

LIFE Ministries

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Newsletter

December 2009

God's Blessings or Materialism?

by Dan Beachy



Dan & Emma Beachy

As we approach the Christmas holiday season, I am reminded of the many resources we have available in this country, even during a period of economical slow down. Most every day I have the opportunity to talk to people across the country and get a feel for the *heart beat* of the church in this country. Even in brief discussions, it is not uncommon for the

economical *slow down* to come up as a relevant issue that is, or has the potential for, impacting our lives. I have discovered that many people think that simply means we do not have as much work waiting for us in the future.

To the individuals making up the 10% unemployment of the work force in this country, this is affecting their daily lives. They have real questions about where the rent or mortgage payment will come from or what can we afford to eat? Can we afford the medical care our child needs?

For these people, life-style has been drastically affected and sacrifice has become a way of life. Going out to eat and travel are now given a serious evaluation before moving ahead. It is not only affecting the big cities, but it is affecting the conservative anabaptist entrepreneurs in rural America. Most everyone personally knows someone directly affected. And yet, although many are directly affected, by far the majority of us are going on as though life were normal. Most people's actual life-style has not been affected.

The government is investing a lot of energy to

convince us to spend money and charge new purchases. The stock market has returned to some of its former levels and for many, life appears to be returning to *normal*. The theory is that if people act like life is normal, it will become normal. Perhaps this generation will be called to evaluate our life-style like our grandparents needed to during the Great Depression of 1929.

In North America we have more material resources than much of the rest of the world can even dream about. There are times that we may feel a tinge of guilt about our wealth and other times we feel blessed that we have the resources to help God's work move forward.

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There are times that we are not sure if God is blessing us or if we are caught up in materialism. On the one hand we want to be wise stewards of our resources and on the other hand we want to use our resources for God's work. It is so easy to accuse the *wealthy* (by the world's standard most everyone in this country is wealthy) of being materialistic. Just what is materialism?

The Oxford University Press Dictionary defines *materialism* as "a desire for wealth and material possessions with little interest in ethical or spiritual matters." I could not find the word *materialism* in the scripture; however, the concept certainly is discussed and addressed. The following words of Jesus address this issue in very practical terms: Luke 12:16-21 (KJV) "*And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, because*

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God's Blessings or Materialism?

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I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, 'This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'

Verse 19 above cuts to the heart of the matter by showing the intent of obtaining the wealth in the first place. The man in Jesus' story wanted to use the wealth for himself with no accountability to God, the provider.

As is true with most of life, the motive behind what we do is what determines who or what is in the "driver's seat." Two brothers can own assets with similar value and one be extremely materialistic and the other focus on how these resources can be used to further God's work. The one with less may be more materialistic than the one with more. It is simply a matter of the heart!

Matthew 6:19-21 (KJV) "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*"

As we move into the holiday season, let us remember to use our resources to *lay up treasure in heaven*. Let us make sure that *our treasure is in heaven*. When our treasure is in heaven, our heart and loyalty will also be there.

Let us remember our brothers that have had major life-style adjustments as we invest in heaven with our treasure. We also want to continue investing in the lives of those that have been sent with the gospel. Many church organizations are also being affected by decreased giving. Let us guard against materialism and use God's blessings to further the kingdom. It is such an honor to be God's steward of His resources. Let us remember the source of our resources and the spiritual purpose of them.

—Dan Beachy

LIFE Ministries is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization established to provide Christian literature for third world countries and to provide financial, marriage, individual counseling and seminars. This newsletter is published quarterly and is available to interested persons at no cost.

Missing Books

We are missing a number of books from our library as well as personal books that counselors have loaned out. Would you please check your bookshelf to see if you have some books belonging to LIFE Ministries that may have been overlooked. Thank you for returning them and allowing others to benefit from them also.

—The librarian

Put Your House In Order

by Mark Schlabach

Recently, I was struck with the verse in II Kings 20:2 where God tells Hezekiah, "*Set your house in order for you will die and not live.*" I do not know what all went through Hezekiah's mind when he received that message, but I am sure it was a wake-up call for him.

That should be a wake-up call for all of us. What would it mean for us to put our house in order? The truth is, we will all get that call one day, unless the Lord returns first. So we are left with the question, "Is our house in order if we would receive that call today?"

Death is a subject that many of us do not want to think about, much less talk about or even plan for. Yet it is a reality of life. Many of us do a lot of planning to be prepared in case something might happen. We buy auto insurance just in case we have an accident. We buy home owners' insurance in case we have a fire or a flood. We buy liability insurance in case someone would get hurt on our property. The list could go on and on about things we plan just in case something might happen. But many of us do very little planning for the thing that we know **will** happen—death.

For some of us, that may mean we need to get our financial house in order. Sometimes I like to ask men this question, "If something would happen to you today, where would your wife be financially?" Would she be able to make it?

Some of us may need to think through funeral plans that would make it easier for our family when we are gone. Some of us may need to do some work on relationships within our family, neighbors or church. Some of us may need to work on our relationship with God in order to set our house in order. Wherever we find ourselves in life, the question applies to us, "Is our house in order?"

We are entering the Christmas season where we celebrate the coming of Jesus to this earth. He did that to make a way that our spiritual house can be in order when we die. That is something to celebrate!

