



Welcome to your new Growth Groups!

This week, we continue in the *Blueprints for Your Life* series by talking about a Blueprint for Your Finances.

- **How would you describe your financial picture right now (good, bad, overwhelming, moving in the right direction, etc.)?**
- **How does your current financial situation affect your life at home?**
- ***Read Ecclesiastes 5:10 and Luke 16:10-13.* What do these two passages teach us about what our attitude toward money and wealth should be as we approach a financial blueprint for our lives?**
- **Describe your plan for improving your financial situation.**
- **How does your financial plan fit into God’s blueprint for your life based on the “three circles” Eric has been talking about throughout this series? Does something need to be adjusted in your plan to fit better into the big picture?**
- **Looking forward to the time you will be spending doing various things in the coming week, how can you change the way you are planning on spending your time and money to better fit with the overall Blueprint for your life?**



Hey Growth Group Leaders!

Congratulations! We have made it through *Connection Groups* and have launched out into new Growth Groups! Several of the groups are poised for great success this fall. I am very thankful that some adjustments have been made to existing groups to set them up for success as we continue to launch new groups. Please continue to keep me informed of challenges and victories we experience in making every group an overwhelming success. There are still several folks who are attending Journey Church most Sundays that have not yet gotten involved in a Growth Group. I encourage you to remember the Empty Chair to motivate your folks to recruit these other folks at Journey, as well as disconnected people out in the community.

Through the past few weeks of Connection Groups, I haven't heard much feedback from you all, except a few logistical questions. This is fine, since we haven't had real deep discussion going on. However, PLEASE be sure to send me feedback from your group meetings within 2 days of the meeting. Let me know how the Travel Guide helped or hindered your conversation, and if anything significant needs to be shared with the church leadership. Communication is key in the success of Journey Church and our Growth Groups ministry.

God bless!  
Andrew

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This week, we continue in the *Blueprints for Your Life* series by talking about a Blueprint for Your Finances:

As you begin the discussion this week, keep in mind that one of the key goals for each discussion in this series is to knit each element together in to the overall Blueprint for Your Life. If our values, gifts, eating/exercise habits, calling in work and ministry, financial goals, etc, don't line up into a single blueprint for our lives, then our lives aren't really fully in-tune with God's blueprint for our lives. With this in mind, be listening for clues to help lead your discussion in this direction and to challenge your folks to put it all together.

- **How would you describe your financial picture right now (good, bad, overwhelming, moving in the right direction, etc.)?**

Whatever answers you get for this question, encourage your folks to elaborate a little bit. Don't allow them to stop at "Good." Ask them to describe why they think they are good as opposed to bad. HOWEVER, don't allow someone to throw themselves a pity party or to monopolize the discussion with their blessings to make others feel bad. Encourage folks to open up, but try to keep it balanced.

- **How does your current financial situation affect your life at home?**

Be prepared to set the stage for this question with your own testimony. I suggest having a story of your family's struggles and how it was resolved ready to encourage your folks. Depending on your group, it may even be more helpful to describe some current ongoing struggles you have and how you are planning on overcoming them.

COUPLES' GROUPS: It is absolutely essential that you encourage your folks to open up on this question. A vast majority of marriages that fail do so either because of money or infidelity, and mostly because of money. We all have some heated discussions about money in our marriages. Our folks need to know that those discussions are OK, but they need to reach a resolution and peace needs to be restored so that bitterness does not set in and the marriage doesn't fall apart. There may be marriages in your group that are on the verge of falling apart because their financial Blueprints don't line up. If something big pops up in your group, feel free to shape the rest of the discussion of this Travel Guide around restoring peace to that marriage. If they need help aligning their finances in their marriage, Eric and I are more than willing to help.

SINGLES' GROUPS: You may have to play this question by ear in your group. Some of you have single-parent issues and the financial strain associated with that. Others have college students of all sorts of financial backgrounds and responsibilities. Just be sure to listen to what is said and use it as a springboard for the following discussion.

- **Read Ecclesiastes 5:10 and Luke 16:10-13. What do these two passages teach us about what our attitude toward money and wealth should be as we approach a financial blueprint for our lives?**

The goal for this discussion needs to be to set our values in the right place. As Eric's message pointed out, there is nothing wrong with making money and there is nothing wrong with paying off our debts and developing savings. However, if our desire to make money causes us to disconnect from God, run over our family, forsake our marriages, cheat our bosses or on our taxes, etc. . . OR, if our poor spending habits prevent us from having the freedom to hear from God about giving and blessing others . . . Then we need to adjust our priorities to line up with our values . . . and possibly even adjust our values to line up with God's blueprint for our lives.

Ultimately, the answer to the above question is:

**Ecclesiastes:** "Pursuing wealth as our first priority in life will always lead to emptiness and a need for more."

**Luke 16:10-12:** "We need to be good stewards with what we have or else we won't manage more any better."

**Luke 16:13:** "If we aren't good stewards, we will wind up serving our financial situation instead of having it serve us, and when that happens, we are not free to serve God."

- **Describe your plan for improving your financial situation.**

This question is simply an opportunity for your folks to admit whether or not they really have a plan to overcome their struggles, and if they are thinking about how it connects to the bigger picture of how God wants them to live.

- **How does your financial plan fit into God's blueprint for your life based on the "three circles" Eric has been talking about throughout this series? Does something need to be adjusted in your plan to fit better into the big picture?**

Essentially, does your financial plan land you in "the sweet spot" where your gifts, values, and experiences come together to allow you to live the life God wants you to live?

Depending on how open your folks are at this point, you may want to take some time to really challenge them with their plans and where they want their lives to go. For instance, if one person is planning on working 4 jobs to get out of debt, ask them how they can stay connected to their families and to Journey Church with that much responsibility. If they respond with an idea that getting out of debt first will help those things later, ask them "What if those things aren't willing to stick around and wait that long? What if you have nothing else left by the time you get there?"

HOWEVER, be careful not to be judgmental or condemning. There is a delicate balance between these and a challenge to think deeper. You need to evaluate who you are talking to, how well you know them and how much they trust you and the group, and how they might respond to your challenge.

- **Looking forward to the time you will be spending doing various things in the coming week, how can you change the way you are planning on spending your time and money to better fit with the overall Blueprint for your life?**

PLEASE don't let your folks leave your group without a practical, immediate, measurable goal to apply what they have learned this week. Our goal is not more information. Our goal is transformed lives.