

questions or comments:

"Modern man now has more money than ever before, but our wealth has brought us many strange and new problems. Never before have we had so much to live with and so little to live for. Never have we earned so much money with so little sweat. Never have we had so much time to waste and so much money with which to waste. Our money has brought us super-highways and jet planes and men in space, but it has left us without direction in life. It has brought us fine homes and left us with empty hearts. Instead of bringing us freedom, happiness and purpose, our prosperity has only increased our boredom and aimlessness. The free-spending practices of our fat-salaried society have corrupted us within. Our almighty dollar has given us a false security not unlike that which the Laodiceans had when they bragged about being rich—but heard God remind them that they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Many of us have allowed our money to curse us instead of bless us. We are, in fact, being kicked to death by the golden calf. Maybe God is trying to say to us, 'Give account of thy stewardship.'"²

Break into four small groups and give each group a situation. They are to decide how they would act in the situation.

● Your church is experiencing a financial crisis. You are a board member. The church has been late in its building payments the past three months. Because of the lagging offerings, the church will be \$1,000 short of its building payment this month. You recently sold a large collection of wood-carved

ducks for \$3,000 so you could pave your driveway. Do you go ahead with this project or help the church in this time of need?

● You have just won \$100 in a raffle. You are really excited about your win. The first thing you do is take the family to eat at a plush restaurant, attend a Christian concert and buy a good gospel record. A few weeks go by and you realize you forgot to give God 10 percent of your winnings. You say, "That's just \$10. God won't miss it, besides I bought a good gospel record with it." Would you agree with the above or do something differently?

● You are taking a group of teenagers to visit your denominational college. The church gives you \$20 for your meals while on campus. You get to campus and find sponsors receive a free meal pass. What would you do with the money when you return home? Why?

● You and your wife decided that you were seeking more of God's blessing, so you have been double-tithing for 10 years. In that 10-year period you have seen your income triple and God bless you with three children. Through an accident on a neighborhood playground one of your children loses sight in one eye. Two months later you find the bank is suing you for \$150,000, the remainder of the balance due the bank on your home. They are suing because the loan company you bought your home through went bankrupt. Finally, your wife is involved in a car accident that does \$4,000 damage to her car, yet she was not injured. You had forgotten to renew your car insurance policy and you were not insured. Do you stop double-

tithing because you need the extra money and things aren't going your way or do you trust God for the future and continue in your giving?

RESPONSE (OR CLOSING)

One spokesman from each group shares the solution to its situation with the entire group and allows discussion. Do the rest of the group members agree or disagree with the solution? Ask the youth to think about this

session during the upcoming week and consider tithes for the next meeting.

Pray for God's guidance in finances and tithes.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Scriptures to Sing, Lillenas, Box 527, Kansas City, MO 64141.

^{1,2}F.C. Spruce, **You Can Be a Joyful Tither** (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill, 1966), pp. 14-15.

one of the construction paper items. If you have a large gathering, divide into smaller groups and give each group one of the items. (If you have a small group, you can eliminate one or two construction paper items.)

Explain that each group is to discuss benefits and hindrances to owning the object. Allow five to 10 minutes for this.

Have each group share its conclusions with the others. Give each group time to study the scripture reference. Gather in one large group to discuss these findings.

RESPONSE (OR CLOSING)

Explain: "Sometimes we tend to think and believe that the answer to any problem we have lies in material riches or possessions. We put our faith in material goods by thinking: If I had a good job and

made lots of money, I'd be happy. If I had a fast sports car, I would be popular. If I had enough money to buy nice clothes, I'd attract friends. If I could travel the world, I'd have it made.

"On goes our list of 'if' or 'things' to make us happy, but Jesus says in Matthew 6:19-21: 'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moss nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'"

Close with a circle prayer. Each person in the circle is invited to offer a request or thanksgiving.

¹Bob Brewer, "Easy Come, Easy Go," GROUP Magazine (February, 1980).

TITHES AND OFFERINGS, PART 1

by Douglas Karl

PURPOSE

To make young people aware of the role of finances in God's earthly work.

PREPARATION

Gather a bucket or offering plate, 100 to 200 pennies, two prizes (one of which can be a gag gift) and songbooks.

Note: This is session one of a two-part series.

OPENING

Open with songs, prayer, offering and announcements.

Play the game Give and Take. Begin by passing around a bucket of pennies. Tell the youth they can take as many or as few as they want.

After the coins have been distributed, have the youth mill about the room giving away or collecting as much money as possible. Instruct the youth to keep track of money they give or collect. When they run out of money, they keep playing by asking others for more.

Award prizes to the youth who gave away or collected the most pennies. Award the gag gift to the person with the least pennies.

Ask the following questions and allow time for discussion:

1. Did you feel any resentment toward those who took a lot of money?
2. How did you feel about the

person who didn't get very much?

3. When I said you could take as much money as you wanted, what did you think?

4. Why did you take the amount of money you collected?

5. What types of feelings were you having as you were giving away money? collecting?

6. How did you feel about others having more money than you at the end of the game?

THE "MEAT" OF THE MEETING

Read the following material to the entire group:

"According to J.O. Atkinson, the crime of the ages has been the prostitution of money. Truly, money is one of the most powerful, yet dangerous forces in all the world. Perhaps this is why Jesus has more to say about the right use of possessions than any other subject. Someone figured there are 1,565 references to giving in the Bible, while there are only 523 references to praying. At least 20 of the 30 major parables by Jesus relate to attitudes toward property. It has been estimated that one verse out of every seven in the Gospels deals with money and the things money can buy."¹

Allow time for questions and comments.

Read the next quote to the entire group, again allowing time for