

Message Discussion Guide

THE GOSPEL DEMANDS RADICAL ABANDONMENT, PART 2

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

October 19, 2008

Mark 10:17-31

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Last Sunday, David quoted Jim Elliot, a missionary who was martyred as he sought to proclaim the gospel to unreached people in the jungles of Ecuador. He said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

- What do you think he meant by those words?
- How do words like these apply to our possessions?
- Why is it difficult for many in North America to apply this principle to our possessions?

Option 2

One can argue that material blessings are a gift from God and demonstrate His favor. As David showed us in the Old Testament, God blessed Abraham's family – the nation of Israel – with material possessions and with land. These blessings were sometimes certainly a sign of God's favor on His people, but not in every circumstance. Even today God demonstrates His grace by bestowing great material wealth to many, especially in North America, even though they do not honor Him.

- Do you think one with great material blessing has found greater favor with God than a poor person? Why or why not?

Many times we think we deserve the material wealth we have because we have worked hard for it. Perhaps you came from a poor or even an oppressed family but you have been able to overcome those circumstances and now live a wealthier, even affluent, life.

- How does this line of thinking compare with the fact that people all over the world work very hard and yet remain in poverty?
- If possessions are not always a sign of God's favor and are not necessarily because we work harder than other's, why do you think God has blessed us wealth and possessions?

Review the Message . . .

A Radical Shift . . .

We must understand our use of money and possessions in the context of biblical history.

- **In the Past (Old Testament)**
 - **Obedience to God led to acquiring possessions on earth.**
 - **God gave possessions to build a place that displayed His glory among the nations.**

Discussion...

- Begin by reviewing Mark 10:17-31 again with a focus on the “shift” beginning in verse 23. Ask a volunteer to read.
- What is the significance of Jesus calling His disciples “children” in verse 24? (Compare with Mark 10:13-16 and Peter’s words in 10:28)
- What was God’s purpose in blessing the nation of Israel in the Old Testament? (See Deuteronomy 28:1-14, esp. vv. 9-10 and 1 Kings 10:1-10, esp. vs. 9)
- Why do you think God’s blessing of Israel was carried out through possessions and land? How else did God bless them? (See Leviticus 26:1-13)

Application . . .

- How great of an impact has the “Old Covenant” thinking regarding obedience to God, obedience that leads to material blessing, had on the modern church? Why?
- What are some ways in the modern world that we impose ideas associated with the Temple of ancient Israel on the institution of the church? How might we begin to correct some of these ideas?
- God’s material prospering of Israel did not eliminate the poor from the land, but it provided the system and resources for caring for them. Similarly, in the wealthy culture of the United States the systems and resources to serve the poor should be adequate to meet everyone’s needs. Why then are there so many homeless, hungry, and brokenhearted living in the U.S.?
 - **In the Present (New Testament and Today)**
 - **Obedience to God leads us to abandon possessions on earth.**
 - **God gives possessions to build a people who take His glory to the nations.**

Discussion...

- Why were the disciples shocked at Jesus’ comments to them in vv. 23-24?
- Why was the rich man’s wealth a barrier to entering the kingdom?

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- What are some Old Testament ideas that transfer over to the New Testament?
- Why do you think the idea of obedience that leads to material prosperity is minimized in the New Testament? Why is obedience that leads to suffering highlighted in the New Testament?
- What are some reasons that God purposed to build a “place” (the Temple and the nation of Israel) to make His glory known to the nations in the Old Testament? What are some reasons that God purposes to make His glory known to the nations through His “people” (the Church, the body of Christ)?
- Where in the New Testament can we find wealthy followers of Jesus that are *not* simultaneously being generous and giving to the poor?

Application...

- Based on the disciples’ reaction in Mark 10 to Jesus’ comments about the rich not entering the kingdom of God, do you think this idea of giving up possessions was more or less revolutionary in Jesus day than in ours?
- What has caused the contemporary church to hold on to the assumption that God still desires to build places, that is church buildings and programs, in order to proclaim His glory in all nations?
- If God does not desire to display His glory through the church by her having a higher standard of living than the rest of the world, how then does He desire to display it?
- How do you need to repent and change your thinking related to your material possessions and your spending for the sake of the needy? How do you need to repent and change your thinking related to your goals and desires for building a “bigger and better” lifestyle?
- **In the Future...**
 - **Obedience to God leads us to accumulate possession in heaven.**
 - **God gives possessions to build a paradise where we will enjoy His glory with the nations.**

Discussion...

- Read Matthew 6:19-21. What does it mean for us to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven”?
- What are some implications of Matthew 6:21 regarding how we use our possessions and what we value the most?
- Have someone in your group Read 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. What two groups of people is Paul comparing in this text?
- What event is he likely referencing when he speaks of “the Day” in vs. 13?
- What are some contemporary examples of works that are equivalent to “wood, hay, and straw”? With “gold, silver, and precious stones”?

Application...

- How has your understanding of Matthew 6:19-21 changed in light of the truths of Mark 10:17-31?

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- What are some of the real “treasures of heaven” that we are to “lay up”? How do we practically do this?
- What is one thing that you can begin investing your life, money, and time in that will last for all of eternity?
- Many can identify with the one who “escapes the fire,” like the one referenced in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, but they are content in thinking that what’s most important is their place reserved in heaven. For one who thinks this way, what is the goal of Jesus’ death on the cross? Of salvation? Of a life spent following Christ?
- What is the true goal of Jesus’ death? Of salvation? Of a life spent following Christ?