



In God We Trust

Building our theology of money and generosity

The Giving Growth: Emerging... Tithing... Expanding... Extravagant

OPENING DISCUSSION: Matthew 6:24 *No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. You can serve God and your job, or God and your spouse, or God and your family. All of us have several areas that we have to balance, but Jesus said that we cannot serve God and money. Why do you think these two areas compete for our allegiance?*

We are going to explore the roadblocks to biblical generosity so that you can begin to grow in an attitude of generosity rather than staying trapped by these attitudes toward your stuff.



ROADBLOCK #1 IGNORANCE

All of us live in a world that promotes certain attitudes toward money and possessions. Changing those attitudes is a process that begins with discovering God's perspective.

God owns it all!

READ:

Psalm 24:1 *"The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him."* (NLT)

Haggai 2:8 *"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies."* (NLT)

If you work hard for your salary, why do you think the Bible says that God still owns it all? God designed the world to work based on work and enjoying the fruit of your work. However, everything you have to work with, everything that you work for is still a gift from God. We worship God and enjoy things rather than enjoying God and worshipping things. Otherwise our lives fall apart.

Ownership of things is an issue of trusting God's plan rather than your own. How has the release of your stuff to God helped you enjoy things more and worship God better?



ROADBLOCK #2 FEAR

READ: Matthew 6:25-34

We fear:

- *Financial unknowns*
- *Falling short of financial goals*
- *Loss of job*
- *Getting behind others in possessions*
- *Need more for time of need (security)*

How does the pursuit of things keep us from pursuing God?

What does God tell us to pursue and what promise follows if we seek that first? (Matthew 6:33)

How does fear keep you from managing your finances well?



ROADBLOCK #3 MATERIALISM

READ: Matthew 16:26 “And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?”

1 Timothy 6:6–8 “Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.”

What do you think Jesus means by “gaining the whole world” and “losing your own soul?”

What does 1st Timothy 6 say is what everyone needs? *Food and clothing*

Beyond the basics, what attitude does 1st Timothy 6 say that is better than wealth? *Contentment*

At what point do you think a person becomes content? How much is enough....why?



ROADBLOCK #4 GREED

Webster defines *greed* as “a selfish and excessive desire for more of something than is needed.” While we live in one of the richest countries in the world, which of us has ever said that we have enough?

What do you think makes all of us think that we need more than we already have?

READ: Luke 12:15 “Then he said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.”

1 Timothy 6:10 “For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.”

What kind of sorrows come from loving money more than God?

Have you ever had someone say to you that if they won the lottery they would give to the Pool Project or give more to the Church? Why is that comment false?

OTHER ROADBLOCKS



Church Baggage – *manipulation to get you to give more*

Bad Theology – *Tithing is an Old Testament law that the Church isn’t under*

Bad Budgeting – *A budget will keep me from buying what I want!*

Which of these three roadblocks have you faced?

How does each of these keep you from generosity?

Harvest has taught Financial Peace University 10 times. During that time 374 people have gone through the program the average debt people started with was \$8,464,971. The average debt per household (without figuring in mortgages) was \$39,929. During the class people paid off \$697,675 in debt.

FINAL APPLICATION IDEAS

If God’s goal for the Christ follower is generosity, what are some ways for you to cultivate generosity this week?

What is a project your group could do to exercise generosity this week?