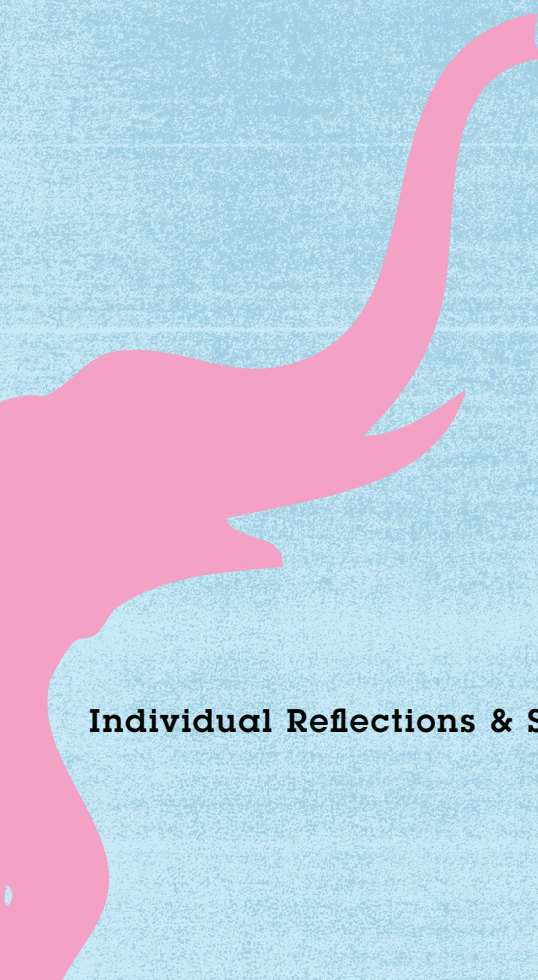




MONEY MATTERS

JESUS' RADICAL LIBERATION OF OUR LOVE OF MONEY
& FEAR OF BEING WITHOUT.



Individual Reflections & Small Group Discussions



Look at the birds of the air, that they do
not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns,
and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.
Are you not worth much more than they?

MATTHEW 6:26

How to Use This Study

In this guide, you'll find Scripture and questions that explore the responsibility God has given us as believers to become good stewards of all that He's provided. Our prayer is that the Spirit of God would use this guide to open your eyes to the freedom we have in Christ—His radical liberation of our love of money and fear of being without.

Money is a sensitive issue in our culture, yet, the Bible speaks of our relationship with money as a window through which our commitment to Christ can be seen.

This guide is in two sections. The first is for individual reflection; each day there is a passage provided for you to REAP through (instructions on the REAP method are on the next page).

In the second section, you will find Scripture and questions intended for discussion in community. We encourage you to come together with your small group or with a few friends to share what God is teaching you through His Word and grow in His truth together.

Should you have any questions related to the stewardship of money, email them to moneymatters@austinstone.org. We'll answer as many as we can and post answers to the frequently asked questions on the Money Matters blog on our website: austinstone.org.

Read

Slowly read the passage listed for each day. Read with an open heart, trusting that Jesus will give you words of encouragement, direction and correction. (2 Tim 3:16). Write down the key Scripture (or two) that stuck out to you.

Examine

Examine the text and write out your observations. What is the biblical writer trying to say? What is the main point?

Apply

As you meditate on the day's Scripture, ask God to reveal to you His specific application for your life. How will you be different today because of what you have read? How do you need to live differently in light of the truth you have learned? How does your life currently reflect the truth of what the Scripture says? In what areas of your life is God calling you to a deeper obedience?

Pray

Pray for a genuinely transformed life, enabled to live as Christ lived. Pray through the specific applications that came up as you studied the Scripture. Confess any areas in which you have failed to live out these truths. Ask God for a renewed mind and heart that longs to grow. Praise Christ for his goodness.



REAP Example

Here is an example of what your journal entry would like using the R. E. A. P. method to read and study your Bible.

READ: Acts 26

Key Text: Acts 26:18 (As you read through the Scripture, select the verse that speaks to you the most and write it out.)

“to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

EXAMINE:

Paul defends himself and gives his testimony to Agrippa. Jesus has chosen him to speak the gospel to the Jews and Gentiles in such a way that their eyes will be opened and they will find salvation in Christ.

APPLICATION:

I will share my testimony to someone this week and share Christ. I will ask God to work in their heart to draw them to Himself.

PRAYER:

God, help me to know that you're everywhere, and help me to share Jesus with someone this week. Amen.

Individual Reflections

The following list of passages is provided for individual reflection during the three weeks of Money Matters. Use the R. E. A. P. method to study these scriptures on finance as a way of complementing what God is teaching you on Sundays and through the discussions in your small group time. You may want to use a REAP Journal (or other type of journal) to write out your individual reflections so that you can keep them all in one place.

