



WINTER 2022 // WEEK 1

Life Group Questions

Stewardship // January 15/16, 2022

// Matthew 6:19-24

Introduction

Welcome to the first week of the Winter Session of Life Groups! This session our first week is not in Acts, but is on the topic of stewardship. **For those of you that are a new group or a group with several new members, you may spend a bit more time in this first meeting getting acquainted using the specific Warm Up questions below and have a shorter discussion around the sermon questions.**

For groups that are reconnecting, there are more questions than normal this week. Just a quick reminder that all of the questions are great for you to think through on your own, but your leader may only pick certain questions for your discussion together. **We don't expect every group to get through all of the questions each week.**

This week we explore a part of Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" from Matthew's Gospel. Jesus teaches His followers that their security should not depend on their resources (money, possessions). Neither should their lives be oriented around those possessions. Rather, their lives should be characterized by constantly trusting in Jesus and giving their lives to Him.

To get the most out of your group time, we invite you to look over the questions below and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

For Life Groups that are meeting for the first time or with several new members:

1. Go around the circle and ask everyone to answer these "H" questions.

Hello - Tell us a little bit about yourself.

History - What brought you to LBC/Life Group?

Hobby - What do you enjoy doing?

Happy - What is a place, activity or person that is your happy place?

2. If you want to dig a little deeper, ask everyone to answer the following prompts.

What is the favorite place you have visited?

What place would you like to visit?

What is something few people may know about you?

Describe your family.

Describe your faith background.

Describe a person or event that influenced who you are today.

For groups that are reconnecting:

1. What one thing are you most excited about for this coming year? Why?
2. What are you hoping God does in your life over the next 10 weeks as we meet together as a Life Group?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
 - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
 - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
 - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
 - 2) Invite someone to read the passage in the group.
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Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) **What one key lesson did you learn from this week's sermon? What one question do you have?**
- 2) This last year or two brought a lot of insecurity and uncertainty to our world. **What is something that you took for granted or thought you could count on that was revealed to be fragile or unstable? How did you react (fear, anxiety, disorientation, disappointment, something else)?**
- 3) Jesus instructs his people not to put their confidence in goods that are valued from an earthly perspective, but instead in goods that are valued from a heavenly perspective (verses 19-20). **What reasons does Jesus give for this?**
- 4) Jesus says that where your treasure is that is where your heart is (verse 21). In other words, what you treasure reveals much about the values in your heart. **What does your life say about your heart?**

What (or who) are you trusting in for your security, happiness, or significance? Can you point to areas in your life where there is evidence of that?

- 5) In verses 22-23 Jesus points out that what we treasure has implications for every aspect of our lives. **Where do you see your treasuring of earthly goods affecting every area of your life? Give an example.**

Where do you see treasuring Jesus and His kingdom effecting every area of your life? Give an example.

In your life, which of those treasures leads to joy, peace, freedom, and security? Explain.

- 6) Jesus concludes this section of His sermon by claiming one cannot give his or her allegiance to both God and possessions (verse 24). **Why is that? What is so hard about devoting yourself totally to both of these? Can you provide an example from your own life?**
- 7) Of course money or possessions are not bad things in themselves. It is how we view, value, and use them. **What are some specific ways you can safeguard against giving your heart to (worshipping) your possessions?**

As importantly, are there ways you can use your possessions to serve Jesus and His kingdom?

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

Prayer opens us up to the leading of the Holy Spirit which makes it an important part of the Christian life. We realize that everyone has their own comfort level with group prayer, and we want this to be a

time of safety and care. You may verbalize your prayer or pray silently to yourself; that way everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Some things to consider during prayer time:

- What did the message or group discussion cause you to notice about your relationship with Jesus?
- How can you express gratitude for what God's teaching you?
- What questions are stirring that only God can answer?
- Are there troubling things in your life that need to be confessed to God?
- Is there an unmet need that only God can fulfill?

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Each week we're suggesting a couple of spiritual exercises. These are not required, but they may help us to actively live our faith and grow as followers of Jesus. Feel free to practice one or both. If a certain exercise is helpful for you, we encourage you to find a way to incorporate it into your daily life. **Next week in your Life Group, take a few moments to share how either of these exercises may have changed your outlook on your daily life.**

(1) Take time this week (better yet for a whole month) and write down all your expenditures. Now take a highlighter and mark all of those that were not necessary for your livelihood. What percentage of those non-necessary expenditures were for you and what percentage for others and God? Now write down some possible changes you could make to spending that would better reflect the values of God's kingdom.

(2) Take a break from our culture's relentless assault on your desire to acquire and possess more stuff. For a whole week, limit—as much as possible—your exposure to advertising. Don't browse Amazon (or other internet stores). Don't watch television commercials (better yet don't watch television). Stay away from shopping centers. Take the time you would normally be exposed to advertising and instead reflect on the values being pushed by the marketing of products and how they create in us the desire to acquire more and give our hearts to our possessions.