

Discipleship Course

6. Being distinctive- Money and possessions

Being God's people today

The Big idea

Money is a good gift from God for which we should be thankful. However, it easily gets hold of our hearts in a way that is destructive, and takes us away from God. God calls us instead to use our resources with eternity in mind, trusting him to provide for all our needs.

Introduction: Our culture vs Jesus



“Be on your guard against all kinds of greed! A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” **Jesus**

1. Be thankful! Your resources are a gift from God

“Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer”

1 Timothy 4:4-5

2. Be careful! Your resources can take you away from God

a. Beware the love of money

“Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

1 Timothy 6:9-10

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

Matthew 6:24

b. Beware the danger of greed (Luke 12:13-15, p. 1045)

3. Be wise! Use your resources now in the light of eternity (Luke 12:32-34)

a. God has already given us eternal riches

b. So use your earthly resources to store up treasure in heaven

Small Groups

1. How might it be tempting to live for money & possessions rather than God?
2. What might it look like practically to use our money in the light of eternity, not just for the here and now? How will that make us look different to the world around?
3. Why are we often reluctant to give our money away?

In 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians to be generous in giving, and in particular to give money towards an 'aid-package' for the troubled church in Judea, being collected across the churches Paul had established. We will follow through 5 key encouragements as to what Christian giving should be like. Read the passage for each section, and then look at the questions together.

Christian giving should be.... joyful! (2 Cor. 8:1-7)

- What is surprising about the Macedonians giving?
- What can we learn ourselves from the example of the Macedonian churches?

Christian giving should be... inspired by Jesus! (2 Cor. 8:8-9)

- 'Grace' means the same kind of thing as 'generosity'. How has Jesus been generous to us?
- How does this act as a motivation to be generous with our resources?

Christian giving should be.... proportionate (8:10-15)

- How does Paul address the fact that we all have different levels of wealth? (8:10-15)
- How could this be an encouragement, or a challenge?

Christian giving should be... willing (9:6-7)

- Why do you think our attitude to giving is important?
- How could thinking through our giving 'in advance' help with this?

Christian giving should be... trusting God (9:6-15)

- What promises are made to those who give cheerfully?
- What will it look like to trust God with these promises?

In 2 Cor. 8:7, Paul says, "See that you also excel in this grace of giving". In light of this passage, how can you grow in the grace of giving?

Taking it further in the week

Reflect

- Take 5 minutes to jot down all the main resources God has given you
- How could you use these resources now for the sake of God's Kingdom?

Read

- Read through **1 Corinthians 16:1-3**.
- Paul further advises the Corinthian believers about their giving, with some helpful principles for us.
 - *What is Paul's basic advice when it comes to being prepared to be a generous giver?*
 - *How can you practically put that into practice in your own circumstances?*

Respond

- Set aside some time in the near future to properly review your finances. Are you living within your means? Are you being a generous steward of the resources God has given you?
- Spend some time praying about your attitude towards money, and your finances. Plan to pray regularly to pray about your use of money.

Prayer points