

Faithful With Finances-Week 3



Learner's Guide

Each week in this study has 5 main points. Each point is supported by Scripture, explored with questions, and sealed through prayer prompts. This is a SIGNIFICANT amount of content. Our encouragement to you is to review the Scripture and the questions thoroughly in preparation for the group meeting. Also provided in the document are prayer prompts to accompany your study.

You, the learner, will grow in contentment and generosity if you commit yourself to prayerful study of this content and engage eagerly with your small group. Enjoy!

Week 3 – Barriers to generous giving.

Barrier #1 - Misplaced citizenship.

***Scripture to read:**

1 Peter 2:11 - Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles (in this world), to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

2 Corinthians 5:20 - We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

Philippians 3:20 - But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

>Randy Alcorn has some helpful insight on a Christian's citizenship:

"Where we choose to store our treasure largely depends on where we think our home is. Suppose your home is in France and you're visiting America for three months, living in a hotel. You're told that you can't bring anything with you upon your return to France, but you can earn money and mail deposits back to your bank France while in America. Would you then fill your hotel room in America with expensive furniture, wall hangings and fixtures? Of course not. You'd send your money where your home is, and spend only what was needed to maintain your temporary residence, knowing that the treasure you sent ahead will be waiting for you when you get home." From *The Treasure Principle*

***Questions to answer:**

-Does Randy's illustration of citizenship behavior resonate with you?

-One thing I (Mitch) have come to understand about my citizenship is that my heart becomes attached to the place I invest my treasure in. If I invest my treasure in this temporary world, the reality of my eternal home begins to fade, and I actually begin to fear leaving this temporary place! Ouch! Do you experience the same kind of anxiety?

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Barrier #2 – In a word...Greed.

***Scripture to read:** 1 Timothy 6:6-10 Use your own Bible to read Paul's instruction on contentment and greed to his protegee' Timothy.

***Questions to answer:**

-In verse 6, What character traits are described as 'great gain'? Are you in possession of these traits?

-In verse 8, what does Paul list as the basic material realities that bring contentment? How strange does this sound to someone afflicted with *Afflunza*? (*Affluenza* is the spiritual virus of wealth accumulation and hoarding)

-In verse 10, what is proposed as the 'root of all kinds of evil'? What happens to some' who are eager for money'? Have you experienced these consequences? Are you experiencing them now?

Prayer to pray: "Lord, show me, again, that you are the source of my contentment. Show me, again, that you have *already* provided more than I will ever need. I give you permission to crucify my eagerness (greediness) for money so that I can begin a journey toward generosity and contentment. BIG prayer, BIGGER God. AMEN!"

Barrier #3 – Misplaced hope.

***Scripture to read:** 1 Timothy 6:17

17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

***Questions to answer:**

- Look at the first word in verse 17. 'Command' is a strong word! Do you see yourself in the group (...rich in this present world) that Timothy is told to command? If you don't you should, and so should I. Maybe the 'command' is needed to wake us up to reality!

-In this text Paul speaks directly to the two choices for our 'hope placement'. What are they? How are they described? Which of the two would you say is the object of your hope?

Barrier #4 – Spiritual Poverty.

***Scripture to read:** Revelation 3:14-19 Use your own Bible to read Jesus' stern, sobering, and possibly frightening rebuke to people who had a lot of prosperity in common with us.

***Questions to answer:**

-In verse 15, Jesus says knows about the deeds, or works, or behaviors of the people in this church. How Jesus describe this behavior? What is the 'spiritual temperature' of this group?

-In verse 16, Jesus describes what he is 'about to do' in response to the spiritual condition of the group. What do you think this action means?

-In verse 17, what are the Laodicians saying about their material possessions and their needs? Does Jesus affirm that being wealthy is the remedy to spiritual neediness? If not, what is his position on wealth dependence? ('But you do not realize that you are...')

-in verse 18, what counsel does Jesus give as a remedy for this spiritual poverty?

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-In verse 19, where can we find encouragement in the face of rebuke? What's the proper active response to the Lord's discipline?

Barrier #5 – "I'm in a prison of debt!"

***Scripture to read:** This is your opportunity to feed yourself! Following are propositions, from Scripture, on the consequences of personal and family debt. You can take these at face value (not recommended) or search using a concordance, online engines and these keywords (recommended).

Debt's consequences:

1. Debt is a form of slavery. 2. Debt prevents rest. 3. Debt is a procrastinator's way of 'spending' money. 4. Debt is a metaphor for sin. 5. Debt compromises your ability to provide. 6. Debt compromises your ability to be generous. 7. Debt conflicts with a hard-working mindset. 8. Debt stunts the benefits of practicing delayed gratification.

***Questions to answer**

-Debt is a form of slavery. Agree? What's the remedy for this slavery? Scriptural support?

-Debt prevents rest. Agree? Remedy? Scriptural support?

-Debt is a metaphor for sin (EEK!). Agree? If 'yes', what does repentance look like? Scriptural support?

-Discuss other consequences of debt, agreements, remedies, and provide Scriptural support.