

Small Group Guide THE GOSPEL AND MATERIALISM

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

October 9, 2011

1 Timothy 6:3-10

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects 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 an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

Message Outline

THE GOSPEL AND MATERIALISM

1 Timothy 6:3-10

Open Your Eyes...

- See the urgent spiritual need in the world.
- See the urgent physical need in the world.
- Realize the extravagant kingdom opportunity in the church.

Watch Your Hearts...

- Don't crave spiritual division.
 - The caution...
 - False teachers are fueled by ignorance and arrogance.
 - False teaching results in controversy and strife.
 - The exhortation...
 - Be content in the gospel!
- Don't crave material possession.
 - The caution...
 - Materialism is deceptive.

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- Materialism is dangerous.
- Materialism is damning.
- The exhortation...
 - Be content in God!
 - Live simply.
 - Give sacrificially.
 - Thrive eternally.

Give Your Lives...

- Proclaiming the gospel as good!
- Living like God is gain!

Message Summary

Dr. Platt began today's message by urging us to see the urgent spiritual and physical needs in the world, giving several heartbreaking statistics of spiritual and physical poverty. Within this poverty is extravagant Kingdom opportunity.

The warning of today's message is against two kinds of cravings: spiritual division (1 Tim. 6:4) and material possession (1 Tim. 6:10). The cure for spiritual division is being content in the gospel. The cure for materialism is contentment in God, and thus living simply and giving sacrificially so we may thrive eternally.

The challenging response to today's study is to give our lives proclaiming the gospel as good and living every day like God is gain. As we follow this way, we live counter-cultural lives that show the world that Christ is enough—we do not hope in wealth—and our resources are surrendered to the cause of the Great Commission.

Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- What is materialism? How has our culture glamorized this sin?
- Generally speaking, are you a saver or a spender? How does materialism look different in each of these personality types?
- Does materialism have anything to do with the amount of money you make or spend? Why or why not?
- Why is having eyes that are open to the reality of poverty in the world not enough? What else is necessary for our giving and sacrifice to be God-honoring?
- In what ways are the false teachings that Paul mentions in 1 Timothy 6:3-5 appealing to the flesh?
- Consider Pastor David's seawater analogy. What kinds of "seawater" tempt you most? How does God's Word provide your specific way of escaping that temptation?
- Read the Scriptural Call to Confession on the worship guide: 1 Corinthians 12:7-10. Consider the words Paul used to describe his contentment in verse 10. How does being content in these things for the sake of the gospel go completely against materialism? (See also 1 Timothy 6:8.)
- As you read the following verses, discuss how they warn against materialism: Achan's sin in Joshua 7:10-13, the rich and wise King Solomon's words at the end of his life in Ecclesiastes 5:10-11, Jesus' warnings in Luke 12:13-21, and James' warning to the rich in James 5:1-6.
- Read Matthew 6:19-24. What does your bank account indicate about your heart? What does your Internet browser history indicate about your heart? What do your bookshelf and movie collection indicate about your heart? What do your closet and storage room indicate about your heart?

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- As we strive to turn our hearts away from materialism and toward a pure love for God, why is it easy for the sin of pride or judging others to take the place of our materialism? How can we avoid replacing one sin with another sin?
- Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10. Do we really believe that God is our contentment? What produces a heart that is happily satisfied in God?
- How can you live more simply for the sake of the Kingdom?
- What practical steps can you take this week to focus more on what you have—Christ—and less on things you want or don't have—materialism? What hinders you from taking those steps?
- What practical steps can your small group take toward meeting the needs of spiritual and physical poverty in your city and around the world? If your group is already involved in meeting needs, take a minute to discuss how giving in this way has fueled your desire to give even more.

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

Weekly Prayer Focus . . . (from our worship guide)

- **Church:** *Pray that you would be free from the love of money in your own life. Pray for a contentment that propels radical giving and radical living for the sake of the glory of Christ to saturate our church.*
- **Local:** *This week we are praying for Daniel Cason Ministries, a ministry to urban children through their K.I.D.S. Christian Music Center and camps, the homeless, hungry, and needy in downtown Birmingham by providing food and clothes; and a ministry to urban shut-ins. We are also praying for Shades Mountain Baptist, Danny Wood, Pastor.*
- **Global:** *This week we are praying for Brook Hills Long-Term Missionaries the Debeljuhs serving in Croatia. We are also praying for our Short-Term teams serving in India and South East Asia.*