

# Immersed in God's Word

*His disciples came to him, and Jesus began to teach them.*

*-- Matthew 5:2*

## **Monday, November 12: Disciples Master Money to Serve God, Devoting Resources to His Cause**

*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. ~ Jesus, Matthew 6:24*

No mincing of words; no dancing around the subject. Jesus is clear: *You cannot serve both God and money.* Both seek your devotion. Cain, the first murderer, was told by God: *If you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it* (Genesis 4:7). Sin mastered him. Does money have such a grip on you?

Though money is not evil, the oft-misquoted biblical warning is true: *Love of money is the root of all evil* (1 Timothy 6:10 – see it in the image to the right?). But money is a great asset when managed well in love for God



and mastered for use in His Kingdom. Many like to think they would do greater good for God with greater financial resources. Maybe so. Regardless of how much money we have access to now, practice faithfulness now. Then, in God's time, another of His teachings may well take its course: *Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!* (Matthew 25:21).



**Prayer for the week:** Lord Jesus Christ, I want to do good and be faithful with my financial resources. Better yet, I want to be a good and faithful servant – even child – who desires to share in your happiness – using all things. Amen.

## Micro-Meditation: Psalm 139:19-24

**Read** 19-24 2x

**Mark** words or phrases that catch your attention.

**Meditate:** Talk with God about those words. Ask him to impress things upon your heart and mind in response.

<sup>19</sup> If only you, God, would slay the wicked!  
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!

<sup>20</sup> They speak of you with evil intent;  
your adversaries misuse your name.

<sup>21</sup> Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD, and  
abhor those who are in rebellion against you?

<sup>22</sup> I have nothing but hatred for them;  
I count them my enemies.

<sup>23</sup> Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

<sup>24</sup> See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.



**Pondering Point:** When the Psalmist calls for God to *slay the wicked*, he clearly sees himself as not in their camp, but rather opposed to them. He sees himself in God's camp, those who pursue the righteous ways of God? What are you pursuing?

## Tuesday, November 13: God's Mission in 2 Corin. 8:9:

*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 through his poverty might become rich.* ~ Apostle Paul, 2 Corinthians 8:9

Although Jesus was well-off, he gave up his riches and embraced poverty. Clearly Paul is not describing Jesus as financially rich, though, as true God, he does own the cattle of a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10). Nor is Paul intimating that through this generous act of Jesus becoming "poor," His disciples will somehow become financially rich. His point is that we are rich in Christ, regardless of the state of our finances. This is just one more way to view God's saving work through Jesus Christ on our behalf.



“Poor” often means going without. In this case, Jesus chose to forgo His heavenly benefits – to go without – in order to help us. Why...? It is so that we who have been separated from God by sinfulness can be restored to a wonderful, rich relationship with God. It is to help us experience life as God intends – knowing Him, with Him (see John 17:3). We are all poorer lacking a relationship to God. To fall back on Jesus’ initial words from the Sermon on the Mount: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Matt. 5:3).



**Prayer:** Father God, You have enriched my life through undeserved blessings – none greater than knowing you.

There is forgiveness, yes, but also the kindness to bear your name and enjoy special favor as your child. You lavish your love on me and on all who come in the name of Jesus Christ. Thank you for blessing me richly in his name. Amen.

### Micro-Meditation: Psalm 139:19-24

Ps 139:19 If only you, God, would slay the wicked!

Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!

<sup>20</sup> They speak of you with evil intent;  
your adversaries misuse your name.

#### Teaching or Command of God:

Bring to an end the violence of the wicked  
and make the righteous secure — You,  
the righteous God who probes minds and hearts.



*Psalm 7:9*

## THE PROMISE

*2 Peter 2:9*

The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.



**Pondering Point:** Many deceitful schemes have been run under the umbrella of God’s name, but God knows who are His and who are merely using His name for personal gain. *O Father, our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name... Amen.*

## Wednesday, November 14: Your Identity in Christ

- I am devoted to my Master God, and because I am rich in Christ, I seek to master money and excel in the grace of giving.

*They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.*

~ Apostle Paul, 2 Corinthians 8:3-5

“They” in 2 Corinthians 8:3-5 are identified as disciples from the Macedonian churches who pleaded to help out with a collection for God’s people. Though poor themselves financially, their generosity welled up for others. It was this generosity that fueled Paul’s reminder to the Corinthian Christians about their commitment to the same cause. The Macedonians were moved by a deep love and appreciation for their Lord. They weren’t just giving to a need. Even though real people benefitted, the real giving was *to the Lord*. That might explain why “even in their poverty” they could not be held back. Who do you know that gives like this? Is this you? When you give, is it *to the Lord* first? Could you excel in the grace of giving?

