



The Center for Financial Education

# The CFE Communion

*Providing Promise for a Healthier Financial Future*

January & February, 2009

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## CFE News

### THANK YOU, DORI!

We want to thank Dori Groenendyk for the great job, she did as the Financial Peace Coordinator. She did a wonderful job of promoting FPU and coordinating classes. However, Dori has decided to discontinue her role as the Coordinator for CFE. Thankfully, Dori and her husband, Harry, will continue to facilitate FPU courses.

So please refer any questions you have in regards to Financial Peace to the CFE office at 722-4900.

### Please keep using goodsearch.com

### TAX TIME



This year we will be teaming up with Northwestern College students again to provide help with our clients tax returns.

This has been a very successful partnership, and we appreciate the support from Northwestern College.

### JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING FEBRUARY 16, 2009

We would like to invite all of our partners and friends to our Annual Meeting on Monday, February 16 at 7:00 pm. We will meet at the New Life Reformed Church of Sioux Center.

Prayer Warriors, Leadership Team, Clients, Payees, Donors, Church Leaders, Community Leaders; come for coffee and to share our vision.

During the meeting we will review statistics of the past year, vote for officers, and review the new budget.

See you there!



### Your Donations Appreciated

Thank you for your generous support. Please keep this ministry and its clients in your prayers.

## GIVING: UNLOCKING THE HEART OF GOOD STEWARDSHIP

From “Giving, Pursuing Spiritual Transformation”, Willow Creek

*While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.*

*Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.*

*“Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”*

**Mark 14: 3-9**

Of all the acts of servanthood he witnessed, one touched Jesus’ heart so deeply that he memorialized it forever. One would expect the spotlight of his attention to fall on some grand sacrifice, something of “high impact.” But what left Christ’s heart pierced was a woman named Mary and her alabaster jar.

An alabaster jar. We all have one. They come in different shapes and sizes, and sealed within is all that we prize—our treasured earthly possessions. Occasionally we break the seal, remove the lid and share—as we know we ought. But we do so carefully, reservedly, with control, anxious all the while to put the lid back on. So much

of life is spent preserving and conserving what we hold in our alabaster jar.

Mary’s servanthood brings each of us to a fork in the road. The question of good stewardship—What will you do with your alabaster jar?—is one that every person must decide.

Ultimately, good stewardship is not a matter of wise money management or even responsible giving. It is a matter of extravagant love. Have you taken in the love of Christ extravagantly poured out for you? Has it left your heart so filled with gratitude that you can’t help but lavishly pour it out in return? Is his love transforming your prayers from “Give me, Lord” to “Use me, Lord—all that I am and all that I hold dear”?

In the words of author Ken Gire, “The Savior had come to earth to break an alabaster jar for humanity. And Mary had come that night to break one for him.

“It was a jar he never regretted breaking. Nor did she.”

Nor will you.

### **The Story Money Tells**

Money is a litmus test of our true character. It is an index of our spiritual life. Our stewardship of money tells a deep and consequential story. It forms our biography. In a sense, how we relate to money and possessions is the story of our lives.

If this is true of all men in all ages, does it not have special application to us who live in a time and place of unparalleled affluence? Take a man or woman who works from age twenty-five to sixty-five and makes \$15,000 a year.

In his lifetime his person of modest income by our standards will handle well over half a million dollars. He will manage a fortune. And if Scripture is true, and men must give an account of their lives to God (Rom. 14:12), then one day this man must answer these questions: Where did it all go? What did I spend it on? What has been accomplished for eternity through my use of all this wealth?

In the account of the poor widow, Mark wrote, “Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury” (Mark 12:41).

Notice we are not told, “Jesus happened to see...” No, it seems he deliberately watched to observe what people were giving.

Jesus was interested enough in who was giving what to make an immediate object lesson to the disciples about the true nature of trusting God as demonstrated in sacrificial financial giving.

If we stop to think about it, this passage makes all of us who suppose that what we do with our money is our business and only our business feel terribly uncomfortable. On the contrary, it is painfully apparent that it is *God’s* business—that God makes it his business. He does not apologize for watching with intense interest what we do with the money he has entrusted to us. If we use our imaginations, we might even peer into the invisible realm to see him gathering some of his subjects together this very moment. Perhaps you can hear him using *your* handling of finances as an object lesson. The question is, what kind of lesson?