



# Men's Golf Fellowship

## Speaker Discussion Questions

### Mark Whitacre (Part One)

**Spiritual Topics: Greed, Success, Self-Centeredness, Living a Dual Life**

#### **About the Talk**

Mark spoke at length about his time as an undercover agent for the FBI. Through that experience and his subsequent imprisonment, Mark not only came to a personal relationship with God, but learned many life lessons such as the destructive nature of greed, the allure of success, narcissism and the destructive struggle of living a dual life. We will use Mark's experience as a platform to talk with each other about these topics on a personal level.

#### **Discussion Questions**

- Mark told of a green lamp that was actually an FBI video monitoring system that he placed in meeting rooms all over the world in order to tape the price fixing meetings and gather evidence against ADM. He commented on how stunned he was that no one ever noticed it. His explanation was very simple, yet profound: greed blinds you. He said "the executives in those meetings were so consumed with money that they did not even notice the same green lamp in the room in different hotels across the globe." What do you think of his statement "greed blinds you"? Is it true? If so, how does it blind people? Greed can often lead to lying and cheating. Have you ever seen greed blind someone in your life

***Related Scripture: Luke 12:15 – The danger of greed***

- Mark was wildly successful at an early age and admitted quite frankly that he did not handle it well. What does it mean to not handle success well? Think of and share some examples. Another way to approach this is: how does one handle success well? What does that look like? Now think of the success you have had in your life (i.e. business, sports, relational, etc.). Have you handled success well? If so, how? Have you or someone you know not handled success well? In what way(s)? In hindsight, if you had your success to do over again, what would you change? ***Related Scripture: Genesis 39:2-5 – Success***

- Mark said that people come out of prison in one of two ways: either bitter or better. He explained that the difference between the two is the “I” in the word “bitter” and that if a person is self-absorbed they most likely will become bitter, but if they are other-centered they will come out free from bitterness. His conclusion from his experience was the realization that life is actually not about us. What do you think of that statement? How do we live life as though it was all about us? When talking and acting how do we show that we think about ourselves more than others? Think of one personal example where you (a) acted in the interests of others first and then, (b) where you thought of yourself first and others second. ***Related Scripture: Philippians 2:3-4 – Other-centeredness***
- Mark lived a dual life for 3 years while he was undercover. He knew what his job was with the FBI, yet he acted as if he had no ties to them when he went into work at ADM each day. There is a temptation for everyone who believes in God to live a dual life, to live and speak one way at work or on the golf course and another at home or at church. What are some of the areas that people tend to compartmentalize when living a dual life? Why do you think there is this tendency in each of us? Is it ever a positive thing to compartmentalize? Have you ever known a person that seemed to live two very different lives? ***Related Scripture: Matthew 5:14-15 – Living a dual life***

### **Closing Prayer**

God, give me the conviction to place you first in my life and to never put you aside for the things of this world. Give me strength to begin to involve you in all aspects of my life and to not relegate you to convenient areas of my life. Lord, give me the humility to allow you to guide me and to trust that wherever you lead is good.