

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. 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.”*

Read Matthew 6:19-24

1. What strikes you about this text? Why do you find this word, phrase, or image significant?

What did Kevin say or ask this morning that you found to be a helpful or challenging point about the topic of wealth?

2. Jesus begins his teaching by talking about treasure (19-21). Name something of yours that you consider a treasure.

How did this person/object reach the status of “treasure” for you?

Do you think Jesus is saying that it is wrong for you to have these treasures? Why or why not?

What, then, might he be saying about improper uses of treasure?
Hint: Describe a time when you saw an improper use of treasure.

How can you tell when our tendency to treasure things goes beyond the bounds of God’s intention (aka storing up treasures on earth)?

3. Jesus gives an alternate teaching on the kind of treasuring his disciples should do (20). What is his instruction?

What do you think it looks like to “store up treasures in heaven?”

Why do you think this instruction is unusually difficult in our world?

Are there things Christians can actively do to prevent themselves from falling into these difficulties?

Hint: Think about limits they could place on themselves or what kind of regular practices might they participate in.

How does storing up treasures in heaven affect our lives in the here and now? How should it affect them?

4. One central challenge to Jesus’ teaching in this passage concerns wealth and money and who we serve (24). Why do you think Jesus specifically names wealth when describing rival gods to God?

In what ways can money and wealth become like a god?

How do you think a person can tell when money rules their life?

What else, besides wealth and possessions, are people tempted to serve instead of God?

Describe what a person would be like who served money alone. What are the defining traits of this kind of person?

Describe what a person would be like who served God alone. What are the defining traits of this person?

5. Another central aspect of this passage concerns one’s heart. In your own words how does the heart fit into this teaching of Jesus?

What might be some ways to tell what a person’s heart is focused on? What kinds of indicators would you pay attention to (think especially in regards to wealth and possessions)?

How do you think a person’s heart (their internal life) affects their external life? *See Bible Notes for some hints.*

What is the relationship between the posture of our heart and how we see the world?

How might a person begin redirecting the desires and treasures of their heart more towards the things of God?

† **The million-dollar 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.*

How would you describe your own heart right now when it comes to wealth and possessions? What does your heart’s prayer need to be tonight? Take time to pray this prayer with the group.

Resources

Bible notes

One of the most cryptic sections of this teaching of Jesus involves the center verses of the passage—the eye is the lamp of the body (22-23). It is important to remember that the eye was considered an active part of the body in the ancient world. It was a “lamp” in the sense that the ancients believed it provided light from within a person and affected their view of the world around them.

Another way to think about it is that of a window—it allows light to illuminate both the inside heart of a person as well as the world around them. Therefore, an “open/healthy/good eye” would produce a person filled with light and it would positively affect the way they saw the world around them. A “closed/unhealthy/evil eye” would result in a life of darkness—both in their heart and the way they viewed the world. Jesus is teaching his disciples that there is a direct relation between their inside life (their heart) and their outside world (the way they see the world).

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.*

“Treasuring the Things of God” Activity

This week try to do a treasure hunt with the kids. There are two ways to execute it. The first is to write up your own clues that direct the kids to various parts of your house/yard. The second is to allow the words in the text to serve as clues. For example one strip of paper would have “moth and rust” with the question “Where in the house might you find both moths and rust?” And then they would go and find the tool shed, for example. Be creative with the verses and clues and have some kind of treasure at each stop. At the end of the treasure hunt gather together the kids with the various objects they have located through the house and/or yard.

Read: Matthew 6:19-24

Ask: What do we learn from Jesus about treasure and treasuring things? Are these objects you have collected bad in and of themselves? Then what might Jesus be teaching us? How might we go about remembering to keep the things of God as our ultimate treasure? What can we do to constantly remember that we are to serve God alone and not our wealth or possessions?

Pray: God, help us to remember that everything we have comes from you. And help us to be generous in all that we do. Amen.



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LIFE Group Guide

Matthew 6:19-24 – The Heart of Living Righteousness: Treasuring

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The theme: **At the heart of living as a disciple of Jesus is choosing to treasure the things of God. When we do we open and align our hearts with God’s purposes. Our whole lives are then filled with light and life. We are no longer pulled into serving objects like wealth. Instead we find ourselves living a life where everything we do and have is dedicated to God. This is a life of storing up treasure in heaven—a life that begins now!**

This week Kevin’s sermon posed questions about the status of our heart and who/what it is we ultimately serve. As he stated below the surface of any discussion about money and wealth is a discussion about priorities and perspective. Jesus’ words call us to reflect upon what we treasure and how those things are shaping our lives.

Leadership tip: Discussing topics like wealth and priorities of the heart are sometimes difficult. How we answer these questions reveal a lot about who we are and can leave us vulnerable before a group (especially the million-dollar question). Such vulnerability is both a challenge and an opportunity. You are challenged as a leader to handle what is said with sympathy and listening ears. You have the opportunity, if you maneuver through this challenge, to cultivate a deeper group dynamic that can affect your meetings and sharing from here on out as a LIFE Group. Pray that you would have wisdom in this meeting and through your discussion.

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.*

- ❖ April showers bring May flowers! Tell about a time you gave flowers, received flowers, or tell your favorite flower.
- ❖ What do you want written on your tombstone?
- ❖ What’s the weirdest treasure you have ever found? Tell the story.