—Mark Schlabach

Year-End Reflections

by Glenn Hoover

Dear Supporters of LIFE Ministries,

Greetings to you in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Here we are in December, the last month of the year. This is the time we celebrate the miraculous birth of God's Son, His gift to the world. We celebrate His birth with family and friends from near and far, over delicious meals and times of fellowship. We also reflect on the past year and recognize God's goodness and faithfulness to us.

At LIFE Ministries we also celebrate God's faithfulness and goodness to us as a ministry. God has confirmed His faithfulness and goodness in many ways throughout the year. We deeply appreciate the words of encouragement, emotional support, prayers, gifts, and financial donations, to name a few. Throughout the year many have sacrificed and given generously and we are thankful for that. God used you as His servant to meet the ongoing needs here at LIFE Ministries and we were able to increase our services to the many people seeking help. We are very grateful and indebted to you for your kindness and generosity.

Year-end giving is very important to the ongoing work of LIFE Ministries. Many of our clients are unable to pay for the cost of services we provide for them. The requests continue to come, keeping the staff very busy meeting the needs. You can be a part of the ministry with your gracious giving and we have enclosed an addressed envelope for your convenience. May God bless you as you prayerfully consider a year-end gift to LIFE Ministries.

LIFE Ministries works with Anabaptist Foundation and Mennonite Foundation to receive estates, trusts, gifts in kind, or property. I will be honored to work with you to accomplish your goals of using resources for God's Kingdom. You can reach me by phone at 717.871.0540 or by email: ghoover@life-ministries.com

For His Kingdom,

Glenn Hoover, Counselor/Director of Development

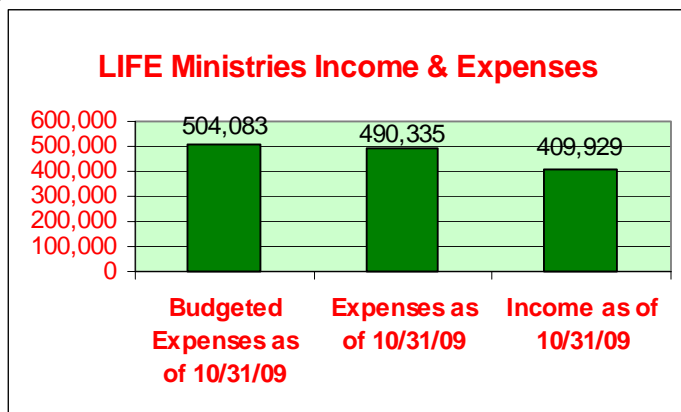


Chart does not include funds designated for literature

Mailing List Update

We consider it a privilege to provide a newsletter to keep in touch with those who are blessed by our ministry, who pray for us and who support us financially. The newsletter is free to anyone who is interested in receiving it.

We want to be good stewards of God's resources and you can help us to reduce waste. Maybe you have been receiving the newsletter for years and are no longer interested in receiving it. If for any reason you no longer wish to receive it, please give us a call at 717.871.0540 or email: info@life-ministries.com and we will remove your name from our mailing list.

Thank you to those who notify us of address changes. Your help in updating our mailing list is greatly appreciated.

Seminar CD's Available

Pastors/Leadership Seminar - 3 CD's - \$12
New Test. Leadership Models – by *John Coblenz*

- New Testament Models
- 21st Century Challenges
- 21st Century Leadership

Pastor's Seminar 2009 - 3 CD's \$12
Caring for the Shepherd – by *Walter Beachy*

- Personal Relationship Care
- Personal Marriage Relationship Care
- Personal Family Relationship Care

Financial Seminar - 3 CD's \$12
Living With Financial Uncertainty

- Current Financial Landscape - *Mark Schlachach*
- Philosophical Change in Finances - *Glenn Hoover*
- Kingdom Principles for Living Today - *Joel Martin*

Grief Seminar - 3 CD's - \$12
When You are Visited by Grief

- Essentials for Grievors - *Sam Gingerich*
- The God Who Is Near - *Dave Myer*
- A Search for Meaning and Hope - *Sam Gingerich*

To order: Please mail check with your order to:
LIFE Ministries, 250 Meadow Lane, Conestoga, PA
17540. Cost of shipping is included in the \$12.

LIFE Line

- Praise God for a message of joy and hope to share with others this Christmas season!
- Pray for health and strength for the staff during the winter months.
- Praise God for all those who donated materials and labor to build a house for a fundraiser! Pray for the sale of the house.

Please let us know if you would like to receive the bi-monthly prayer calendar which guides you to intercede daily on behalf of the Board, Staff, and various activities of LIFE Ministries.



LIFE Ministries Sweetheart Banquet

Friday, February 12, 2010
6:30 PM

LIFE Ministries, Conestoga, PA

Speaker: Sam Gingerich
Asst. Administrator/Counselor

Reservations required. Please call 717.871.0540 or email: info@life-ministries.com to reserve a seat. Space is limited and we encourage you to register early. No tickets required—a freewill offering will be received to cover expenses.

Sweetheart Banquet

Tuesday, February 23, 2010 - 6:30 PM

Yoder's Restaurant, New Holland, PA

Speaker: Dan Beachy
Administer/Counselor at LIFE Ministries

Reservations required: Please contact Amos Smuckers at 717.768.3996 for reservations or for more information.

LIFE Executive Board

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