

Radical finances

discussion guide

based on **Matthew 6.1-4, 19-34** (Linked to sermon of 22/2/26)

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This was part of a series on the Sermon on the Mount

Intro: Can you think of a story of someone who's taken a radical approach to finances (eg taking a big pay cut, or giving away a large percentage of their income, or buying a second home purely so that a homeless charity can use it, or trusting God to provide miraculously etc)?

Read Matthew 6.1-4

What are some of the ways we can give – but with the wrong motives (eg to feel good about ourselves)?

Jesus assumes his followers will give to the needy (in addition to tithes), continuing the Jewish tradition (eg see Deuteronomy 15.7-11; Proverbs 14.31, 19.17, 22.9, 28.27). The early church obviously did this (eg see Acts 2.45, 9.36; Romans 15.26). What should 'giving to the poor' look like for us?

Read Matthew 6.19-24

What are the risks of storing up for ourselves treasures on earth? (see also 1 Timothy 6.6-10,17-19; Luke 12.13-21)

What does storing up 'treasures in heaven' look like for us?

v22-23 don't seem to fit or make easy sense. The idea is that our eyes can reveal a lot about what's going on inside – eg fear, sadness, elation, anger etc. If (v22) our eyes communicate generosity (see the NIV footnote), it's a sign that God's at work in our lives ('our whole body is full of light'). The converse is true (v23).

Money is like fire. Under control, fire is good (for heat and cooking etc). But out of control, it is very dangerous. Can you think of times in your life when money has been your servant (good) and/or times when money has been your master (dangerous)?

Read Matthew 6.25-34

In what ways do you see our culture and local community worry about food, body and clothing?

How should looking at the birds and flowers help us when we join in with worrying about these things?

What is God said to do / be / know in these verses? How does that encourage you?

Read Mark 4.18-19

Jesus talked about the deceitfulness of wealth. What are some of the lies with which Master Money misleads people today?

Dan talked about financial health and spiritual health being like a see-saw – where one opposes the other. Have there been times in your own life when "the worries of this

life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things” have come in and choked the word of God in your life, making you spiritually unfruitful?

Personal reflection:

Head – what have you learned in this session that you need to ponder on more?

Heart – what has spoken to your heart in this session that you need to pray through more?

Hands – what actions do you need to take to put this into practice?

Is there anything from this reflection you want to share with your group (or one or two others in the group) so they can pray for you specifically, and encourage you in the days ahead?

Prayer suggestions:

- Pray for those in our church community who are weighed down by debt at the moment – and for the work of Christians Against Poverty.
- Pray that as individuals, we would be different to the world around us in the ways we give, save and spend.
- Pray that as a church, we would be wise with the finances that are entrusted to us.
- Give thanks for the new people who are coming to church at the moment, that God would do a deep work in their lives and draw them into ongoing discipleship.