

4. Read Matthew 6:21. *In what way is our spending during the Christmas season a reflection of our heart?*

5. Read Matthew 6:24. *How does Christmas become a "season of excess" for you?*

- Food
- Drink
- Busy Schedule
- Overspending
- _____

–How does this leave you feeling after the holiday is over?

TAKING IT HOME

If you were asked to use this season as an opportunity to teach children how to handle money responsibly, what are the important lessons that you would like to teach them?

The struggle against wanting more is very real indeed. As you enter into the Christmas season, are you already feeling a sense of frustration or defeat in this area?



Spend Less

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. - Matt 6:24

God our Father - is a **GIVER**

[see: Isaiah 9:2,6-7; Luke 1:30-33; John 3:16-17]

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is **GIVEN** is, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. - Isaiah 9:6*

*For God so loved the world, that He **GAVE** His only begotten Son, - John 3:16a.*

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us - Romans 5:8

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - Romans 3:31-32a.

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**This Christmas spend LESS
except when you should spend MORE**

the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. - 1 Timothy 6:10a

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- Matthew 6:24

If your company automatically deducts charitable contributions for you, did you know you can designate that gift directly to Grace?

We are a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation. If your company needs our Federal Tax ID#, Teresa Echegaray or Loria Sylvia can give it to you.

If your contribution has to be made to a specific organization your company recognizes, you can designate it thru *The United Way*[®].

The United Way will redirect it on to us. If you want to make that change now or in the future, make sure you enter all of our Church's information on the "Write In" line on the Pledge Form.

Here's the Church's legal information: Mira Mesa Grace Chapel
9050 Mira Mesa Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92126
(858) 271-7730

Community Group Homework

For the week of November 29, 2009

This is the last week of the fall quarter. Winter quarter begins the week of January 10, 2010. **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back over your sermon notes, was there any particular point or passage of Scripture that most challenged, confused or caught your attention?

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

"What do you want for Christmas?" Share about a time when you got exactly what you wanted.

– *How long were you satisfied with the gift?*

DIGGING DEEPER

1. *When you read Christmas ads, what emotions do they arouse?*

– *Do they make you feel like something's lacking in your life?*

2. *Have you ever bought something, only to discard it soon after because it had lost its luster?*

3. *Read Matthew 6:19-20. What are the differences between the two types of treasure?*

Ideas To Help You - "Give More & Love All"

Spending time together

- Prepare a feast for a special evening with family or close friends
- Give your child a baseball bat for a trip to the batting cages together
- Buy two copies of a book and meet weekly with a friend to discuss what you've read
- Hand-paint & bake pottery mugs with your kids (available at craft stores)
- Wrap a \$5 gift card for a coffee date with a close friend
- Help your neighbor set up their Christmas ornaments
- Wrap popcorn and a \$5 video store gift card, for a movie night with a friend
- Cook a meal for someone's aging parents
- Take a friend to a free concert at the park - don't forget the food
- Create an elaborate scavenger hunt for your nieces and nephews
- Host Monday Night Football with your friends and make homemade pizzas
- Go on a long day-hike in the mountains with your spouse - pack in a picnic lunch
- Help someone with arthritis wrap their presents
- Go ice-skiing with your kids & invite another family to join you
- Bundle up the family and walk thru a neighborhood with lots of Christmas lights

Creative activity coupons

- "Use-our-house-while-we're-on-vacation" coupon for someone
- "House-project" coupon to help your friend finish that DIY Project
- "Out-of-town adventure together" coupon with your child
- "Babysitting" coupon for those parents who could use a night out
- "Yard-work" coupon for an elderly person in your life
- "Walk-your-dog" or "housesit-your-cat" coupon, paired with can pet food for your neighbor
- "Change-your-oil" coupon for a friend with less car expertise than yourself

Things to make

- Record a "Best of 2009" mix CD for friends
- Compile a book of your favorite recipes for a neighbor
- Create a photo album of the kids for the distant relatives
- Cut up old magazines and make funny Christmas cards
- Sew, knit, or crochet something for a friend or family member
- Record an interview with grandparents on the history of their life to give the family
- Build a raised garden bed for herbs or vegetables
- Write a meaningful and intentional letter of appreciation
- Bake a loaf of bread and deliver it with fresh jam or jelly
- Make a memory book for a friend of a trip you took together
- Bake Christmas goodies for your friends and family, teachers, fire department, etc...

Give around the world

- Buy a goat or a fruit tree in your friend's name for someone who needs it; check out the gift catalogs from [World Vision](#) or [Samaritan's Purse](#)
- Participate in Grace's Thanksgiving Offering on Sundays in November. We're buying life sustain trees for those in need thru our relief agency, [CAMA Services](#)
- Partnering with [Living Water International](#) to build wells for clean water in developing countries

The Advent Conspiracy isn't about not spending money or not shopping. It isn't just to do good in the world. It's okay to spend some money (sometimes creating something cool can be much more expensive - so be aware of that). Don't create a whole separate set of pressures, worry, and guilt by feeling like you can't spend a dime. Just step out of the consumerism, be thoughtful and enjoy the celebration!

ADVENT CONSPIRACY

Americans spend \$450 billion (450,000,000,000) celebrating Christmas. Yet, after 2 months of shopping malls, traffic jams, and Rudolf on the radio, most experience an empty feeling of missed purpose on Dec 26th. Is this what you want out of Christmas?

The true story of God's love thru Christ's birth is subversive; it tells of an upside-down kingdom. It's a story of promise & hope, in which the blind see, the lame walk, and the least become the greatest. Advent was a world changing event, that focused on the birth of Christ. What if we traded our celebration of stuff, for a celebration of hope? What if we made unbelievable memories with family & friends, while saving lives at the same time? This is what the **ADVENT CONSPIRACY** is all about.

Worship FullyNovember 22

Christmas is a season where love wins, peace reigns, and a king is celebrated with each breath. Entering the story of advent means entering this season with an overwhelming passion to worship Jesus to the fullest.

Spend LessNovember 29

Our culture guilts us into overspending. This Christmas we're asking you to consider buying **one less gift**. It sounds insignificant, yet thru this sacrifice you'll experience a miracle: that will cause you to truly celebrate Christ during the advent.

Give MoreDecember 6

God's gift to us was a relationship built on love. That's why we're drawn to the idea that Christmas should be a time to love our friends & family, and give to people in need. This Christmas, give more of yourself. Write mom a letter; take the kids sledding, bake some cookies, sing some carols; give to the truly needy.

Love AllDecember 20

Jesus loved in ways never imagined. Though we was rich, he became poor...to love the needy, the forgotten, the overlooked, and the sick. This Christmas we can join Him. By spending less you'll have resources to help the helpless. One less gift will become one unbelievable present in the name of Christ.