

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. The opening questions will get people warmed up to the tensions explored in the long quote in the guide's Life Application section. Have plenty of grace in this conversation, knowing that none of us get this right all the time, and we continuously need to be nudged back on course. These opening questions will allow the group to talk about their impulses toward generosity and accumulation.
2. The word for treasure in the New Testament's original language isn't just a noun referring to possessions; it suggests the accumulation of things as a focus of joy. He's talking about being driven by a desire to acquire. Jesus wants us to examine what kind of treasure we are chasing after to find joy. When Jesus uses the word heaven, he is referring to God's domain that overlaps with our domain, and when we invest in heaven, we are furthering God's purpose in his plan for the world.
3. To understand what Jesus is saying about the "eye," we have to recognize that the words for "healthy" and "unhealthy" in the original language of the New Testament are words that were often used for "generous" and "stingy." If we substitute those meanings in the text, we'd hear Jesus say: "If your eyes are generous, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are stingy, your whole body will be full of darkness."

We also need to understand that today, we know the eye is an organ that allows light to pass into our bodies, making sight possible. However, in the ancient world, it was thought sight was a process where light passed out of the body through the eyes. Jesus is referencing this commonly held understanding to make his point: How we handle wealth and possessions reflects what is going on inside us. If we're filled with light, generosity will flow out of us. If we are filled with darkness, we will selfishly hold on to what we have and be stingy.

In the second metaphor about masters, Jesus says that sometimes the problem of wealth and possessions is what is going on inside of us. The way we handle our money and possessions is a direct reflection of what is in our hearts. If we find ourselves being stingy, holding back on being generous, something inside us is a problem.

QUOTES AND ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

"If the kingdom vision of Jesus doesn't reshape our approach to possessions, then we are not living out the kingdom vision." -Scot McKnight, The Story of God Bible Commentary

"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength." -Corrie Ten Boom

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? communitychristian.org/baptism/
4. Who have you been able to B.L.E.S.S.? (B-Begin with Prayer, L - Listen, E - Eat, S - Serve, S - Share your story)