



**GENEROSITY & GRATITUDE**

**LIFE GROUPS  
STUDY GUIDE  
OCTOBER 24-31, 2021**

## PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE



*Generosity*

**October 24**

**21**

# GENEROUS AND WILLING TO SHARE

## STUDY GUIDE

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-19

OCTOBER 24, 2021

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### INTRODUCTION

- 1 What does it mean to be content? What is the difference between contentment and complacency?
- 2 Would you say you are content with where you are in life? Explain.
- 3 How does achieving contentment look different in the life of a follower of Jesus than in the life of someone who does not know Jesus?

### UNDERSTANDING

> READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10.

Here Paul was speaking against false teachers who believed success was found in wellbeing and material wealth. As Christians, we believe God has called us to be generous with all that we have. Being content in God and generous toward others produces a gain that we will experience in this life, as well as the life to come.

- What gain is there to be found when you pursue contentment in God? How does the call to follow Christ reframe our goals and our desires?
- How did verses 7-8 support the claim that Paul made in verse 6?
- What did Paul teach about material wealth?

Paul was not making a blanket declaration against wealth, but a point that nothing can be taken with us when we die (v. 7). Paul didn't condemn wealth, but he condemned the pursuit of wealth as a way to find joy. Put another way, money is not evil, but the love of money is.

- What is the difference between being an owner and being a manager? How does seeing yourself as an owner produce greed that is hard to overcome? How is greed a trap for our souls?
  
- How does pursuing wealth as an ultimate end lead to other kinds of sins?

Owners have the right to do what they please with all they own. A manager is charged with stewarding what does not belong to them. When we think about ourselves as owners, we see wealth as something we can acquire and store up. It drives us to pursue wealth at the expense of our relationship with Christ and commitment to gospel ministry. When we see ourselves as owners, we develop a love for money that leads to other sins because of the roots it lays in our hearts if unchecked. However, when we see ourselves as managers, we realize that we own nothing, and we will be judged on what we did with the resources that were not ultimately ours.

- At First Woodway, we want to become people who give of ourselves, our time, and our resources. How does loving money keep us from doing all of these things?

> READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:11-16.

- Rather than pursuing the ownership of wealth, seeing ourselves as managers frees us to pursue what really matters. What are those things?
  
- What calling did Paul urge Timothy to follow?

The Bible repeatedly contrasts the temporary nature of material wealth with the eternal nature of spiritual wealth. Those who see themselves as managers live with freedom in this world; they are not anchored to it. Instead, they fight the fight of faith and pursue the only treasure that will never fade.

- The distinction between being an owner and a manager is ultimately rooted in realizing who we are in light of who God is. Who are we in Him?

Those who follow King Jesus listen to His voice, which means our giving becomes indefinite. We do with our resources what the owner of those resources tells us to do with them. In this section, Paul broke out in a prayer of praise to God because truly seeing who God is always has implications for our lives. God's identity as owner drives us to steward the gifts He has given us in a way that honors Him.

> READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19.

- What are God's expectations for people who "are rich in this present world," according to this passage?
- Why is generosity an effective way to combat the false pride and false security that money brings?

Paul mentioned four ways to use wealth wisely. To do good involves using wealth in a positive way instead of letting it feed a life of personal luxury. To be rich in good deeds pointed the wealthy in the direction in which they were to be truly rich—in service to others. To be generous demands a liberal sharing of wealth with others. One who is willing to share shows that the generous act of giving springs from internal generosity. When we understand how much God has entrusted to us, we desire to grow in our generous response to Him. Paul was suggesting that genuine wealth is found in what we give, not in what we have.

- Part of the reason we foolishly hold on to wealth is that we think it brings us security in this life. How does generosity actually pave a path to a wealth that we will never lose?
- What dividends do we receive on our eternal wealth in the present world?

Eternal life is both a present and a future possession. Jesus defined it as knowing Him and knowing God the Father as well. But why this directive? Timothy had been a Christian for several years. So in what sense did Paul want Timothy to lay hold of what he already possessed? The Greek word translated “take hold” means to make something one’s own. Paul’s thought likely was that Timothy—and we by extension—should live the Christian life to the max. This included giving generously as Christ modeled for us.

## APPLICATION

- What change needs to take place in your life to show spiritual growth in the way you view money and possessions?
- How can we continue to remind one another of the temporary nature of material wealth and the eternal nature of spiritual wealth?
- What has God made you a manager of? How can you use those resources for the work of His kingdom in our city and around the world?

## PRAY

Praise God for the good gifts that He gives. Thank Him for the unfading and everlasting nature of eternal gifts. Pray that you would be a faithful manager of the resources that He has given you as you pursue the wealth that will be fully revealed in eternity.

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LIFE GROUPS

## PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

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*Generosity*

OCTOBER 31

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# YOUR TREASURE SHOWS YOUR HEART

## STUDY GUIDE

MATTHEW 6:19-21

OCTOBER 31, 2021

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### INTRODUCTION

- 1 What comes to mind when you hear the word stewardship?
- 2 What are some talents you have? How do you use these talents in your daily life?
- 3 What would you say you spend the most time doing in a given week?

In his well-known book, *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell proposed what has become popularly known as the 10,000 hour rule. Through his research, Gladwell found that a person has to spend approximately 10,000 hours practicing to become an expert at something. To demonstrate this, Gladwell dipped into the lives of professional symphony musicians, Bill Gates, and the Beatles.<sup>1</sup> Beyond the time commitment, imagine the investment in talent and resources these individuals must have made to become experts. How we use our time, our talents, and our resources can determine the course of our lives.

