

PARTNERS NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter for the Ann Arbor Catholic Men's Movement

February 2012



Men of Faith, linked as brothers, growing as husbands, fathers and disciples of Jesus Christ

You, God and Your Money

*By Michael L. Wilson, MBA, CFP®, CRC®
Integrity Financial Planning
www.integrityplanner.com*

Here are four simple steps to create a spending plan, also called a budget, that you can live with happily. **Step 1 is to define your values and your priorities;** the Bible is an excellent starting point for shaping your spending plan. A great way to kill any chance of sticking to a budget is to just list your expenses. That approach assumes everything you're currently doing is necessary and a priority. So instead of mechanically listing some numbers on a piece of paper, define your values first. **Step 2 is to develop a simple spending plan based on your values.** Hold a family meeting. List all of your household income. Then list all of your household expenses. **Step 3: If your expenses are greater than your income, then prioritize your expenses** (but base them on the values you defined in Step 1). And lastly, **Step 4: Track your spending plan visibly, where everyone in your household can see it.** These four steps are pretty simple, though they're not necessarily easy to do. But by following them, you greatly increase your chances of creating a budget that is biblically sound and livable.

It is also helpful to recognize what is not a biblical approach to budgeting. For instance, **let's talk about the value of material possessions in a Christian's budget.** In Luke 12:15, Jesus said *"Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."* The world we live in makes a very strong case for buying lots of things. Think, for a moment, about the number of advertisements you saw or heard today. We are constantly bombarded with attempts to influence our buying habits. But remember Jesus' warning—life does not consist of our possessions. As you build or refine your spending plan, check to see what amount of your resources are going towards material possessions. Are you inadvertently

defining your life by your possessions? If so, change your budget now to reflect God's values and priorities as defined in the Bible.

As you develop or refine your budget, here are two great questions to ask yourself about every item: what am I saving for? And what am I spending for? Those questions force you to reveal the motivations in your spending plan. Keep asking "why?" until you hit bedrock. For instance, I spend money to pay for electricity. Why? To provide decent living quarters for my family. Now we're at bedrock; using money to take care of my family's needs is biblically sound. But consider this example: I'm saving money for a brand new pickup truck. Why? My daughter is about to start driving, and I want her to have the latest and greatest. Why? Because teenagers derive a lot of self-esteem from the type of car they drive. Now we're at bedrock; using a vehicle to enhance a person's self-esteem is a poor substitute for a relationship with the Living God. So as you consider your spending plan, ask yourself: what am I saving for? What am I spending for? Make

Men, Come and Get Inspired! . . .

Thursday, February 2, 2012

Speaker: Marty Bodnar

*Sr. VP at Exchange Capital Management,
Named Academic All American,
Former Co-Captain U/M Basketball*

Topic: "Jesus, Lord of Our Finances?"

Meeting Location :

The Parish Center Gym at
Christ the King Catholic Church



For more information call (734) 930-4524 or
visit our web site at www.catholic-men.org

**Our Next Meeting: Thursday, February 2nd at the Parish Center Gym at
Christ the King Catholic Church 7:30 - 9:30 PM**

US 23 to Exit 41 at Plymouth Road, go **East** 1/3 mile to first traffic light at Earhart Rd and turn **left**. Go to next intersection and turn **left**. Turn left at the first driveway. The meeting is in the **large red barn building** which is on the **left**.

You, God and Your Money

(continued)

sure you have a biblical basis for how you choose to handle your money.

One more way we can honor God is by spending money to support our families, which might include our elderly parents. Likewise, it is biblically sound to repay any and all of our financial obligations in a timely manner. Whatever bills we have, we're obligated to pay them by their due date. The best place to start defining those values is the Bible, which has much to say about handling money. **The goal is to make sure we have a biblical basis for every item in our spending plan. This process will help us develop spending habits that consistently honor God.**

3 Tips for Talking to Kids about Money Challenges

By the dads @ fathers.com

In today's economy, we're bombarded with all kinds of messages, and chances are your kids have heard some of the doom and gloom news as well. They're probably wondering, *How's that affecting our family?*

Do they see you and your wife having discussions about money? Have they noticed any changes in your family's finances? Getting these issues out in the open will bring your family together, provide a sense of relief and be a blessing in the long run.

(If you and your wife do have a heated discussion about money, do it away from the kids.)

Sue Shellenbarger, the work and family columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*, has written about how to help kids understand your own financial issues. Here are several of her insights with some added application ideas:

First, **talk about lifestyle changes that need to be made**, even with young children. Tell your kids the facts in a brief and straightforward way, giving them as many specifics as you think they can handle regarding income, expenses, and your budget. This is a great time to let them see some of the realities of money management.

Second, **involve your children in the problem-solving process**. Don't feel bad if you have to tell them, "We have to find ways to spend less money." Kids can handle that, and they might even surprise you by volunteering to make some changes to help the cause. In the process, you'll learn more about what really matters to your kids.

Third, **make it clear that while some things are changing, other important things are not**—like your values, your faith, your involvement in their lives, and how much they mean to you. Young kids sometimes assume the worst and don't always apply sound logic, so they may need to be reassured that things will be okay, you're not leaving them, and your love for them will not change.

ACTION POINTS

- If you're telling your kids about a layoff or some other financial hurdle, find a time when you can talk about it calmly, without conveying panic or desperation.
- Ask for your children's help as you set a budget for your summer vacation.
- Assist your child in a project that will help teach him about the "real world" of money: a lemonade stand, lawn-mowing enterprise, etc.
- Together with your child's mom, set up a plan to allow your child to start making more of her own money decisions as she grows older.

Help Us With Your Brief Input!

Please Email Us at

kkull@productivetraining.com

1. How often do you read this newsletter?
2. Do you find it helpful in your walk with God?
3. Any suggestions to make it serve you better?

Mark Your Calendars Now for March 6th!

The speaker for the March 6, 2012 meeting of the Catholic Men's Night will be Nick Synko who is the Principal Partner of Synko Associates an Ann Arbor based career transition and executive coaching firm. He is the author of two books that have won national acclaim and is the founder of "*Careers Through Faith*" a non profit ministry designed to help individuals to integrate their career, faith and life. The title of his talk is "Jesus, Lord of Our Job".

The date and location of this meeting will change from our usual pattern. It will be held on TUESDAY, March 6, 2012 at Saint Francis of Assisi Church in their Parish Activity Center between the Church and the School. It is located at 2250 East Stadium Blvd. in Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 at the corner of St. Francis Drive and across from Tappan Jr. High School. They are just a couple of blocks west of the beginning of E. Stadium on Washtenaw Ave. Mass will begin at 7:30 pm and will be followed by fellowship and refreshments. Nick's talk will begin about 8:30 pm.

We gladly stand with Promise Keepers and St. Joseph Covenant Keepers.

To get on our mailing list e-mail cmmdesk@catholic-men.org
or write to the Ann Arbor Catholic Men's Movement, P.O. Box 466, Ann Arbor, MI 48106