

# 2022 Community Groups

## WEEKLY GUIDE

### June 12 - Community Guide

As we continue the sermon series, First and Best: Making the Most of Every Opportunity, we focus our attention on our finances. The bible has a lot to say about money and how we are to use it, but it can be a difficult topic for people to talk about. Let's make a commitment to keep an open mind and heart as we read through these scriptures to make sure our view of money is in line with God's word!

### Community Prayer:

Lord, everything we have comes from you. Remind us through this study about how important it is that we regularly submit our attitudes and actions to you so that nothing else will take first place in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen

### Opening Questions:

1. As you were growing up, what was your family's attitude toward money?
2. What did you feel when you got your very first paycheck? What did you do with it?

### Exploration:

You may be asking yourself, "Why are we talking about this?", "What does this have to do with my spiritual life?" This is a topic that is dominating the headlines; gas prices, housing market, inflation...etc. Some of the most often searched topics on the internet over the past year have been, stimulus checks, mega millions, stocks, crypto currency...etc. This is something people are talking about, and the bible has a lot to say about it. It is important that we understand God's view of money.

We will look at two different stories from the Gospel of Luke that give us some important insights on healthy and unhealthy views of money.

### Luke 18:18-24

3. What stands out to you from this passage? Why?

This man came to Jesus with a good question, it is a question we all must ask at some time in our life, "what must I do to be saved?" From this account, it is clear that this man is a good "rule follower". When Jesus reminds him of the commandments the man is confident to say that he has kept them. If it was possible to earn eternal life, this guy would be in good shape. But Jesus, who knew this man's heart, challenged him to release control of his finances and



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the man was broken hearted. Then he goes on to remind the people that it is very difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.

4. Why do you think it is difficult for a wealthy person to enter the kingdom of God?

While it may be difficult for a wealthy person to enter the kingdom of God, it is certainly not impossible, but it requires faith and trust. We can see this in our next scripture passage. Pay attention to the attitude of the person as you read the following passage.

### **Luke 19:2-10**

In those days, people who collected taxes were considered to be the worst of sinners. They were hated! Most of them were known to extort and oppress their own people for their own personal gain. Zacchaeus was no exception. But here we see a man who was so grateful to Jesus that he freely began to offer his finances as a sign of his sincerity.

You may have noticed that Jesus didn't even ask him about his money, but Zacchaeus offered to give half of his possessions to the poor and to pay back four times the amount of anyone he had ever cheated. This was a joyful act of gratitude for the kindness Jesus had shown.

5. What is the most generous thing anyone has ever done for you?
6. What is the most generous thing you have ever done for someone else?

### **Two Approaches to Finances**

Both of our scripture passages focused on the power of money and how our attitude about it can impact our spiritual life. First, we read about the wealthy man, we will call him "Rich" and then about Zacchaeus, we will refer to him as "Zach". Both Zach and Rich were considered wealthy in their day.

Many of us in North America would be considered wealthy when we look at the conditions around the world. Most of us have a roof over our head, indoor plumbing, access to transportation, daily food, etc. We may not feel wealthy, but by the world's standards we would probably be more like Zach and Rich than others in the world.

Jesus never says it is bad to be wealthy and he never looks down on anyone because they are poor. Financial status is not the issue. The issue is our attitude toward God.



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### Money is a Spiritual Issue

It is clear in both of our passages that the way we view money and the way it is handled is a spiritual issue. Matthew 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” How we view money and possessions is a strong indicator of what we value.

“We really must understand that the lust for affluence in contemporary society is psychotic. It is psychotic because it has completely lost touch with reality. We crave things we neither need nor enjoy. We buy things we do not want to impress people we do not like.”

~Richard Foster *‘Celebration of Discipline’*

7. What is the one thing in your life that would be difficult or painful to give up if Jesus asked you to?

Jesus never tells Zach what he should do with his money. His response is because of the good news of Jesus. Rich, however, walked away sad when he had to decide whether the good news of Jesus was worth more than his personal comfort and wealth.

### 1 Timothy 6:17-18

Here again, we see that wealth is not bad, it can however give a false sense of hope to those who rely on it rather than relying on God. According to scripture, those who have been fortunate enough to have wealth also have a responsibility to be generous and willing to share.

### 2 Corinthians 9:7

Once again, we see that Jesus looks at the heart of the giver not the amount that is given.

8. What have you been taught about giving to God through giving to the church?

**1 Corinthians 16:2 “On the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, for God loves a cheerful giver.”**

There are lots of different teachings about giving. Here are a few examples:

- Tithe – 10% of everything you earn goes to the church
- Offerings – anything over and above the 10% tithe



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- General Offerings – give whatever you decide to anyone in need, the church, missions, organizations, individuals...etc.
- First Fruits – give the first and the best of whatever you receive
- Freedom – do whatever you want, you are in complete control

### A Practical Plan for Finances

- Give First
- Save Second
- Live on the Rest

When it comes to our finances, Jesus' ideas may seem radical. The Bible is filled with these counter cultural ways that bring peace and joy.

9. When you have financial conversations, does the idea of 'joy' ever come up? Why or why not?
10. What does this tell you about your understanding of money?

It is important for you to understand how your faithfulness to God and to the church is making an impact.

Because of your faithful generosity, people experience the good news of Jesus:

- A place for people to hear the message; building, technology, lights, heat & A/C...
- Technology – currently over 500 people join us online weekly
- Baptisms – this year alone we have seen children as young as 8 and adults over 80 choose to be baptized.
- 300+ children hear the good news every week in Kid's Ministry (20% of Hillside attendance is 5<sup>th</sup> grade and younger)
- 800+ kids will be at Summer Blast to experience God's love in powerful ways.
- 100's of volunteers make ministry possible at Hillside and beyond
- Food donated that helps to feed hundreds of families right here in our community
- Blood Drives, Back Packs of school supplies, Christmas gifts, etc.
- Global Partners are able to share Gods love throughout the world

Did you know, at Hillside?

- 80% of us give online
- 221 people gave for the first time in 2022
- \$245,000 has been given to global partners in 2022
- Hillside has an extensive yearly audit to ensure good stewardship