WEEK 1: **It's All His**

- Acts 4:32-37
- 1 Chronicles 29
- Job 38-41
- Psalm 78
- Matt 7:7-12

WEEK 2: **Do Not Be Anxious**

- Exodus 17
- Luke 12:22-34
- Deuteronomy 8
- Genesis 20
- Psalm 23

WEEK 3: **Give Out of Poverty**

- Luke 21:1-4
- Hebrews 13
- Romans 15
- 2 Kings 7:3-14
- Mark 14:1-11



Small Group Discussions

These three discussions are designed as a basis for conversation during your small group time throughout the weeks of Money Matters. Spending time in individual reflection throughout the week will better prepare your heart and mind for these small group times.

Not in a small group? Find one at groups.austinstone.org or pull together a few friends to talk about these important topics.



Week One

It's All His

Read

Exodus 35:4-36:7

Examine

1. What was all of this work and material needed for? What is the significance?
2. The people had just left slavery in Egypt. Where did they get all of the material (cross ref. Ex. 3:22; 12:36)?
3. What was the attitude of the people in giving to the construction of the tabernacle? Why do you think this was?
4. What other observations can you make from the text?

Apply

1. How should mission and vision drive your desire to give?

2. The Israelites were able to give freely because they had not earned or worked for the materials that they gave to the tabernacle. In what ways do you view your money and resources as earned? Do you ever feel entitled to spend and save rather than give because you have worked hard for your money? Why are your resources truly not your own?

3. In what ways does your giving testify to the worth of the gospel and glory of God?

4. What other applications can you take from this text?

Pray

1. Pray that you would not see giving as merely funding programs, people or events, but that God would open your eyes and stir your heart to see the greatness of His mission.
2. Ask God to break you of the tendency to view the things that are in your possession as *owned* by you rather than *stewarded* by you.
3. Ask God to stir you to be a giver in such a way that the greatness of the gospel and the greatness of Christ would be seen by those around you.



Week Two

Do Not Be Anxious

Read

Matthew 6:25-34

Examine

1. In the verses prior to this passage, Jesus remarks that, “You cannot serve both God and money” (Matthew 6:25). Why does He follow that statement with a call to abandon worry? How are these two things related?

2. What reasons does Jesus give for the source of anxiety? Why, according to Jesus do we have no reason to be anxious about anything?

3. Read Exodus 16:13-20. What are the regulations God provides regarding bread for His people? Why does the extra bread get moldy at the end of the day?

4. What other observations do you have about Matthew 6:25-34?

Apply

1. In what ways does money cause anxiety in your life? In what ways do you look at money to provide you with what you need, instead of looking to God? What would it look like to be free of anxiety when it comes to money?

2. Mark Driscoll, a pastor in Seattle says, “anxiety is not a condition to be managed, but a sin to be repented from.” When we are anxious, what does that say about us? What would it look like to believe that God is our provider?

3. In what ways do we demand that God provide for future needs instead of praising Him for His provision in daily needs? Are there areas of your life in which you are frustrated or anxious, because God has not revealed His future provision? What is the daily bread He has promised and given to you today?

4. What else can you apply to your daily life from this passage? How do your life and finances need to look different in light of these truths?

Pray

1. Confess your anxiety to God. 1 Peter 5:7 says, “cast your anxiety on Him.” Spend some time laying your burdens at the feet of a Father who provides for His children.

2. Ask God to grow your faith. Ask Him to give you specific promises in His Word to comfort you, and ask Him to give you faith to believe in those promises.

3. Acknowledge and praise God for the daily bread that He has already given you. Ask for forgiveness for trusting in yourself rather than Him to provide for the future, and ask for the ability to trust that He'll take care of tomorrow.



Week Three

Giving Out of Your Poverty

Read

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Examine

1. The church in Macedonia heard that the saints in Jerusalem were in need. What prompted them to give to this cause; how was God at work in their giving?

2. What allowed them to give much in spite of not having much themselves?

3. How did they get to the point where they could engage in the “risky” behavior of begging to give to the cause even when they were in poverty?

4. What other observations can you make from this text?

Apply

1. The Macedonian Church's ability to give was prompted by the grace of God. How much is our desire to give based on human effort and will? Why is it necessary for God to initiate our giving?

2. How does your desire to give compare with that of the Macedonian church (cross ref. 2 Cor. 9:7)? Does an abundance of joy lead you to give? If not joy, what usually prompts you to give?

3. Why does radical giving start with giving yourself to God (see v. 5)? In what ways do you view yourself and your finances as your own?

4. What other applications did you take from this text?

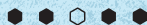
Pray

1. Ask God to teach you to be gracious in your giving. Ask Him to stir your heart towards being a radical giver of resources.

2. Pray that your giving would not be under compulsion but fueled by the joy from giving to His kingdom and cause.

3. Pray that God would reveal to you areas of your life where you have not given yourself completely to Him, and that you would see every gift that He has given you to steward for His glory.





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