

## ‘Just a little bit more’

In the 1920’s, a reporter asked John D. Rockefeller, a wealthy businessman in America: “How much is enough?” His answer was fascinating: “Just a little bit more.” The comment Mr. Rockefeller made was meant to be tongue-in-cheek. However, the comment was profound since it put into words the mindset of many in our society.

Very few New Zealand families, whom the world would define as wealthy, have a clear understanding of financial freedom or their “finish line.” Until this objective is clearly defined, the answer to the question, “How much do we need?” (or “How much is enough?”) can be troubling.

### **What’s your number?**

As you read this, you may be thinking this subject doesn’t apply to you. However, it is healthy for everyone, not just the extremely wealthy, to seek God’s direction by determining in advance how much is enough. If we choose to focus on how much will be enough, rather than focusing on how much we can grow and build our personal wealth, then our families, churches, communities, and countries will be better for it.

In reality, even most affluent families never reach the conclusion that they are financially free because they do not realize the answer to “how much is enough” does actually exist. The first step however, must be a desire to determine the number.

### **Facts and perceptions**

How do we begin to define financial freedom? First of all, financial freedom is a concept best defined by the individual family, at least in the beginning. Only you, the Holy Spirit, and possibly a trusted advisor, can identify what that point would look like for you and your family.

This beginning point must be intuitively correct, not necessarily economically correct. It only matters if you have a sense of peace about it.

In fact, the amount perceived as being enough is often significantly greater than what is actually required to support an individual or family’s current lifestyle. In my experience, the perceived amount has been as much as twice the actual need.

Once a family has defined their particular number, it is encouraging each year to identify the total amount of resources they are managing and to see how they have grown. Many times, a family will feel led to give the increase away.

How is this relevant to our level of giving to charities and to people in need?

Unfortunately, many people base their charitable giving on how much money they have left over. The challenge for the family is determining the true extent of their excess resources, a question that can be answered if they take the time to define their financial

freedom number.

The bottom line is that you have to begin defining your own financial freedom.

Edited from an article by Kevin Shahan, published in Money Matters March 2006.

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