

ICEBREAKER AND OPENING THOUGHT

These are designed to get your group talking. Greed, possessions, and money can be sensitive topics to discuss, and we want people to feel 'warmed up' and safe. Encourage everyone to answer, but don't force anyone.

BIBLE DISCUSSION

The Bible isn't anti-possession; it's anti-greed. Make sure that your group members understand that there is a difference between having and the need/urge/obsession with always more. It can easily morph into a quest that will never be completed.

The parable in Luke talks about one man's urge to have more and more and more, an insatiable desire that comes at the expense of his neighbors and community. On top of being greedy, it's also foolish because once he dies, all of these things go to someone else. This foolishness is especially contrasted with the Matthew verse. Your group might want to consider the ways that greed shows up in each of our lives.

Unpacking what your members have been taught about greed and money can also help you steer the conversation. Members who have been taught that the accumulation of things is God's blessing might be initially resistant to the idea that too much can be a symptom of sickness, not health. On the other hand, members who have heard that all money is evil might need to be eased into remembering that money is a tool that God can use.

LIFE APPLICATION

Greed can be spurred on by many initially wise actions - wanting to take care of family members, wishing to have retirement savings, wanting something to share with others - but if we aren't careful, it can spiral, and we can lose sight of those initial motivations.

Remind your group that money is not evil in and of itself, but it can reveal the inner workings of our hearts. We are often unaware of what is going on under the surface if we don't stop to dig into it.

Simplicity is the medicine that can help us counteract our greed and obsession for more. People might think that simplicity is really about embracing poverty or having no money at all. In contrast, simplicity is about using what you already have and then becoming a person who values generosity, people, and sharing more than a higher number in our bank account or a bigger toy in our house/garage.

The two actions (Purchase Pause and Possession Purge) might seem simple on the outside, but they could provide insight for your group members about their actual motivations and desires. Please encourage them to identify the harder one and adopt it for a set amount of time. Remind everyone that the goal isn't simply 'less things' - it's about freedom from things that weigh your life down.

CHALLENGE

Spend some time together as a group meditating on these questions, perhaps with pen and paper or something to jot down notes. Read these out loud and give everyone time to think (perhaps 20-30 seconds):

- What are the messages or definitions of "success" I've taken on?
- How did my family of origin shape my relationship to money and possessions?
- If I look at my bank statement and my calendar, how do I prioritize my time and money?
- How do I know if I own my possessions or if they own me?
- What sort of emotional attachments do I have to my things?
- Do I recognize how marketing and media stir my desire for more, bigger, better?
- Does my current reality suggest that I value pursuing...
more stress, more clutter, more hurry or
more joy, more connection, more meaning?