continue to chase after more and more money and material, looking for satisfaction. Our world puts serious pressure on us to buy "more, more, more" every day. Our human side loves the temporary fix that riches bring... and Satan? He would like nothing more than to distract us from the true-life satisfaction that is found only in Jesus. It's going to take some help if we're going to act according to truth, rather than myth. Praise God that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

**Tuesday, November 5.** Richard Branson is a multi-billionaire. He funded the first privately own space craft. There was an ad with a picture of him with a crazy-expensive wrist watch, and two words: Self Made. *Myth #2: Wealth is a rational result of resourcefulness.* If I've made my money, it's because I made my money, right? I did it. I earned it. I worked hard for my wealth. I started out on my own. No one helped me. I just went at it as hard as I could. I, right? Nope. **Read Ecclesiastes 5:19.** Sure, Sir Richard Branson is brilliant, but where did he get that brain? Sure, Branson has worked hard, but where did he get a healthy body? How about all the education and learning opportunities he had when he was young? His parents provided all that for him, and where did they get the resources? Branson could have died from malnutrition at three months old if he had been born on the other side of the globe. Or he could have been born in a different time, say the Middle Ages, one of the most oppressive times in history. But he wasn't. He was placed into this place, given this mind, given this energy, given these responsibilities and opportunities, from whom? Directly or indirectly everything Branson has is a gift from God. God made him. Same goes for each of us. Everything comes from Him and we are the work of His hands. Something peaceful and powerful floods our heart when we truly recognize this: None of us are "self-made."

**Wednesday, November 6.** The human heart has only so much room in it. God has designed us to passionately pursue Him so that we can be divinely satisfied in His love and then love others with His love. Love God; and love people. That's all the human heart can handle. But the world, the flesh, and the devil would like us to think that there's room for more. *Myth #3: I can be fully surrendered to Christ and still love money.* **Read Matthew 6:24.** Money isn't evil, but Scripture tells us that the love of money is, and for good reason – **Read 1 Timothy 6:9-10.** Money isn't really much more than pieces of paper with pictures on them, or virtual numbers in an online statement. And yet, people kill for it. People get divorced over it. Friendships get destroyed because of it. When we love money and put our trust in it for meaning, purpose, and fulfillment in life, it always leads to destruction. The greatest commandment is that we would love the Lord our God with all of our heart, all our soul, all of our strength, and all of our might. All of it. He is our master, our only master, because the human heart only has so much room in it.

**Thursday, November 7.** When the topic of money and church comes up, many people get defensive. Maybe you had trouble even bringing yourself to start a Bible plan about money. After all, isn't God all about loving people and giving to others? Why should we have to give our money to God? If these are thoughts you've had before, don't be embarrassed. If you're going to go all-in for Jesus and your money is included in that, you should have questions. And you should have answers. That's why we're writing this plan! So to start, we'd like to take the opportunity to explain exactly what the Bible asks of Jesus-followers when it comes to finances. As we read the following verses, we'll see that "Give" isn't even necessarily the right term. Instead, we ought to use the word 'tithe.' The reason this word is more appropriate is because the word 'tithe' literally means 'a tenth.' And Jesus reinforces the reasoning behind this principle: No matter how much money you make, we are all called to sacrifice the same ratio, not the same amount. Someone with less money is not expected to give the same amount as someone with lots of money - Jesus is not after a dollar amount. As we'll find out in tomorrow's devotional, Jesus is after our hearts. But for now, we wanted to start by explaining and reading just exactly what the Bible (and Jesus) said about tithing. So take a few minutes for yourself and see what it says! **Read Malachi 3:8-12, Proverbs 3:9-10, Leviticus 27:30-33, Mark 12:41-44, Matthew 6:19-24**

**Friday, November 8.** Hopefully reading those verses yesterday began to give you an idea of how God views money. As far as tithing goes, it began as a command and exercise for God's people to remember just exactly where their provision came from. Whether of their flock or of their garden, the first ten percent of whatever they gained was to be given back to God; and not only ten percent, but the best ten percent. There's something about giving your first back to God that reminds you that He actually is the reason you have any of it to begin with. And there is nothing that will move faster and get a tighter grip around our heart than our money. As we'll see in the coming passages, this tithing and returning back to God is actually less of an obligation and more of a gift - it helps us to keep our hearts from relying on something so fickle. It provides us with a tangible way of saying, "God, I trust you and I know that you can do far more with this ten percent than I could do with the ninety percent!" *Why do we tithe? Because it helps us to remember who our real Provider is!* **Read Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Deuteronomy 16:17, Psalms 50:7-15**