Typically we think about stewardship only as it relates to our finances. But as these experts from *Outliers* show us, we have been given much more than simply financial resources. God has given each one of us time and talents. Giving, then, is about more than giving financially. God has called all followers of Jesus to give of their resources, time, and talent to the work of God in the world.

1. Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company, 2008).



## UNDERSTANDING

> READ MATTHEW 6:19-21.

- In your own words describe Jesus's warning to His people in this passage.
- What effect do moth, rust, and thieves have on valuable objects? What was Jesus's intention with this illustration?
- What are earthly treasures, and what is wrong with focusing on accumulating them? What is the spiritual danger of making these things the focus of our lives?

Jesus warned that the treasures we accumulate on earth are temporary and will not last. Today much of our wealth is stored in banks or in intangible commodities like stocks or bonds. But in the first century, wealth was much more material. It was in gold, fine objects, and clothing. Moths literally ate away wealth; rust corroded it from the inside out. Thieves ran away with it. What Jesus wants us to see is that things we enjoy right now (including our time and talents) will not last because they were not meant to last. At some time, they will go away and we will no longer enjoy them, either by material loss or in our death. When these temporary things become the focus of our lives, we have lost an eternal perspective. Giving matters because it changes our perspective.

- We can apply what Jesus has said here beyond just our material possessions to other things He has given us, like our gifts and our time. Why do giving and generosity always involve more than material wealth?
- What is the difference between being an owner and a steward, and what does that distinction say about our relationship with God?

Every Christian man and woman is a steward, and being a steward is quite different than being an owner. God is the owner of our resources, our time, and our gifts. Because God is the owner, we are merely managers of God's resources. Our resources, time, and gifts are all temporary; they will run out. Being a good steward means we use our limited, God-given access to our things to make the most of them while we can. The treasures we enjoy in this life are fleeting. When we realize this, it frees us to use the temporary gifts to make much of Jesus in the time that we have.

- The statements Jesus made in verses 19-20 are very similar, but what is the key difference? What separates earthly treasures from spiritual treasures?
- Why are we so tempted to pursue earthly treasures when the heavenly ones have such greater value?

Jesus challenged His followers to invest in the things of eternity. Unlike earthly treasures, spiritual treasures aren't material possessions that bring us temporary satisfaction. Rather, they're the benefits of our faithful service to God while on earth—such as salvation from sin, eternity in His presence, an inherited place in the kingdom of God (1 Peter 1:3-5), and perfect, glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 15). These are the rewards we look forward to when we give.

- Jesus said your heart will follow where you invest your resources, time, and gifts. Share about a way you have seen this proven true in your own life, either for good or for bad.
- Think about where you are currently spending your time, money, and abilities. What does this reveal about what you treasure most at this time in your life?
- Read 1 Timothy 6:17-18. Rather than hoard our resources to ourselves, to what should we give our resources?

With verse 21, Jesus pointed out that when you get invested in something with your time, money, or energy, then your heart will follow. If you want to live for God and be a part of what He wants to do in and through you, then you have to get invested in what the Lord is doing today. That is the investment, the treasure, that can never be taken away; it is the treasure that you will never lose. What we do with our gifts, time, and resources is of eternal consequence.

> READ 2 CORINTHIANS 8:9.

- Look through the first verses of 2 Corinthians 8 to get a fuller understanding of the context of these verses. What situation prompted Paul to include this in his letter to the church?
- What does it mean to give proportionally? What does it look like from person to person?

The church at Corinth was relatively well off, yet when the chance came to give to support the church at Jerusalem during a famine, they lagged behind. However, the Macedonian churches gave as much as they possibly could. When we give, the focus should not be on the amount, but on the proportion of our income. To people with little worldly wealth, any giving strains them. To people who are better off, they haven't been blessed to build a bigger barn but to make much of God. When we give, we give in proportion to our wealth.

- What did the Macedonians realize about Jesus Christ that eluded the Corinthians?
- Paul ultimately rooted his call to give in the gospel of Jesus Christ. How have we experienced the generosity of Jesus?
- How was Jesus rich? How did Jesus give in proportion to His wealth? What does it look like for Jesus's example to become the standard for all Christian giving?

Jesus is the richest and most exalted king the world has ever known. Jesus is the Creator, Owner, and Ruler of all things. Yet, Jesus became poor so that we may become rich. When we speak about proportional giving, we are modeling the practice of Jesus because Jesus is the richest king, but He gave the most to His people. Day after day, year after year, sin after sin, God's people had incurred a debt that they would never repay. But instead of coming to claim the debt, Jesus came to pay the debt and forgive the debtor. In the gospel, Jesus has put on full display the unmerited and unlimited grace of God. For our sake, Jesus became poor so that we could become richer than we could ever imagine.

## APPLICATION

- Of the three areas we talked about today—resources, time, and gifts—which do you have the hardest time giving back to the kingdom of God?
- How can we help one another be generous with more than just our finances? How could we pool our resources, time, and gifts to make a bigger difference for the kingdom of God in our community and beyond?
- Studies show that many church attenders do not give financially. Many more likely do not give of their time or gifts either. What are we denying the mission of God if we do not give ourselves fully over to it?

## PRAY

Praise God for all He has given you. Ask that you would use His resources for His glory.