

Stories of Redemption
Allowing God to fix our finances
Luke 19:1-10
4 of 6

A December, 2010 article in Newsweek argues that after a brief period of cutting back Americans are starting to spend again—whether they can afford it or not. Some experts call it "frugality fatigue"—in other words, we're weary of cutting back, and we're ready to splurge again. The authors argue, "The truth is that spending may be hard to contain. Entire generations of consumers have grown up with the idea of instant gratification and the credit culture that comes with it."

These are some of the key statistics from the article:

- American households have pared their debt (from \$12.5 trillion in 2008 to \$11.6 trillion in September of 2010), but most of that came from home foreclosures and defaults on credit cards.
- From the start of the recession, we have continued to increase our spending in the following expense categories: Telephone equipment (up 16.6 percent), pet expenses (up 14.4 percent), and child care (up 12.8 percent).
- Although 89 percent of Americans say they're watching their expenditures, spending has increased anyway.

More tellingly, the authors include two stories that epitomize our runaway spending. First, Maria Diaz, a 30-year-old waitress who was forced to move in with her mother, said, "I keep waiting for things to get better, and they just don't. After awhile, I just decided, 'I need some new clothes. I'm going to get them.' My mama's not happy, but I don't care. You stop spending, and you stop living."



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Then there's the story of Harry Dugan, a 50-year-old respiratory therapist from New Jersey. Although he's "underwater" on his mortgage and he tried to curtail his expenses, he recently "had a bit of a relapse": he purchased a \$900 television and a \$21,000 car. "It was an impulse buy," he confessed. "If I could go back, I'd get something cheaper."

The article concludes with a warning: "Yes, spending is great fun, until the bill arrives. That's a lesson we've learned the hard way. Or maybe we haven't." [Stefan Theil, "*The Urge to Splurge*," *Newsweek* (12-6-10)]

This week's Daily Bible Reading will consist of passages that teach us about the stewardship of the money with which God entrusts us.

- DAY ONE – Luke 12:13-21
- DAY TWO – Luke 18:18-30
- DAY THREE – Luke 19:1-10
- DAY FOUR – Luke 19:11-27
- DAY FIVE – Matthew 6:1-4

Memory Verse:

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21)



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