

## Week 3: Cultivating Contentment

This week, we look at how our purpose should be applied to our money. Jesus spoke about money more than most other topics, which means it was, and still is, important.

### 1. You Can Miss Out On The Freedom That Christ Offers If The Things That You Strive To Own End Up Owning You

- Read Luke 18:18-26

Jesus could see into the rich young man's heart that was ruled by his love for money. To expose the idolatry of his heart, Jesus told him to lay his wealth down completely. In that moment, the rich young man made the decision that reflected what in his heart already, by choosing the love of money over his salvation. It made him deeply sad to have to choose, but he still went ahead with his true desire.

- ❖ Q: What do you think the scriptures mean by the *love of money*?
- ❖ Q: Why was the rich man so sad to have to choose between his money and his salvation?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think the struggle with money is that much harder for rich people?
- ❖ Q: How comfortable would you be with the idea of a friend (who does not have much money) auditing all of your belongings/bank slips to see what you spend your money on, and how much of it reflects your *love of money*? What do you think this exercise would reveal to you?

### 2. True Freedom In Christ Changes Our Relationship With Money

- Read Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus had a totally different posture. He was wealthy, corrupt and yet burdened by it all, and wanted to be free. His desire was to love God more than money, and in that transaction, he was saved. As his heart chose Jesus, his money followed his heart decision, and he was suddenly free of his love for money. Some of us are not sure whether or not we are lovers of money and a simple test is to see where our priorities lie. Where we spend time and money shows us where our hearts actually lie.

- ❖ Q: What was the main heart difference between Zacchaeus and the rich young ruler?
- ❖ Q: Why was Zacchaeus able to give away half of his money?
- ❖ Q: Why is our love of money essentially a heart issue, and not really about how much or how little we actually have?
- ❖ Personal Reflection Q: Does your love for Christ reflect in the way you spend your money?

### 3. The Goal Isn't Wealth Or Poverty, But Contentment

- Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10

Paul did not condemn the rich but left room for both the poor and the rich in the church. Instead, he addressed the potential attitudes in the church towards money, regardless of the financial position in which individuals may have found themselves. Paul wanted them to be content with the basics, rather than living their lives striving after the next best thing.

#### 4. Five Beliefs That Fuel Contentment

- Read 1 Timothy 6:11-19 & Philippians 4:10-13

Being content takes an effort and requires us to dwell on these truths:

- i. Everything we have comes from God.
- ii. We can live joyfully within God's current provision for our lives – this means that:
  - We will make the choice to stop coveting what others have.
  - Instead of going into debt for things we want or think we need, we will choose to make do without, knowing that this is what God has apportioned for us.
- iii. We honour God by giving generously to his work in the world.  
This should cause us to:
  - Give proportionately – scripture has always talked about giving the first fruits of our labour to the Lord, and not just the dregs as an afterthought. **The principles haven't changed for our giving today.** Instead of reducing our giving to the lowest possible option, we should be giving generously.
  - Give first – if our hearts put God first, then our giving will come before anything else.
  - Give gladly – Paul tells us not to give to God out of a sense of compulsion. A heart that loves to give to the Lord reveals a heart for the Lord.
  - Give quietly – Jesus told us to give without others noticing. This truly tests of our motives for giving.
  - Give freely – if we give hoping for any sort of reaction, our giving is really about us.
- iv. We are not defined by money. We are therefore free to talk about our failings with it. We should be able to talk to people, and get help and guidance if we have been living with the wrong attitude to money.
- v. We trust in the sure and eternal rewards of heaven (see Matthew 6:9-21). It is only with a real belief in the gospel that we will be able to prioritize the next life instead of this life.

- ❖ Q: If we really believed that our gifts, talents, abilities and education were all gifts from God, how would that impact the way we viewed our monthly income?
- ❖ Q: Would you consider yourself to be content with the means God has given you? If so, does the way you spend your time and money reflect that?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think we have to fight for contentment?
- ❖ Q: Why is true contentment a result of a real grasp on the gospel?
- ❖ Q: Which area of giving mentioned above do you find the easiest to do, and which do you find the most difficult (i.e. giving proportionately, first, gladly, quietly or freely). Explain your answer.

#### Group Reflection Question:

- ❖ Q: What is the one big “take-away” that God wants you to address from this week's message as a matter of urgency? Share it with someone in the group and get them to check in with you about it later in the week.