

## Midweek lesson for men : 12 October 2011

### “The Sin that Entangles”

#### Introduction

Horror movie - a creeper grows into house and entangles people – first around ankles then whole body, sucks the life out of them ...

#### Are you entangled?

##### **Hebrews 12:1**

- Does not refer to a particular sin but to sin generally – can be different for different people
- But there is a particular sin that is entangling some people in the church – not just one person (otherwise this group lesson would not be needed ...)
- If this lesson does not apply to you directly, that’s good. But it should at least help you to recognise and deal with this situation in the church
- I am referring to a sinful attitude to money, a desire to get rich quickly
- Building wealth responsibly and honestly is not a sin (we need people of means to financially support the church), but doing things to “get rich” is based on a sinful attitude towards money

##### **1 Timothy 6:10**

- Consequences : wandering from the faith, piercing with griefs
- We see some of this in the church in PE, including being pierced with the grief of blacklisting

##### **Romans 12:2**

- There are terrible role models in society – corrupt politicians, civil servants, “tenderpreneurs” - total moral decay
- Chasing after money is conforming to worldly patterns
- Getting into debt to the extent of being blacklisted is conforming to worldly patterns (blacklisting can result purely from bad luck, but more often than not it results from greed and/or not seeking advice)
- Wanting more and more and “going up in the world” is conforming to worldly patterns
- Disciples must be willing to “scale down” when finances get tight” (e.g. selling that big car and buying a smaller one, selling that house and renting for a while, etc.) – these are signs of no longer conforming to the patterns of the world

#### What do you reflect?

##### **Genesis :26-27, Psalm 115:3-8 and Psalm 106:19-21**

- God designed us to reflect something - that’s how we are created
- We were created in the image of God – to reflect His will and glory to the world
- We reflect and become like what we worship – if we worship idols, we become like them
- If we worship money, it shows in what we read, what we talk about, what we think about, who we spend time with, ... Our lives start to reflect money and all that money stands for
- Using the idolatry language of these Psalms – idolatry is putting something other than God as number 1 in your life. If we worship idols, we become like them (the Israelites worshipped the image of a golden calf / cow, an animal known for its stubbornness, so God gave them over to being a “stiff necked” / stubborn people).” You want to worship a cow, fine. You will become like one”
- The desire for money seems to have displaced God as number 1 in some people’s lives, and it shows it what they reflect / mirror to those around them

#### Do you honour God with your money?

##### **Proverbs 3:9**

- Another consequence of pursuing money (greed) is that our giving to God suffers
- It shouldn’t but it does and it has in our church
- We honour God with our wealth when we tithe / give Him the first fruits of our income
- A Godly view of money is to “top slice” a portion of our earnings (not necessarily 10% but an amount that represents generosity and sacrifice)
- We should not even consider this portion as “ours”- it belongs to God and His church. We should then budget with what’s left.
- If we do not honour God through giving FIRST to Him, we DISHONOUR Him.

### Do you seek advice about money matters?

#### **Proverbs 19:20, 20:18**

- Seeking advice makes a lot of sense – clearly it pleases God and its there to protect us from making bad decisions
- We seem to avoid seeking advice when it comes to our finances – seem to be “out of bounds” for some people
- Some like to keep their finances in the dark – don’t bring it out into the light. Why ? Maybe they know they are not righteous and will be challenged ...
- Examples of bad decisions that seem to have been made by some without seeking advice : buying flats to rent in Central, taking loans to buy new cars or houses (not in itself wrong but a big decision that warrants prayer and seeking advice), lending and borrowing money from disciples – next section ...

### What is your attitude towards lending or borrowing money?

#### **Romans 13:8 and Luke 6:34,35**

- What principle do these scriptures teach when taken together ?
  1. We should help each other out financially, but when we do so we should NOT expect to be repaid – implication is that we should only “lend” money that we do not really need
  2. And from the borrowing side, when we receive money from someone, we should be willing to pay it back - God will work it out if the lender and borrower hold onto these Biblical principles !
- Implication : Better to give R 1000 to someone in need than lend him R 5000, if you will need to be repaid the other R 4000
- We should never give or lend money that we need to live off according to our budget – its unwise and can cause relationship problems if the lender cannot pay it back

### Is your “generosity” causing others to sin?

#### **Matthew 18 : 1-7**

- The “children” in this context refer to disciples - we should not cause one another to sin
- In most cases, lending more money to disciples already in debt (in extreme cases, being blacklisted) is unwise – it can cushion them from their reality and their need to make tough decisions and lifestyle changes
- This applies equally to friends and family who are not disciples – continually bailing them out does not help them in the longer term. Taking a stand may not be easy but will show that you truly love them
- The consequences of sin need to be felt to help bring about repentance – continually “rescuing” people from self inflicted grief is NOT Christian love

### Where is your heart ? (really ...)

#### **Matthew 6 : 19-21**

- What do you treasure the most in life ? Your relationship with God (and by association His people) or something else ?
- Your heart will follow what you treasure – if you treasure anything before your relationship with God (and by association His people), your heart is in the wrong place
- Fortunately God is gracious and forgives, but it requires repentance

### Do you need to repent?

- Do you need to repent of anything concerning how you view and manage your money ?
  - Do you seek advice with making big financial decisions ?
  - Have you brought your finances into the light ?
  - Are you open to being challenged about your view of money and how you spend it?
  - Do you honour God through sacrificial giving to His church / family ?
  - If you are in debt as a result of making poor decisions or greed, are you doing all you can to no longer conform to this pattern of the world ?
- Do you love your brothers and sisters to the extent of withholding money from them, if that is what is required to help bring them come to repentance ?