



This week, we are continuing our series, "High Definition Living, an inside look at the Sermon on the Mount." Our message this week is "Seek First." Our primary goal is to learn to overcome fear and worry with trust and security in Jesus Christ.

- **What are you doing to prepare for the future?** (i.e. retirement, children's education, insurance, wills, etc.)
- **Do you spend a lot of time thinking about your future and the future of your family? Does thinking about your future ever cause you to worry about what *could* happen?**
- READ: Matthew 6:19-24
 - **What does this passage teach us about how far in our future we need to be planning?**
 - **When you consider the context of verses 19-21, what does verse 21 teach us about our eternal perspective?**
 - **What do you think verse 24 is teaching us about money?**
- READ: Matthew 6:25-33
 - **What does verse 32 teach us about the importance of food and clothing?**
 - **What does this passage teach us about God's ability to provide the necessities in life?**
 - **What do verses 31-33 teach us about what we should be concerned about and what we should leave up to God?**
- **Does your life feel like you are "serving two masters," trying to be a Christ-follower and trying to get ahead in the world at the same time?**
 - **What will it take to shake your finances off as your master and allow them to become a tool for God to use in your life?**
 - **How will looking at every aspect of your life with an eternal perspective affect how much you worry about these things?**
 - **What can you do this week to shift your thinking toward Trust in God through an eternal perspective?**



**Growth Groups
Leaders' Travel Guide
Week of February 10-16, 2008**



Hey Growth Group Leaders!

For some of you, this week will be the first time your groups have been able to meet for discussion in quite some time. If you haven't had your regular meetings, I hope you've tried to take advantage of the unusual schedule to get together for some "fun" activity apart from Group time. Also, for everyone, I hope you take a little time to catch up with each other and to pray for each other this week.

Again, let me know if there's anything significant happening. Let me know if you have been able to identify potential Apprentice leaders so we can plan for new groups in the fall. Let me know if there's anything I can do to help you make your group better.

If you're interested in reading a little information about how "Groups" work, I found an article from the military breaking down group theory. It may be interesting for you to skim through and see what stage your group is in, and if there is a way for you to move it forward:

http://www.campbell.army.mil/eo/EVEPdf/6_LP9_GroupDevelopmentTheory.pdf

I would love some feedback on the article.

Have a wonderful week!

Andrew

This week, we are continuing our series, "High Definition Living, an inside look at the Sermon on the Mount." Our message this week is "Seek First." Our primary goal is to learn to overcome fear and worry with trust and security in Jesus Christ.

As you begin this study, be aware of our primary goal. Remember, planning for our future is not wrong. Being concerned about food and clothing is not wrong. Seeking financial security is definitely not wrong. However, when our quest for these things paralyzes us with worry or fear, we have taken God out of the equation. When we are truly trusting God and seeking His wisdom and will, our futures will be taken care of, we will be fed and clothed, and our finances will begin to fall into place.

The first two questions will help you find out where the folks in your group are on these issues. Additionally, it will help them attach the upcoming discussion with the realities they face day-to-day. Don't spend too much time here, but don't try to push through so fast that your folks don't get their current perspective to the forefront of their minds.

- **What are you doing to prepare for the future?** (i.e. retirement, children's education, insurance, wills, etc.)
- **Do you spend a lot of time thinking about your future and the future of your family? Does thinking about your future ever cause you to worry about what *could* happen?**
- READ: Matthew 6:19-24
 - **What does this passage teach us about how far in our future we need to be planning?**

Our primary focus needs to be on eternity. I encourage you to take a little time here to discuss having an eternal perspective in our relationships with other people. This means that we see people the way God sees them. It also means that we are concerned about their spiritual condition. Challenge your folks to think about some of the conversations they have had this week. Were they salted with an eternal perspective?

- **When you consider the context of verses 19-21, what does verse 21 teach us about our eternal perspective?**

As we invest in eternal matters, our desires will be for things of eternal significance. We've mentioned before that this verse means the things where you invest your money, time, and energy, will become the things you are most fond of and concerned about. Given the verse's context, as we invest more money, time, and energy into eternal things, our heart will long for our permanent home in eternity, and our desire will be to take others along with us.

