

DEEP



WIDE

v GROUP STUDY



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Deep & Wide: vGroup Study

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WIDE-GENEROSITY

Few topics are more controversial in the church than money. Sadly, many inside and outside of the church have seen the abuse of church members for the sake of greed. Unfortunately greed continues to prevail in the church today. However, the Christian Scriptures talk about money often. The New Testament in particular sees money as both a heart issue and a practical matter within the church.

We have seen how generosity is an important wide spiritual habit. When we cultivate generosity within our own individual lives and within the church, we are able to care and provide for needs that God places before us. Yes, money is abused within the church; however, money can also be an incredible tool the church uses for good.

- How do you view money? Is it a good, bad, or neutral thing? Why?
- We've probably all seen, whether up close or at a distance, the church abuse money, but how have you seen the church steward money for the good of others?
- Prior to this, have you cultivated generosity as a spiritual habit? If so, how have you cultivated generosity as a spiritual habit?

One New Testament author who discusses money and generosity often is the Apostle Paul. We see this in places like 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8-9, and 1 Timothy 6. We are going to look specifically at what Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Here Paul is providing final instructions for Timothy, this time noting how to pastor those in the church who are wealthy.

¹⁷As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

- Based on what Paul says, is money a bad thing? Look back to 1 Timothy 6:6–10 to see what else Paul says.

⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

1 Timothy 6:6–10

- What does Paul say the wealthy's attitude toward money should be? How does Paul say the wealthy should use their money? Why is both attitude and action important with money?
- How do people, both Christian and not, tend to think about and use their money?
- Paul addresses the rich, but based on what he says about generosity, how should the poor think about this? Are only the rich to be generous? If not, why?
- Why do you think money, either having it or desiring to have it, can become so destructive? How do we protect ourselves from being destroyed by it?

No doubt, Christians are to be generous. Jesus himself serves as our example: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). But cultivating the spiritual habit of generosity can be difficult to cultivate, both spiritually and practically. Therefore we have to think through some practical and challenging ways to do so.

- Think about how you use money. What do you spend your money on? How much do you save? How much are you generous with?
- How do you feel about money? How should you feel about money?
- What practical next steps do you need to take to cultivate generosity as a spiritual habit in your life?
- What needs to change in your life for you to become more generous with your money?