

Jesus & Money: Surrender

Luke 18:18-30

January 21, 2024

Begin with Prayer

In silence, invite the Holy Spirit to guide you. Then pray:

Empowering God, we pray that you will send your Holy Spirit

to move us to understanding; to help us to believe the gospel; to give us strength and wisdom to live by it. Amen. (Worship Sourcebook Q.3.5.8)

Reconnecting and Debriefing

Take a moment to check in with one another (2 minutes each).

1. *What is something you'd be interested in trying for the first time this year?*
2. *How do you feel when you don't have control?*



Introduction

When we gather, our goal is to be a people apprenticed to the life of Jesus. As you begin this week, remind your group to not try to fix, problem-solve, or rescue; keep pointing one another to the truths of the gospel in our lives.

Listening to God's Word

In this series, "Jesus & Money," we are engaging in a deeply personal topic that we often avoid. But the Bible has much to say about our relationship with money, and roughly 40% of Jesus' parables address it. This week, we'll see how Jesus is like a good doctor. He draws our attention to how money threatens our spiritual well-being, and offers to heal us from its toxic influence.

Small Group Discussion

Before reading this week's passage, we will begin by engaging in a practice together:

Practice – The Prayer of Indifference

We may feel hesitant to bring the financial realm of our life into the conversation. Yet as apprentices of Jesus we want to conform our will to Jesus' will in every aspect of our lives, including how we use our money. An important posture in any discernment of God's will is expressed in the "prayer of indifference," in which we ask God for "the capacity to let go of what doesn't help me to love God or love others-while staying engaged with what does." ⁱ

Imagine yourself holding the symbols of your financial wealth in your hands (e.g. bank cards, investment reports, housekey, car key, memberships, etc.). Opening your hands, pray the following:

God, I invite you to search my heart and know me. Show me the places that I am attached to anything other than Your will. I am aware that I am not indifferent when it comes to money. I often cling to using money according to my own agenda. Without judgment and in self-compassion, I ask You to show me how to surrender to Your will. Bring me to holy indifference so that I might hear from You and follow You, to the places and ways in which You are at work. I commit my spirit, heart, and mind to You. Give me grace to desire your will alone. Amen.

Read Luke 18:18-30. Then discuss together:

- ***What is your first thought when you read through this passage?***
- *How does context help to explain the meaning of this encounter?*
- Given what this man believed about himself (vv 20-21), *what may have sparked his question to Jesus in v 18?*
- Refer to **Exodus 20:1-17**. *Why might Jesus emphasize some laws, and leave out others?*
- Jesus' next words are spoken out of love for this man (see Mark 10:21). *How would Jesus' instructions target what is standing between this man and the fullness of life with God?*

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10, Colossians 3:5, and Hosea 13:6.

- *What signs reveal that money has become a higher priority than our relationship with God?*
- *Where do you see these signs in your own life?*
- *What are the potential dangers or losses from making money/wealth our highest priority?*
- *When have you experienced these dangers or losses in your own life?*
- *Why do you think Jesus makes such a stark warning about these dangers (v 24-26)?*
- *What are the benefits of accepting Jesus' invitation to surrender control and follow him (v 22)?*
- *Is there anyone in the group who can testify to finding freedom in the area of finances? What were some of the things God used to do this?*
- *As we begin this series, what is one question or hope you have in learning to follow Jesus with your money?*
- ***How do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to respond to what we have read and discussed?***

Reflection

Pastor Matthew named four tests:

- **Envy Test:** Dreaming of someone else's home, toys, vacation homes, vacation, fashion.
- **Anxiety Test:** Physical tensions that arise from fears about bills, debt, etc.
- **Therapy Test:** Spending to medicate/escape from uncomfortable emotions, lack of control.
- **Frugality Test:** miserliness, judgmentalism about others, hoarding, scarcity mindset.

In prayer, reflect on these areas of your life. *Where do you experience these symptoms of money's hold on your life? What price are you paying for allowing money to have a hold?*

Imagine Jesus looking at you with love. *What is he asking you to surrender to him?*

What would it look like to obey and follow him instead of going away sad?

As much as you're able, express your willingness to surrender control of your finances to God. Invite Jesus to lead you and provide you with what you need to make a change

Caring for One Another

- *Suggest a prayer request that is related to the topic we've discussed.*
- ***Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?***

Using **the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)** as a guide, based on what you've shared together, spend time listening to God and praying for one another.

ⁱ Marina Berzins McCoy, "Ignatian Indifference," <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-indifference/>. Accessed January 10, 2024.