

Small Group Guide THE GOSPEL AND MATERIALISM (PART 2)

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

October 16, 2011

1 Timothy 6:17–19

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.)

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Physical Poverty in the World...

- The people...
 - Over 1 billion people living (and dying) in desperate poverty (on less than \$1 a day).
 - Hundreds of millions in slums.
 - Hundreds of millions starving.
 - Millions of children exploited.
 - Millions of children orphaned.
- The poverty...
 - Lack of food and water.
 - Lack of education.
 - Inadequate medical care.
 - Brain damage.

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- Preventable disease.

Material Riches in the Church...

- The path to great gain...
 - Be content with having necessities.
 - Be cautious with acquiring excess.
 - You will take none of it with you.
 - It will take contentment from you.
 - You will miss God's purpose for you.
- The path to total ruin...
 - Love of money.
 - Desire for riches.
 - A life of self-destruction.
 - A life of self-mutilation.
- The plan for rich people...
 - Flee self-confidence.
 - Flee self-centeredness.
 - Focus on God.
 - He gives good things for our enjoyment.
 - We give good things for others' enjoyment.
 - We invest good things in our and others' eternity.

What the Gospel Compels...

- Simplify your living.
- Increase your giving.
 - What is God leading you to share?
 - What is God leading you to sell?
 - What is God leading you to sacrifice?
- Consider your going.
 - Here...
 - Impoverished communities.
 - Needy children.
 - Local foster care.
 - Domestic and international adoption.
 - Around the world...
 - Short-term.
 - Mid-term.
 - Long-term.

What the Gospel Demands...

The gospel demands a blank check...today.

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Message Summary

Dr. Platt began by giving a material picture of poverty around the world. More than 1 billion people live in desperate poverty, unable to satisfy even their basic food, water, education, and medical care needs.

Scripture call Christians to be content with necessities and avoid the love of money, which leads to destruction. Those who are materially rich in this world must focus on God, shun the pride that possessions produce, and learn to give extravagantly and sacrificially.

Dr. Platt then interviewed Katie Davis, a 22 year old mother of 13 adopted daughters and founder of a relief and rehabilitation organization in Uganda called Amazima Ministries International. He concluded with a summary of some of the gospel's implications for our lives and a challenge to offer God a blank check for our lives today.

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?).

- Read 1 Timothy 6: 6–8. With what should Christians be content? Why should we be very cautious about acquiring excess?
- How should the needs of 1 Billion people living in desperate poverty on \$1.00 per day or less affect our decisions about acquiring possessions? Do they? Why or why not?
- How does having excess, or desiring excess, rob us of contentment? Can you share an example from your own life? How can acquiring excess cause us to miss out on God's purposes for our lives?
- Based on 1 Timothy, as well as other Bible passages we've studied, how can we discern between necessities and excess?
- Read 1 Timothy 6:9–10. Is money evil? What does the Bible describe as "a root of all kinds of evils"? What are some of the evils produced by the love of money?
- How does the Bible describe a life centered on the desire for riches? Why do Christians ignore this warning? Are there ways you have ignored this warning?
- Read 1 Timothy 6:17–19. How can the materially rich in this world flee self-confidence and self-centeredness? What is the biblical antidote to materialism?
- How and why do possessions produce pride? How can we (the rich) get used to setting our hopes on riches instead of God? Is there an excess or luxury you would have trouble giving up?
- Who is the source of material blessings? What should be our attitude toward material blessings? Why does God give some believers material blessings?
- When we increase our giving to others in Jesus' name, how are we benefiting ourselves? Are the benefits temporary or eternal? Why should we ask how much we can give rather than how much can we keep?
- What is God leading you to share, sell, or sacrifice? With whom will you share? For whose sake will you sell your possessions? For whose sake will you sacrifice your possessions, time, or energy?
- Is "going" to make disciples an option or a mandate for believers? How might "going" look differently for different people? What are some steps you need to take so that you can "go" in the next year?
- What are some lessons you learned from listening to what God has done through Katie Davis? (Remember to pray for Katie, her children, and the people she ministers to, including Nancy.)
- How can you minister to the people or person in front of you this week? Why is it sometimes easy to ignore people we see regularly?
- How can your small group go together to share the love of Christ extend the grace of Christ to those living in impoverished communities in Birmingham?
- How can your small group share the love of Christ and extend the grace of Christ to impoverished children and families around the world?
- Katie Davis said that when she's been obedient in little things, she's found God faithful in much. What little things does God want you to be obedient in this week?

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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 ...

- **Lives and Church:** *Pray that God would make us a people who treasure Christ so highly that we will gladly lose all that we have in order to gain Christ. Pray that these sentiments would not be mere words, but that they would translate into holy living and sacrificial love for the glory of God and the good of our neighbor.*
- **Local:** *This week we are praying for the ministry of Restoration Academy, a Christian school located in Fairfield. We are also praying for Trinity United Methodist, Andrew Wolfe, pastor.*
- **Global:** *This week we are praying for Brook Hills Short-Term teams in East Asia. We are also praying for our Mid-Term missionaries Ginna Caldwell and Hannah Gilstrap serving in Macedonia.*