

LEADER GUIDE

LESSON 3: MATERIALISM VS. ETERNALISM

YOUR HANDLING OF MONEY AND POSSESSIONS REVEALS YOUR PERSPECTIVE AND SENSE OF DESTINY.



prestige and social standing as benchmarks of success. Counter to such a worldview, the believer must adhere to patterns and habits that help him/her deny the flesh and energize the spirit. Fasting, among other disciplines modeled by Jesus, offers a natural process by which we may experience supernatural outcomes.

Our response to material wealth shows the maturity of our Biblical understanding. And when we understand the way our character is molded, a simple truth prevails. What we feed will thrive; what we starve will die.

THINK ABOUT IT: We must flee from, and starve, a lifestyle of “materialism.”

Why? Because materialism:

- blinds or distracts us from holy priorities. (John 9.40)
- causes anxiety and stress over unimportant goals. (Col 3.2)
- corrupts by encouraging a false sense of self-sufficiency. (Prov 3.5)
- confuses by trying to find meaning outside of scripture. (Ps 112.1)
- promotes coveting and a sense of never having enough. (Phil 4.11)

TALK ABOUT IT: How does “keeping up with the Jones” keep us in spiritual chains?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

- “Obsessing over possessing” makes us vulnerable to temptation and distraction
- Our perceived or convinced “need” for [X] clouds our judgment on spending
- Spurs self-centeredness that pulls our gaze from legitimate need
- Our willingness to go into debt to enjoy a specific product, activity, or experience shows lack of self-control and maturity

THINK ABOUT IT: We must pursue, and feed, a lifestyle of “eternalism.”

Why? Because an eternal perspective produces a life more abundant. (vii)

- We are more blessed in giving than receiving. (Acts 20.35)
- We gain all by losing all. (Luke 17.33)
- We store up “treasure in Heaven.” (Matt 6.20)
- We release faith through the planting of seed. (James 2.18, Matt 17.20)
- We protect, trust, hope, and persevere. (1 Cor 13.7)

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TALK ABOUT IT: Fasting helps us control our appetites by withholding from our flesh. How then do we “feed” our hearts to reflect eternal vision and values?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

- By setting our minds on things above (Col 3.23)
- By seeing Him as He is, not how we think He needs to be (1 John 3.2)
- Through fellowship with the Father (John 5.19)
- By being transformed in His presence (Exod 34.29)
- By being transformed in the renewing of our minds (Rom 12.2)

CONCEPT SUMMARY:

Mother Mary Angelica, founder of the Eternal Word Television Network, put it this way: “It is not so much the possession of things... it is the burden these things impose—the fear of loss, the greed for more, the power they exert, the glitter that is so bright for so short a time.” (viii) We neutralize these urges when we submit to His Lordship through the acknowledgement that it’s all His in the first place.

THINK ABOUT IT: We cannot serve two masters. (ix)

Deut 8 recounts how Israel’s destiny – and ours (x) – includes an “ability to produce wealth” that is interconnected with our obedience AND the responsibility we bear to acknowledge God as source of that ability.

Luke 12.15-21 provides valuable insight into the consequences of choosing the wrong master. The rich fool “forgot God” (contrasted with the “remembering” of Deut 8.19) and instead presumed a posture of self-sufficiency. His selfishness and arrogance led to laziness, all of which prompted God’s judgment of his heart.

TALK ABOUT IT: What are the consequences of a “divided heart” when it comes to finances?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

- Practical: limitations on ministry impact and reach
- Spiritual: limitations on intimacy with the Father
- Lukewarm – not God’s favorite temperature (xi)
- Propensity for making poor or ill-informed decisions
- Lack of focus and diligence in taking action or following through

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CONCEPT SUMMARY:

The issue at hand is not one of whether or not you should have riches, but rather what we do with them when they are released to us – and what they can do to us (see 1 Tim 6:10) when our heart is unguarded. (xii)

LEADER NOTE:

The passage in 1 Tim is often misquoted; if you reference this verse as part of your discussion, please read it with your group carefully. Money is not the root of all evil, but rather the “love of money is the root of various forms of evil.”

PERSONAL/FAMILY APPLICATION

DISCUSS Read and learn about fasting (food, stuff, behavior, activities) as displaced by prayer, Bible

DECIDE What will you give up for a time/season/forever? What will take its place? What do you expect to gain?

DO! Set goals; be faithful & disciplines; do it cyclically; celebrate the outcomes.

- (i) *Exod 20.2-3*
- (ii) *Gal 5.19-21*
- (iii) *1 Pet 1.24*
- (iv) *Thomas Ken, Manual of Prayers for the Use of the Scholars of Winchester Col-lege, 1674*
- (v) *3 John 1.2*
- (vi) *Matt 7.11*
- (vii) *John 10.10*
- (viii) *Excerpted from “In the Shadow of His Light” by Mother Mary Angelica, EWTN, 1973*
- (ix) *Matt 6.24, Luke 16.13*
- (x) *Rom 8.15, 1 John 3.2*
- (xi) *Rev 3.16*
- (xii) *Prov 4.23*