

## Message Discussion Guide

### THE GOSPEL DEMANDS RADICAL ABANDONMENT (PART 3)

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The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

October 26, 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**

Remind learners that Jesus once told a parable about the "Good Samaritan." This story is widely known even among the non-religious as a story about helping others. Explain that the story was an explanation to the question, "Who is my neighbor?". A man asked this question to Jesus in order to determine whom he was commanded to love. However, this question missed the point of Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus never intended to limit the people to whom we would act neighborly.

Similarly, how does asking the question, "What's wrong with possessions?" also miss Jesus' commands for us to help the poor and needy by giving of our resources?

How do we miss the point of the commands by even asking this question?

#### **Option 2**

Explain to learners that the recent problem with the world economies has caused a lot of stress and anxiety for many people. Ask the following questions:

- How has the economy shaken our confidence and security?
- What does our reaction to the economy reveal about where we place our confidence and where we find security?

Explain to learners that we will discuss how riches can be a barrier to Christ and the gospel as it can allow us to place confidence in ourselves.

### **Review the Message . . .**

#### A Radical Warning...

We desperately need to realize the \_\_\_\_\_ deadly \_\_\_\_\_ nature of our possessions.

- The danger we face...
  - Riches cause us to become self-\_\_\_\_\_ confident \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Riches cause us to become self-\_\_\_\_\_ sufficient \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Riches cause us to become self-\_\_\_\_\_ centered \_\_\_\_\_.
- The decisions we make...
  - A life of selfish \_\_\_\_\_ luxury \_\_\_\_\_ that forsakes the poor.
  - A life of selfless \_\_\_\_\_ love \_\_\_\_\_ for the sake of the poor.

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#### *David's Practical Steps*

- Identify the necessities and luxuries in your life. Be honest. Then begin selling and giving away your luxuries for the sake of the lost and the poor.
- Based on your necessities, set a simple cap on your lifestyle and then give away everything else.

#### **Discussion Questions**

- Enlist a volunteer to read Mark 10:17-31. Focusing on Verse 23, what does Jesus indicate about the relationship between possessions and salvation?
- Is Jesus declaring condemnation for wealth and wealthy people?
- Invite two volunteers to read 1 Timothy 6:6-10 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19.
- Based on these passages, how do possessions/wealth jeopardize our relationship with Christ? What are some of the words or phrases that Paul uses to describe the effect that wealth can have on a person?
- What instructions does Paul give to help people live in a way that loves the poor?

#### **Application . . .**

- Are possessions inherently bad? At what point do possessions become sinful?
- When is a person considered wealthy? By what standards do we judge the economic status of the wealthy? Do Jesus' and Paul's words apply to only those persons who have an abundance of resources to share, or do they apply to those persons who have any resources to share?
- What is the difference between a necessity and a luxury? (or between essentials and excess?)
- David asked the question, "What if God gives us more resources so that we have more to give away (to increase our standard of giving) rather than to increase our standard of living?" How does this thinking differ from the common idea that wealth is a blessing to be used to create more wealth? How does this concept compare to "the American dream"?
- How is possessing resources different from desiring to have more and more resources?

#### A Radical Gift...

Salvation is utterly impossible for any and every person apart from the grace of God.

- God gives salvation to us.
  - God does not sell us salvation.
  - God does not trade us salvation.
- God enables sacrifice in us.

#### *David's Practical Steps*

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- *Each day this week, set aside a specific concentrated time alone and/or with your family and pray. Really pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to change your desires and show you what He wants you to do. Then begin to do it, in His power, one step at a time.*

#### Discussion Questions

- Read Mark 10:25-27 again. Putting a camel through the eye of a needle is impossible. What does this analogy to salvation indicate about man's ability to attain salvation as a result of his own actions?
- According to this passage, how is salvation possible?

#### Application . . .

- Giving to the poor does not earn us salvation. Why then should we be concerned with helping others with our resources?
- Can we give in the way that Jesus commands without having God change our hearts? Why or why not?
- How does God change our hearts?
- If we are not asking God to change our hearts, what does that inaction indicate about our desire to be obedient to Him?
- Is it possible for a Christ-follower not to want God to change their hearts?

#### A Radical Freedom...

Jesus frees us from our bondage to ourselves and our \_\_\_\_\_ stuff \_\_\_\_\_.

- We are free to \_\_\_\_\_ go \_\_\_\_\_ wherever He calls.
- We are free to \_\_\_\_\_ give \_\_\_\_\_ whatever He asks.

#### David's Practical Steps

- *Honestly answer this question: Are you giving \_\_\_\_\_ less than \_\_\_\_\_ your ability, \_\_\_\_\_ according to \_\_\_\_\_ your ability, or \_\_\_\_\_ beyond \_\_\_\_\_ your ability?*
- *Stop asking how much you can \_\_\_\_\_ spare \_\_\_\_\_ and start asking how much it's going to take.*

#### Discussion Questions

- Invite a volunteer to read Mark 10:28. Peter indicates that the disciples had left everything in order to follow Christ. How does Peter's statement contrast with the decision of the rich young man?
- What does Peter's choice of obedience to follow Christ express about his concern for his possessions and their priority in his life?

#### Application . . .

- If Peter's heart had been attached to his possessions, job, and family, would he have been able to follow Christ fully?
- How do possessions and financial obligations enslave us?

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- How can we feel/experience more freedom to follow Christ?
- What will it take for us to be willing to find freedom from our possessions?

#### A Radical Family...

Jesus unites His people together to enjoy and \_\_\_\_\_ encourage \_\_\_\_\_ one another as they abandon themselves to Him.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ church \_\_\_\_\_ no longer seems like an abstract idea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sacrifice \_\_\_\_\_ no longer seems like an appropriate term.
- This \_\_\_\_\_ world \_\_\_\_\_ no longer seems like an adequate home.

#### David's Practical Steps

- *Decide today that your life and your possessions are His to spend radically for the sake of the lost and the poor around the world.*

#### Discussion Questions

- Read Mark 10:29-31. Jesus clearly states that those who follow Him will be blessed beyond measure. How does He indicate that His followers will be blessed for their sacrifice?

#### Application . . .

- Jesus stated that those who abandon everything from Him will be blessed a hundred times over. Is giving for the sake of being blessed a proper motivation for following Christ?
- Is sacrificing difficult when we know the return is worth the decision? Why?
- Why is living in such a radical way so difficult for us? For the church?
- How would our lives look differently if we actually believed the Bible?
- How would our lives look differently if we actually lived as if this life were temporary?