

Small Group Guide: UNDER THE HOOD - Giving

Opening Question

What is the funniest or most disappointing prize you have ever received from an arcade, carnival, cereal box, or giveaway?

Opening Prayer

Lord, thank You for bringing us together. Help us have an honest and grace-filled conversation tonight. Teach us to trust You more deeply - not just with our words, but with our priorities, decisions, and resources. Give us wisdom as we discuss what it means to put You first. In Jesus' name, amen.

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

Money promises what only God can provide. It can promise happiness, security, control, and comfort, but it cannot ultimately deliver what our souls need.

Money is not evil, but it can become a false god. Money itself is amoral; the danger is when we love it, trust it, or depend on it more than God.

Jesus said we cannot serve both God and money. Our finances often reveal where our trust, priorities, and hearts really are.

Tithing and generosity teach us to put God first. Giving is not just about money - it is about trust, worship, and discipleship.

Giving our first and best requires faith. Giving leftovers does not challenge our trust in God the same way giving first does.

Contentment is spiritual, not just financial. The issue is often not simply budgeting, but whether we are satisfied with what God has provided.

Generosity redirects our hearts. Serving and giving help break the pull of materialism and reorient our lives around God's kingdom.

Discussion Questions

1. **Read Matthew 6:24.** Why do you think Jesus specifically names money as a rival master? What makes money such a powerful competitor for our hearts?
2. **Read Ecclesiastes 5:10.** What are some ways our culture encourages us to believe that just a little more will make us happy or secure?
3. Pastor Dan said money promises happiness and security, but only God can provide lasting joy and peace. What is the difference between temporary happiness and the joy God gives?
4. **Read Proverbs 18:11.** What are some situations in life where money cannot ultimately protect, heal, or provide what we need?
5. **Read Deuteronomy 14:23.** How can giving become a spiritual practice that shapes our priorities and teaches us to put God first?
6. **Read Malachi 3:10.** What does this passage teach about trust, obedience, and God's provision?
7. Pastor Dan illustrated giving God our first and best rather than our leftovers. In general terms, what are some areas of life where people are tempted to give God what is left over?
8. **Read Proverbs 3:9-10.** What might it look like for a believer to take a wise, faith-filled next step in generosity without being careless or impulsive?

Practical Applications (Choose one or two.)

1. **Do a heart check.** Ask yourself this week: Am I looking to money for something only God can provide?
2. **Review your priorities.** Look at your calendar, spending, and energy. What do they reveal about what is first in your life?
3. **Practice gratitude daily.** Each day, write down or say out loud three ways God has provided for you.
4. **Take one step toward generosity.** If you are not currently giving, begin somewhere intentional. If you are giving, prayerfully ask God if He is inviting you to grow in generosity.
5. **Choose contentment over comparison.** When tempted to compare your lifestyle, possessions, or income with others, pause and thank God for what He has entrusted to you.

Memory Verse for This Week

Matthew 6:24 - 'No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.'

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for reminding us that everything we have comes from You. Help us trust You more than our money, possessions, or plans. Teach us to put You first with joyful and generous hearts. Give us wisdom, contentment, and faith as we follow You this week. In Jesus' name, amen.