

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Proverbs 3:5-6

(Here is a passage to help your group as you worship. You can go through it together or in groups in meditation and/or in prayer)

Read Proverbs 3:5-6 using the prayer practice of Lectio Divina. Read the passage aloud 3 times. After each reading, spend a few minutes reflecting. After the first reading, open yourself to the presence of God. On the second reading, listen for a certain word or phrase that stands out to you. On the third reading, listen to what God's invitation might be for you.

Icebreaker

What would you do if someone gave you a million dollars?

Text for Discussion: Matthew 6:19-24

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

Money reveals a great deal about our priorities, our motivations, and our deepest desires. So as we discuss money and its place in our lives, we first must ask ourselves: What are our priorities? And are they what we want them to be?

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us that our priorities – especially those about money – are formed by our affections, our vision, and our Master:

Our Affections form our priorities. Scripture isn't saying wealth is wrong in and of itself. But if our priority is to selfishly accumulate money, then we have a disordered attachment to it. Materialism tethers our hearts to the earth, tricking us into thinking our lives consist of the abundance of our possessions. Our heart is formed by what we pay attention to, so if we want to care about what God cares about, we must begin to invest in those things. When we invest in God's kingdom, our hearts move toward it. Our actions will create our affections which will create our priorities.

Our Vision forms our priorities. Our perspective is everything when it comes to setting our priorities. Our outlook determines our outcome. And our perspective changes when we engage with God in real, specific ways, not just through learning new things about Him. We will be led to a life of generosity, and we will find that having God's priorities are not a struggle, because it is a better way to live.

Our Master forms our priorities. As followers of Jesus, we must ask whether Jesus fits inside our picture of *The Good Life*, or does He define it? If Jesus is merely a component of the life we seek, who or what are we really serving? It is impossible to pursue both God and money; it cannot be done. We cannot walk in two directions at the same time. God can only be served with our exclusive devotion. To share Him with other loyalties is to choose idolatry as we elevate those other things to God's level in our hearts.

So, how do we properly invest our affections, expand our vision, and serve our Master? We give. In the Old Testament, God calls us to tithe, offering 10% of our income to His ministries. And we may have to work our way up to this. But we need not stop there. In the Gospels, Jesus says that tithing is a starting point. Because no matter how much we give, we can never out give God.

As we act to unseat money from its mastery over us, we will inevitably worry. But as we trust in God, we'll realize only He can truly provide for us. But why? Why give? Money makes a bid for our heart like nothing else. We must realize that money is not just an indicator of our priorities; it is a determiner of them. The act of giving isn't about following the rules. It is an opportunity to invest in God's kingdom. What could we as a church do for our city, if only we gave as we are called? And how much more could giving in this way do for our hearts and our souls?

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

How can we make sure we are following God's priorities when it comes to money?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- 1) Read Matt 6:19-20. Ponder the reason Jesus says we should seek treasure "in heaven." How, in a practical sense, is that done?
 - The passage points out that our actions form our affections. Do you think that is true? Can you give an example of that from your own life?
 - Can you give an example of when you've invested in the things of God (with time, talents or treasures) and it increased your affection towards God?
- 2) Read Matt 6:22-23. Why does Jesus point out that if our eye is dark, "how great is that darkness"?
 - David mentioned that our perspectives change when we "engage with God in specific, tangible ways." How is that different from learning facts about God?
 - What kinds of spiritual practices have you engaged in, in the past, that have enlarged your vision or changed your perspective?
- 3) **Guiding Question: How can we make sure we are following God's priorities when it comes to money?**
- 4) Read Matt 6:24. Does this seem to you to be an overstatement on Jesus' part? Do you think he meant it literally, or more descriptively? Why?
 - Many contemporary translations capitalize "Money" or "Mammon" at the end of verse 24. Can you describe how some parts of your life lend themselves to this idea?
- 5) What do you think of the 10/10/80 plan? What are some first steps you would need to take to move towards following it? If you are already following it, what has the experience been like for you?

Praying for One Another

(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests.)

- Ask people to share whether or not they struggle the most with giving, saving or spending?
- Pray for one another based on the answers each person gives.