

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

1. Jesus' example

Read Hebrews 12:1-3 aloud.

What are the key principles from this passage?

Go around the circle and ask everyone to identify one principle. Examples: remember the faithful from the past, drop sin, sin easily entangles us, drop distractions, persevere, etc.

How did Jesus demonstrate these principles in his life?

2. Jesus' teaching

Read Matthew 6:19-21 aloud.

What are the key principles in this passage?

How did Jesus' life illustrate these principles?

How do you invest in heavenly wealth?

What are the challenges for us if we desire to live this teaching?

3. Heavenly treasure

In a September sermon, Steve Flatt observed that Matthew 6:21 says your heart follows your treasure, not vice-versa. What does this mean?

How might Jesus respond if someone said...

“I love God, but I can't give him any of my time or money right now.”

“We don't know how we will pay all the bills, but we are going to give God at least 10% of everything he gives us.”

“I have no money to give to God, but I love to worship him and serve him.”

What could someone tell about you by looking at your checkbook?

4. Following Jesus

If we were to focus on forever rather than today's concerns, what would be different about our lives?

How would it affect our relationships?

How would it affect the way we feel inside?

Hebrews 12:1 talks about throwing off things that hinder us. What hinders you? What “urgent” items might come your way tomorrow that are not worth your energy? What are the energy-wasters in your life?

Silly arguments with loved ones.

“If you are a half-way decent person, you will forward this message to 500 people you love...”

Thinking about how to pay someone back for mistreating you.

How do you decide whether or not a situation is worth your time and energy? What are some clues that a concern of the moment merits your attention? How might this morning's sermon help you decide?

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What is one specific way you could focus on forever this week, rather than the concerns of the moment?

III. Other resources

The point – Today's concerns are pressing, but not all of them are vital. Live your life with eternity in view.

Prayer ideas

Pray for wisdom – to know which opportunities are worth our time.
Thank God for the promise of eternity with him.
Thank God for today's opportunities and struggles – for the way they prepare us and others for eternity.

Ask God to guide our congregation through the process of discerning whom he has prepared to preach at College Hills.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Play a balloon bounce game...

- Give each participant a balloon. At the signal, each person throws his or her balloon in the air and keeps it afloat by hitting it. If you catch it or if it hits the ground, you are out for that round. (It is fine to hit someone else's balloon or to play as teams.) Winner is the person with the last balloon in the air.
- Play a second round. This time, announce that the winner will get a girly prize (Barbie doll, nail polish, hair bow, etc.).
- Play a third round, with the prize being a boy toy (car, ball, etc.).
- Play a fourth round, with the winner getting candy that any kid would love.

How did the prize affect the way you played? Did you play harder based on the prize?

Read Matthew 6:19-21 aloud. How does this verse match up with our balloon game?

What does it mean to store up treasures in Heaven? How do we do that?

LIFE Group Guide

Matthew 6 – Focus on Forever

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **Focus on the long-term perspective, really long-term!**

No one taught more about eternity than Jesus of Nazareth. Beyond his words, he modeled that perspective (Heb. 12:1-2) in everything he did.

This LG guide invites your group to look at Steve's sermon text in Hebrews 12, as well as some of Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount.

Leadership tip: If you find yourself using nearly every question in this guide, there is a problem. My approach is to give you more questions than you could possibly use, because groups will be interested in different topics. Asking lots of questions means the group is not participating.

If your group does not talk much...

Ask your coach or co-leader what would generate better discussion.

Ask your group what would generate better discussion.

Make a mental note when the group does start to open up – what seemed to get them talking?

Use more ice-breakers. Go around the circle and invite everyone to answer one of the questions.

Get comfortable with silence. Ask the question, then give them time to ponder. Don't answer for them – even if it takes over 5 seconds. That feels like an eternity for the group leader, but someone will eventually talk.

I. Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

❖ What is your favorite movie?

❖ What was the biggest waste of your time in recent days?

❖ How will you celebrate Halloween this year?