

KEY PASSAGE:

"Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed." [1 Tim 6:17-19]

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Read Matthew 6:19-21. Based upon this verse, where are your treasures? Where is your heart?
2. Give examples of earthly treasures. Now give examples of heavenly treasures.
3. We are intentional most of the time in storing up our earthly treasures. In what ways are you intentionally storing up heavenly treasures? How can you begin to? What step(s) can you take this week to ensure that?
4. Read Proverbs 28:20. Which best characterizes you – one who makes haste to be rich or one who is faithful? What has so far been your return on investment in material riches?
5. Now, contrast what you have experienced when you pursue faithfulness.
6. Read Proverbs 18:10-11. Contrast those who find safety in the Lord vs. those who trust in their wealth. Which best describes where you place your trust?

THE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS:

Spiritual Infant – The language/behaviors of a spiritual infant are characterized by lack of understanding. Infants rarely realize that ALL things come from the hand of God. Infants may put more effort into storing up treasures for a temporal future instead of an eternal future (over-saving for retirement through financial investment strategies, becoming hyper-concerned over having sufficient money to retire).

Spiritual Child - The language/behaviors of a spiritual child are characterized by self-centeredness. Children may believe that treasure is something to be hoarded and true life consists of financial security and many possessions. Children may feel that any excess is theirs to keep for their own pleasures.

Spiritual Adolescent - The language/behaviors of a spiritual adolescent are characterized by a search for identity. Adolescents may be searching for their new role within the family as they grow toward maturity. Adolescents are asking questions such as "will God go before me?" and "does he really care about me?" They need to be encouraged to trust less in their possessions and to "send it on ahead." By experiencing freedom from the material things that weigh them down, they will begin to experience that which is true life.

Spiritual Parent - The language of a spiritual parent is characterized by intentionality and strategy. Parents bring up those who are spiritually younger, modeling and encouraging others by their actions. They have branched from conventional practices and beliefs, shed false security in material treasures, and embraced God's model for new practices and beliefs.

ADULT STUDY / HOMEWORK: (For your personal daily study time)

Day 1: Read 1 Timothy 6:19, Matthew 6:19-21

- List the blessings that come to those who focus on storing up treasures in Heaven.
- Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Proverbs 11:4, Ezekiel 7:19, Zephaniah 1:18
- What can we expect to see more of as we move closer to the return of Christ?
- Our behavior now determines what happens in the future. What are you storing up for?

Day 2: Read Ecclesiastes 5:10-20, Psalms 49:10, 16-20, 1 Timothy 6:3-10, 1 John 2:15-17

- What is the recurring theme in these verses about our worldly possessions?
- What is the key to true gain?
- List the negatives for those who put their trust in their wealth from these verses.
- Read Philippians 4:10-13
- Paul found great contentment though he went through more trials than most of us ever will. What was the secret he learned along the way?

Day 3: Read Proverbs 3:1-10, Psalms 34:10, 37:4, 7-9, Matthew 5:6

- From these verses, what is our part in learning to trust God for our provisions?
- What are the blessings for doing so?
- Read Psalms 127:1-2, 128:1-4
- We are commanded to work hard and be responsible for our actions and all that we possess. But unless God is the major architect, what does the Bible say about our efforts?

Day 4: Read 2 Timothy 2:4, Revelation 19:11-16

- Picture yourself as a soldier at war in Afghanistan. What personal needs would be your priority?
- Under whose command as Christian soldiers are we?
- How attentive to the voice of your commanding officer are you?
- How do you think you would view the excess possessions you are currently responsible for?
- Read Philippians 3:7-10. What was Paul's view of the gains he made in his lifetime?
- Read Hebrews 12:1. Is there something in your life you need to let go of because it is entangling you and distracting you from being a better soldier for Christ? What is it and what will you do about it?

Day 5: Read 1 Chronicles 29:10-17

- David sums up the right attitude regarding possessions: They are from God - they are God's - and they are to be used for His glory. (Read this passage over several times)
- Missionary Jim Elliot said, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."
- Will you now lift up both hands with palms up and thank God for all He has given you. Offer it all freely back to Him to be used for His glory. Pray and ask Him help your heart become like His, to spend His resources storing up treasures in Heaven.

FAMILY STUDIES / HOMEWORK (For 1st Grade and up):

Theme: "The Treasure Principle"

Discussion Questions:

1. "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." - Jim Elliot. Read this quote & read it again! What could this quote possibly mean?
2. If you knew there was buried treasure in a neighboring field what would you do?
3. Read Matthew 6:19-21
4. What does this passage mean to you? (Spend some time on this one! Many implications!)
5. Treasure Principle: "You can't take it with you-but you can send it on ahead." What does this quote mean?
6. Who owns everything? Do we live like God owns everything? If we really believed it, how would we live?
7. As followers of Jesus Christ, where is your "real" home? If we believe that, will we live differently? How so?
8. Many of us deal with selfishness. What is God's "antidote" or solution to our selfishness?