



STUDY GUIDE

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

“Leaning In, ‘First to the Lord’”

Pastor Patrick Bowler

10-22-2023

Consult the Scriptures:

Matthew 6:19-34

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

(Other Scripture: **1 Cor. 5:9, 16:1-4, 5-6; 2 Cor. 2:1-4, 7:8, 11:28,**
Eccl. 1:2, 2:10; Ps. 14:1; 1 Tim. 6:10; Lk. 21:4; Jn. 10:18)

Consult the Scholars:

Randy Alcorn—*“There’s a battle over ownership and lordship of our lives that’s just as intense as the battle for salvation.”*¹

10 Ways Materialism Brings Us to Ruin²

1. Materialism prevents or destroys our spiritual lives.
2. Materialism blinds us to the curses of wealth.
3. Materialism brings us unhappiness and anxiety.
4. Materialism ends in ultimate futility.
5. Materialism obscures many of the best things in life, which are free—including the gift of salvation.
6. Materialism spawns independence and self-sufficiency, which are deadly to faith.

¹ Randy Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), p. 4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

7. Materialism leads to pride and elitism.
8. Materialism promotes injustice and exploitation.
9. Materialism fosters immorality and the deterioration of the family.
10. Materialism distracts us from our central purpose.

Discuss:

Related to your personal devotional time during Leaning In—

1. Is there anything you might want to share related to your time in prayer this week (see *Prayer Journal* in the *Leaning In* booklet)?
2. Is there anything you might want to share from working through the *Devotional Journal* provided at one of the Vision Dinners (Note: copies can be found in the *Leaning In* booth)?

Related to this week's sermon during Leaning In—

1. We're two weeks into our journey together; how are you doing? What are you processing? Where are you being stretched or challenged?
2. Read the quote from Randy Alcorn (above) and discuss. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? If so, share some evidence from your own experience as a disciple of Jesus.
3. Pastor Patrick referred to *materialism* as a doctrine (i.e., a belief system). What did he mean? Do you agree? Why or why not? How might this relate to Alcorn's statement above?
4. Work through Alcorn's list (*10 Ways Materialism Brings Us to Ruin*, [above]) and discuss. Which one on the list stands out to you and why?
5. Read Matthew 6:19-34 and discuss. How might this text inform our understanding of generosity or our attitude towards money?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 2:1-5 and discuss. Pastor Patrick identified three characteristics of the "grace of God" in our generosity: (1) it is voluntary (v. 3), (2) it is passionate (v. 4), and (3) it is prioritized (v. 5). Which one did you find particularly challenging and why?

7. Consider Jesus and how his act of grace exemplifies the characteristics listed above. How does that make you feel?
8. What immediate applications can be made following this week's sermon? What questions do you still have?