Rethinking Stewardship: Faith and Finances
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Catherine Malotky

CHOOSING RESILIENCE
Driving questions

- How much will I get?
- Will I have enough?
- Will it last?
Context

1 piece = $1000
Comb your emotional hair

What are you feeling?
- Relief
- Joy
- Anger
- Envy
- Skunked
- Discouraged
- Resolved
- ?
Orienteering
Orienteering

Ignatius (1491-1564) (founded the Jesuits)

- Advocated detachment so we are liberated from “our appetites, biases, fears, and ambitions, lest they govern our choices.”
- Neither desire or despise wealth.
- Choose the outcome that would give God the greater glory.
Change the questions?

- *Instead of:* How much do I get…
- *Instead of:* Will I have enough…
- *Instead of:* Will it last…

- How much do I need?
- How do I mitigate the risks I can influence?
- How do I build a financial life that expresses my values?
Think about this...

Let’s say someone like me, who raises money for a living, comes to you and asks for a gift of $10,000. What would you need to know in order to say yes?
Being aligned, inside and out

- Can you be an effective leader if you aren’t?
- Stewardship leadership is no different.
- Stewardship competencies: financial health is a matter of faith.
Alignment challenges

- How was your financial education adequate? Not adequate?
- How is the American Dream healthy? Not healthy?
- What does your faith/church offer to help you live a healthy financial life?
- What is the level of your congregation’s financial health? Stewardship maturity?
Orienteering

- What beliefs guide your behavior?
- Whom do you trust?
Whom do you trust?

Suze Orman

Dave Ramsey
Whom do you trust?

John C. Bogle  

Tom Petters
Orienteering

Martin Luther (1483-1564)
- Cheerful service to the neighbor is the true end of the Christian life.
- Attachment to luxury blocks or obscures the desire for truth.
- At the same time, covetousness is a way of leading us closer to God, by revealing our dependence on God’s goodness.
Tough issues

- How much is enough?
  - The balance between self and other.

- How to balance money’s power?
  - When you have more, how do you live with the responsibility?
  - When you have less, how do you live with dependence?
  - Making it about God’s ends, not mine.

- Blessing or privilege?
  - The mix of merit and fortune.
  - Gift, but not favor.
Things to keep in mind

- If we are going to be capitalists, let’s do it well.
- Rely on forgiveness. There are ditches on both sides of any path.
- Become financially literate. Anxiety makes us stupid.
Orienteering

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

- Money only has meaning when it’s used.
- It cannot, in itself, provide happiness.
Core values

- **Remember sustainability**
  - We are a community across time and space
- **Choose**
  - Trust God’s abundance, but plan with intention.
  - Focus on the things you can influence, like how much you share/save/spend vs. how the markets are doing.
- **Resilience over riches**
  - Keep enough
  - Manage risk
  - “Invest” the rest. Become a patron of a better world.
Parting words

But the world never has enough conscience, nor enough tolerance, idealism, justice, compassion, wisdom, humility, self-sacrifice for the greater good, integrity, courtesy, poetry, laughter, and generosity in substance and spirit. It is these elements I urge you to carry into your careers, and remember that the great game of life is not about money; it is about doing your best to build the world anew.

John C. Bogle, author of *Enough* and founder of the Vanguard Group
From a commencement address to MBA graduates at Georgetown
May 18, 2007
Parting words

What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8
Prayer for the baptized

Stir up in us the gift of your Holy Spirit
- The spirit of wisdom and understanding
- The spirit of counsel and might
- The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord
- The spirit of joy in your presence

Both now and forever. Amen