- **What do you think verse 24 is teaching us about money?**

This is intended to be a loaded question. Be sure to follow up the question with some of the following:

- Does it mean that money is evil? Why, Why not?
 - *Money is NOT evil, but if we let it become our master, it will lead us into dangerous territory, and away from God.*
 - *The Bible does not say, "Money is the root of evil." However, the it DOES say "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils," 1 Tim 6:10)*
- What does it mean to serve God **or** money?
- Discuss the saying, "*Money makes an excellent servant, but a terrible master*".
- How does this saying affect how we view money when God is our master?

- READ: Matthew 6:25-33

- **What does verse 32 teach us about the importance of food and clothing?**

This is also a loaded question. Be sure to follow up with some of the following:

- Basic answer: Food and Clothing **are** important, and God knows that they are.
- Are the *types* of food and clothing as important as the *basic need* for food and clothing? **CHALLENGE your folks** to think about their quest for IMAGE and NAME BRAND stuff.
 - Is a little alligator, a designer's initials, a fancy "swoosh", or rolling heels as important as having some sort of clothing to wear?
 - Is going to certain restaurants because of their name or the image they represent as important as having your basic nutritional needs met?
 - How does our quest for IMAGE reflect who we are trying to impress, God or other people?
- Someone will probably bring up the balance between *quality* and *value* to defend their purchases. Ask value-related follow-ups, like:
 - Will the product *really* last two or three times as long as their much cheaper counterparts?
 - What are the chances that you will wear the product out before it goes out of style, anyway?
 - Is it really worth its style value if it outlasts its stylishness?
- I suggest you end by asking, "Just because we **can** afford to buy something, does it mean we **should** buy it? Or should we stick with the *basics* and **invest** in someone/something with eternal value?"

- **What does this passage teach us about God's ability to provide the necessities in life?**

God is more than able to supply all our needs for food and clothing. Sometimes He may even spoil us with something spectacular. You may want to reference Solomon's story by reading *1 Kings 3:5-14*. When given an opportunity to ask for anything he wanted, Solomon asked for something that would please God instead of something selfish. God chose to reward him by granting his request, and blessing him personally, as well.

- **What do verses 31-33 teach us about what we should be concerned about and what we should leave up to God?**

Bottom line: When we make it our primary aim to do what God wants us to do, He'll take care of the rest. You may want to reference *1 Kings 3:5-14* again here.

The rest of the Travel Guide is our CHALLENGE section. From this point forward, we want to challenge your folks to think through this discussion and consider how their lifestyle is affected by what we have said.

We begin with an opportunity to admit where we are, so that we are open to a challenge and response:

- **Does your life feel like you are "serving two masters," trying to be a Christ-follower and trying to get ahead in the world at the same time?**
- **What will it take to shake your finances off as your master and allow them to become a tool for God to use in your life?**

For some folks, the first step is to *step over the line of faith* financially by trusting God with their giving. Making a decision to give what God wants us to give is never easy, because we don't know how our finances will work. It takes faith to step over that line. When we do, God always seems to work things out.

For other folks, the first step is going to be to break the cycle of debt: *cut up the credit cards and being the long process of paying them off*. If you can't pay cash for it, you need to think long and hard about whether you *really* need it or not. If you really need it, then what else did you already spend your cash on that you *didn't* really need?

- **How will looking at every aspect of your life with an eternal perspective affect how much you worry about these things?**

For some folks, they will need to constantly ask themselves, "Is this *really* going to matter 100 years from now?"

For others, they may need to remind themselves, "Hey, God has already promised to take care of this, I need to let Him worry about it, not me."

From our earthly perspective, some folks may have legitimate concerns about some essentials in life. We don't want to belittle them. We need to carefully encourage them to take the situation to God, ask Him to give them an eternal view of the situation, and to pray for strength to trust Him. You may even want to pause for a moment to pray with the person as a group. As God to help their unbelief. This is not a wimpy prayer, it is probably one of the most honest and noble prayers a true Christ-follower can ever pray.

- **What can you do this week to shift your thinking toward Trust in God through an eternal perspective?**

This question may have already been answered in the previous two questions. However, some of your folks may not have come up with something yet. Others may act like they have it all together. This question is our closing question and gives you an opportunity to go back through some of the things your folks have said through the course of this discussion and challenge them to take the next appropriate step toward fully trusting in Jesus.