TAKING IT HOME
Since this is the last week in the current series on stewardship, take some time this week to review your notes from the four messages as well as your answers to the questions in the study guides from each week. It’s easy to get overwhelmed with a lot of ideas that come to us when we are engaged in a particular study, so that in the end we don’t implement any of them. To combat that tendency, select one (and only one) principle or idea from this series that you want to incorporate into your life in the short term (that is, within the next three months). Write it down in the space below. Share it with your community group. Pray for each other as a group to be able to follow through successfully in applying this teaching to your life. Share successes and struggles in future weeks so that you can continue to pray for and encourage one another in this important area of spiritual life.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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Pot Belly Wisdom
Listening to the Voices of Experience
Proverbs 16:16

1. Wisdom is more __________________ than material wealth.

2. Wisdom is something we should ________________.

3. Wisdom helps us ________________ everything in life.

Sermons can be heard at www.northsidecc.org.
Community Group Study Guide
For the week of January 26, 2014

QUICK REVIEW
Take a few moments to review your notes from Larry’s message, the last in our “General Store” series. What was something from this message or from the series as a whole that really spoke to you personally? Have you made any specific changes in your life as a result of our study of these principles of stewardship?

MY STORY
1. Who would you say is the wisest person you know or have known? Why do you say so?

2. Who is someone who has served as a model or mentor for you when it comes to how you manage your finances? What is something specific you learned from them?

DIGGING DEEPER
Wisdom can be an elusive target. Some feel that it can be attained only with age and experience. Others maintain that it is a characteristic that you are born with—enhanced by accumulated knowledge over time, but present from birth and observable at an early age. Wisdom in financial matters is a much-prized ability. When you hire a “financial advisor” to help you manage investments, insurance, taxes or other financial assets and liabilities, you are hoping to find someone who has not only technical know-how but also wisdom when it comes to making financial decisions. The Bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. What this means is that it is impossible to be truly wise unless you start out with a base knowledge of Who God is, and give Him the honor and respect He is due. Wisdom in the area of personal finances likewise begins from an understanding that everything we have comes from God and ultimately belongs to Him. It continues with the recognition that in the big scheme of things, material wealth (or the lack thereof) is not the primary measure or predictor of success or happiness in life. Like so much else in this life, the opportunities and experiences we have in the area of stewardship of material resources are not an end in themselves, but rather serve as training for the life to come.

1. Based on what you read in these two familiar parables, what are some distinctions drawn between wise, faithful stewardship and foolish, unfaithful stewardship?

2. What are some evidences you see in these passages that “wise” does not always equate with “cautious” when it comes to handling finances?

3. Matthew 25:15 contains this key phrase—”each according to his ability.” Do you think that God gives financial resources to people based on their ability to handle them, or do people accumulate financial resources based on their ability to earn them? Explain your answer.

4. In the Luke 12 passage, where God calls the rich man a fool, Jesus concludes with this statement: “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.” What do you think it means to be rich toward God?

5. This passage, taken from another parable about a shrewd manager who cheated his master in order to curry favor with those who owed debts to the master, includes this pointed question: “If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?” What do you think these “true riches” are? Why would wisdom and faithfulness in managing material wealth make someone qualified to handle these true riches?