

WEEK 1: WELCOME TO THE PROGRAM + WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Have someone open in prayer. Afterwards have someone read the text below. Some groups decide to have a different person act as “narrator” each week. Other groups find it helpful to use a “popcorn” style of reading where someone reads for a bit and then chooses a different group member to continue the reading. Feel free to do whatever works best for your group, but make sure to rotate who is reading from time to time.

Welcome to our finish line SPRINT! There are three main goals for our time together over these next several weeks:

1. To experience significant heart change that brings us closer to God
2. To develop a framework for financial stability and
3. To take the finish line pledge and set a financial finish line for our spending

Today, we're going to spend some time laying out the remaining weeks. We're also going to get an idea where each of us is starting from.

To begin, lets each go around and answer the following questions:

What do you hope to get out of this group over the upcoming weeks? What are you most excited for? What are you least excited for?

If you have no idea why you're here, that's okay too. We'll get you up to speed soon.

PART 1: Mission and Vision

Next, we're going to take a few minutes to walk through the SPRINT mission and vision to get us all on the same page.

Mission: Our mission is to lead people into a deeper relationship with God, to radically impact our communities, and to bring the gospel to the world.

Vision: We envision a global community of believers who manage their fleeting earthly wealth with an eternal perspective to impact their communities and bring the gospel to the world.

What This Program Is Not:

1. **A Path to Financial Independence:** Financial independence is the status of having enough wealth to pay your living expenses for the rest of your life without having to be employed or dependent on others. We believe that there are much deeper (and more difficult) goals to orient your life around, and financial independence is not one of them. You have a greater calling.

2. *A Business*: The Finish Line team has made a commitment to never charge for any of its materials. This material is completely free for use in your church, small group, or ministry, and always will be. Sharing is encouraged. There is also no way to donate to the Finish Line team. This program exists only to mobilize Christians in their relationships with God and to complete the Great Commission. And we never want requests for donations to confuse that message.
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PART 2: Program Overview

This program can permanently change your life, and the lives of many around you. But for that to happen, you're going to need to get on board with a couple things:

1. *Participation*: Quite a few things will be asked of us in the next few weeks. In order for us to get anything out of this process, we will need to participate! This is an active process, not a passive one.
2. *Prayer*: We are not satisfied with acquiring knowledge. We are asking God to change the trajectory of our lives. And that kind of change does not come from ideas alone. We need to continually ask God to change our hearts throughout this program.
3. *Honesty*: We are going to be talking about personal subjects in the next few weeks. In order to do so, we need an atmosphere of honesty and confidentiality. Remember, everything discussed here stays here.

Let's give it a try right now.

How would you describe the role of money in your life so far? What was the first experience you remember having with money from your childhood? How did it shape your understanding of how to use money in your life?

PART 3: Searching for Wisdom

As we move through the next few weeks, we need to understand one more concept: *wisdom*. All of us have likely spent much of our lives searching for wisdom, and there is much to be found! In the realm of finances and wealth, there is a great deal of worldly wisdom. And there is significant value in knowing and understanding these worldly concepts. In fact, we will be covering quite a number of them in the next few weeks.

But we are longing for something much, much greater than an understanding of worldly wealth. We want Godly wisdom. So how do we know when something is Godly wisdom? Well, to start, Godly wisdom makes sense in the context of the gospel. In fact, much of the guidance that the Bible gives us would sound silly if the gospel weren't true. Love your enemy. Forgive one another. Sell all your possessions.

Anyone can get on board with budgeting or saving for retirement. But there are some things that make absolutely no sense if Christ did not die to purchase our lives and bring us into eternal relationship with God. And those are the things we are after.

Divide up the following verses, and read them out loud one after another. Afterwards, *be silent* for 2-3 minutes, reflecting on one or two things that stood out to you. Then share your thoughts as a group.

Verses (all ESV):

Ecclesiastes 5:10

10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.

Matthew 6:19-21

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 19:20-22

20 The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?” **21** Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” **22** When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Mark 12:42-44

42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. **43** And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. **44** For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain, **7** for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. **8** But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. **9** But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. **10** For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Feel free to write down your thoughts here.

After giving everyone a minute or two to reflect on the passages.

Discuss as a group:

What stood out to you among the passages above?

PART 4: Don't Waste Your Life

Next, we're going to read a short passage from John Piper's [book](#) *Don't Waste Your Life*. Have someone read the passage aloud.

For me as a boy, one of the most gripping illustrations my fiery father used was the story of a man converted in old age. The church had prayed for this man for decades. He was hard and resistant. But this time, for some reason, he showed up when my father was preaching. At the end of the service, during a hymn, to everyone's amazement he came and took my father's hand. They sat down together on the front pew of the church as the people were dismissed. God opened his heart to the gospel of Christ, and he was saved from his sins and given eternal life. But that did not stop him from sobbing and saying, as the tears ran down his wrinkled face—and what an impact it made on me to hear my father say this through his own tears—"I've wasted it! I've wasted it!" This was the story that gripped me more than all the stories of young people who died in car wrecks before they were converted—the story of an old man weeping that he had wasted his life. In those early years God awakened in me a fear and a passion not to waste my life. The thought of coming to my old age and saying through tears, "I've wasted it! I've wasted it!" was a fearful and horrible thought to me.

Discuss as a group:

What thoughts does the passage bring to mind? If you were to die tomorrow, how would you reflect on the course of your life so far?

As we finish up for today, let's remember that the remaining weeks are an opportunity for us to reflect on our relationship with money so far in life. Hopefully, God will open each of our eyes and hearts to ways we can better align ourselves with His story.

When it comes to money, we are all headed somewhere. But all too often, we don't know exactly what we are headed towards. Without intentional reflection and action, that race can become an endless pursuit of more.

More money. More success. More comfort. More control.

There is a growing movement of people who have decided that they were tired of that race, the race for more. They wanted something different. That's why they chose a financial finish line.

Over the remaining weeks, we are going to be exploring the process of setting a financial finish line. We'll be tackling some challenging topics. Remember that above all, our goal is to use our lives to our maximal capacity, to expend all of ourselves for God. We don't want to end our lives crying "I've wasted it!". And the Finish Line Pledge was created to help us to that end.

Have someone close in prayer.

REGISTRATION

If you haven't already, have your SPRINT host or another designated group member register your SPRINT at the link below. You can complete the form on your phone in about 30 seconds.

Registration: www.finishlinepledge.com/register

FEEDBACK:

We'd love to hear your thoughts about this week's material. How can we improve? Leave us feedback at www.finishlinepledge.com/feedback