



A Biblical Study of How Money Reveals
What Matters Most to Us

DISCUSSION GUIDE



We all would say we want to invest our lives in the things that matter,
but how serious are we about this desire?
Too often what we say we believe does not translate into how we live.

Our desire in this short series is to examine how we are living and how it
lines up with what we say we believe and how we really want to live.

*Thanks for joining us, we hope this series is helpful as we seek
to live our lives for the things that will last forever.*



LESSON 1: LIFE IN PARADISE

Discussion questions before watching the video:

1. What is your view of God? Do you see God as generous or restrictive? Why? Do you think God is more interested in getting from you or giving generously to you?
2. Talk about the attitudes toward possessions and money that were expressed in your home growing up. How is your life today similar or different?

Watch Lesson 1: Life in Paradise

1. Is it possible to really love Jesus and live for the things that matter if God doesn't have your money? Discuss why Jesus seems to correlate attitudes toward money and the allegiances of your heart.

2. According to Genesis 1-2, how did God intend the world to be? In what ways does God reveal Himself as generous in those two chapters?

3. Is surrendering every area of life to God a recipe for regret or happiness? Why?

4. We believe God is truly who He presents Himself to be in Genesis 1-2 and yet we hesitate to trust Him with our money and possessions, evaluate why this tendency is so strong in our lives?

5. As you review your past stages in life, comment on attitude changes which have occurred toward money and personal belongings.



LESSON 2: THE WAY OF CAIN

Discussion questions before watching the video:

1. What insights about yourself and what you're living for did you gain from the homework assignment in the last lesson?
2. How would you define temptation? Is temptation only about seeking after bad things? Explain.
3. Do God's blessings to us cause us to love Him and depend on Him more or can they have the opposite effect? Explain.
4. Share about something you really wanted, but after getting it you found it to be somewhat disappointing.

Watch Lesson 2: The Way of Cain

1. Ask two or three people to summarize what is being said in James 1:14-18. Make a few observations about how this Scripture applies (or doesn't apply) to the topic of money.

2. How did Bryan explain the significance of the trees in Genesis 1-3? What are the "trees" for us today? How might this shed light on why God doesn't bless you more?

3. Is giving to God ultimately about fulfilling God's requirements or about who we worship? Compare with II Corinthians 9:6-8.

4. Take a moment to evaluate your giving patterns on the scale below. Have several people share observations from their diagrams.

IN THE PAST

Far from God's Plan _____ Closer to God's Plan

IN THE PRESENT

Far from God's Plan _____ Closer to God's Plan

LESSON 2: HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Do an inventory of where you invest your time and money. Does God get the best of what you have to offer? Imagine your kids, spouse, friends and work associates are writing your eulogy, what would they list as the things that matter most to you?

TIME

MONEY

LESSON 2: Practical Challenge

Give a Grant: Since the \$50 bill has a picture of President Grant on it, put a \$50 bill in your wallet, then ask God to direct where it should go. Try this once a month.



LESSON 3: TORN BETWEEN TWO LOVERS

Discussion questions before watching the video:

1. What insights about yourself and what you're living for did you gain from the homework assignment in the last lesson?
 2. How does the average person in our culture determine his or her significance?
 3. It's common for people to buy things they can't afford or to rack up credit card bills they can't pay off. Why do you think this happens? What's the core issue?
 4. Most days do you feel confident in who you are or do you struggle with your sense of value? Are you at peace most days or stressed out? Why?
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Watch Lesson 3: Torn Between Two Lovers

1. What does John say about having two lovers? How does this compare with what Jesus said in Matthew 6:24?

2. How do we use money and stuff to tell the people around us that we matter, that we have value? How does money help us put points on the scoreboard in a performance-based value system?

3. A possible barometer of the level of significance and security you find in God may be seen in the amount of generosity you practice. Share about this connection in your life.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

X

DATE



LESSON 4: THE FOOLISHNESS OF TRUSTING RICHES

Discussion questions before watching the video:

1. What insights about yourself and what you're living for did you gain from the homework assignment in the last lesson?
 2. Share about an academic or sports letter you may have earned in high school or college. Or tell about any trophies, awards, or special commendations you have received in recent years. Where are those letters, letter jackets, trophies, plaques or letters of commendation today?
 3. What makes living for the values of this world so appealing? Why do so many people, including so many Christians, ultimately live for the things that won't last?
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Watch Lesson 4: The Foolishness of Trusting Riches

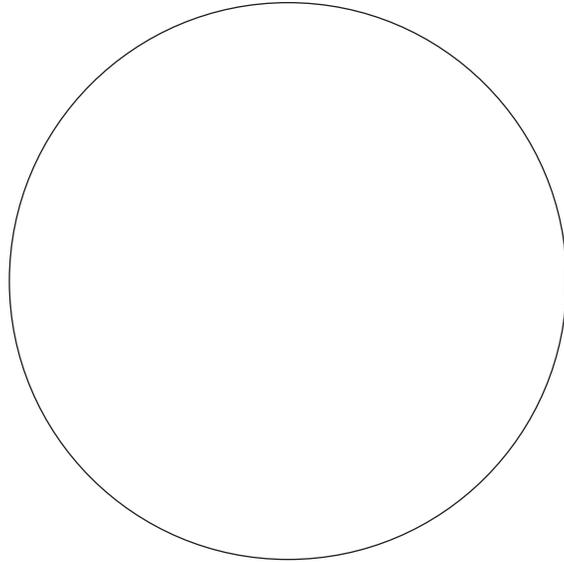
1. Why does the text tell us not to be overly impressed with the accumulation of money and stuff in this world? How big of a problem must this be to have an introduction that covers all people, of all cultures, of all times?

2. What is the "grand reversal" discussed in the video? How does this compare with what Paul says in Philippians 4:10-14? How about I Timothy 6:6-10?

3. In the video we heard that many successes in this world can be compared to a cow eating grass in the pasture. How can we avoid this?

LESSON 4: HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

The best way to measure what you're living for in a practical way is to evaluate where the money goes. Not just a percentage of the income but where does it all get spent? What seems to matter most to you based on that? Create a pie chart to illustrate how much money goes to each piece of the pie.



LESSON 4: Practical Challenge

Give away one of your possessions every day for a week. Remember, everything in the universe belongs to God. If you need it later, He can get you another. This will be a good exercise for you especially if you tend toward hoarding possessions.



LESSON 5: CULTURE WARS

Discussion questions before watching the video:

1. What insights about yourself and what you're living for did you gain from the homework assignment in the last lesson?
 2. When was the last time you built a sand castle or sand sculpture? Who were you with? Share a feeling you had while doing this.
 3. By now it seems clear no one wants to waste his/her life by pursuing the things that don't really matter. So how does it happen? Why do so many Christians simply go with the flow and build their "house" on the sand?
 4. Suppose someone has asked you to counsel them on living rightly. What are a number of practical suggestions you would provide for them as they seek to avoid the flow and current of the culture? Identify a few clues indicating a life of living for things that don't really matter.
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Watch Lesson 5: Culture Wars

1. According to Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, what two things need to happen for us to build on the rock (Matthew 7:24)? What would it mean then to hear and act on the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:19-24?

2. According to our study, what would it mean to come to the table hungry? What's the danger in this according to the text?

3. Review the three areas to help manage the risk of getting distracted by the things that don't really matter. How are you doing in each area?

LESSON 5: HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Do an assessment on the three areas from Proverbs 23. One is how you think, one is where your time goes, and one is whom you allow to influence you. Rate yourself on a scale from 1-10, with 10 being doing well and 1 being doing poorly.

HOW YOU THINK

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

WHERE YOUR TIME GOES

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

WHOM YOU ALLOW TO INFLUENCE YOU

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

LESSON 5: Practical Challenge

If you tend toward spending too often, this exercise will challenge you... go on a buying fast. For some, one week will be a challenge; for others, you might want to try a month. Let God show you where you have been spending your money and pray for guidance to use your money as He desires.



LESSON 6: IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

Discussion questions before watching the video:

1. What insights about yourself and what you're living for did you gain from the homework assignment in the last lesson?
2. Share about a hobby or interest you especially enjoy. Roughly how much time and resources do you expend in your enjoyment of this pursuit?
3. The core issue we've been wrestling with is not how much money we can get out of you. The core issue is what are you living for? Understanding you only get one chance at life, no sincere Christian wants to waste his/her life on things that don't matter. Yet, this can be very hard to assess. Many Christians think they're doing fine in this area yet in reality they are not. One of the most accurate barometers is what we're doing with our money. Share a few insights you have gained regarding how you spend your money or view your possessions.
4. Suppose you have recently died. Imagine a few of your family and friends reminiscing about your life. What are a few observations they would likely make about the ultimate values in your life? How would they summarize your attitudes toward money? How would they have observed generosity in your life?

Watch Lesson 6: Imagine The Possibilities

1. Is it possible to truly understand the grace of God and not be a generous giver? Share some thoughts on how the grace of God should influence your generosity.

2. Paul said if you sow sparingly, you should expect to reap sparingly. We sow sparingly because we want to keep more for ourselves. Is that how it works out? Paul also says if we sow bountifully we should expect to reap bountifully. On the scale below indicate where you feel you are and where you'd like to be this time next year.

IN THE PAST

Sowing Sparingly

Sowing Bountifully

IN THE PRESENT

Sowing Sparingly

Sowing Bountifully

3. What is the difference between the prosperity gospel and biblical truth regarding giving and money? What do you think prevents God from giving even more to you?

4. What have you learned about yourself from this study and what changes do you need to make or what values have been reinforced for you? If money talks, what did it say to you in this series?



Live life for the things that will last forever.

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everyone. every day.

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