# Excel

IN THE  
GRACE OF GIVING



**Prayer:** Father God, form in me a love and appreciation for Jesus like the Macedonian Christians had. Build a generous spirit in me to match that spurs me toward generous giving enabling you to bless people as you see fit. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

## Micro-Meditation: Psalm 139:19-24

Ps 139:21 Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?

<sup>22</sup> I have nothing but hatred for them;  
I count them my enemies.

### Teaching or Command of God:

Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. *John 15:23-24*



### THE PROMISE

*John 15:18-20*

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.



**Pondering Point:** Hatred is a strong or even harsh word, but not one Jesus shies away from using. Is this a word you throw around loosely or use only with intentionality?

## Thursday, November 15: Re-Center around God

*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. ~ Jesus, Matthew 6:24*

Monday's IMMERSION mentioned Cain, the first murderer, being told by God: *If you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it* (Genesis 4:7). Instead it mastered him. Does money have such a grip on you, appealing to desires that are not spiritual? Let's review, repent, and return to God as we re-center our lives around Him.

**Review the week.** Is money mastering me? What sacrifices do I make for money or what it can buy? Do I view money as mine, ours, or God's? Do I have a plan to give generously? Do I excel in giving?

**Repent if necessary:** Do you need to repent of misusing money? The above questions are heart-oriented and repentance will likely revolve around matters of the heart and its either generous or stingy spirit. Be honest with God about what you think and feel.



**Return as necessary:** If God has been deposed from your heart's throne in any way, ask him to re-take the place that is rightfully his. Re-give your heart and your finances to His glory and service. And then make a conscious decision (and plan!) to excel in giving.

### Micro-Meditation: Psalm 139:19-24

<sup>139:23</sup> Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

#### Teaching or Command of God:

The word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. *Heb. 4:12-13*



## THE PROMISE

Serve [God] with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you. *1 Chronicles 28:9*



**Pondering Point:** What a day to call God to search your heart! Test me God! Have I let money or something else keep me from wholehearted devotion and service to you?

## Friday, November 16: Discipleship Point and Prayer

*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 through his poverty might become rich.* ~ Apostle Paul, 2 Corinthians 8:9

### From Luther's Explanation to the Apostles' Creed, Article 2:

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature – having purchased and freed me from all sins, death, and the power of the devil. This he did, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. He has done this in order that I may belong to him, to live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.



**Discipleship Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I am grateful to belong to you. I want to live my entire life under your leadership. I want to serve you well with whatever time, talents, and resources that you make available to me. Amen.

### Micro-Meditation: Psalm 139:19-24

Ps 139:24 See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.

### Teaching or Command of God:

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God;  
may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.



*Psalm 143:10*

### THE PROMISE

*John 14:6*

Jesus answered,  
I am the way and the truth and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me.

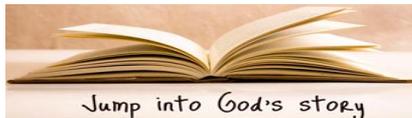


**Pondering Point:** Psalm 139:24 brings to mind step 4 of the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-Step program: Fearless Inventory. Are you open to a fearless inventory of your life with God?

## Saturday, November 17: Scripture's Story for the Week

### Parable of the Unjust Steward

Luke 16:1-15



In this parable about a dishonest financial manager, Jesus highlights the unjust steward's shrewdness – or one might say his *financial creativity* – in setting himself up for the future. Jesus then challenges His people who are listening in, the “people of the light”, to be creative in their use of worldly wealth also – but for eternal impact. Clearly money has great **potential** impact for God. But just like fire, money has a capacity for great harm as well. Fire has many good uses – purification, cooking, and heating to name a few – but when out of control its deadly. Money can bring people abundant blessings too: Food, housing, safety. But left un-mastered for God, it will get out of control and leave people broken or even enslaved to it. Don't leave this to chance – commit your money to God.



**Prayer prompt:** Ask God to reveal to you how you can be creative in your use of finances for the sake of His Kingdom and the blessing of others in it. Pray for mastery in this area and commit all of your resources to Him and His glory.

## Sunday, Nov 18: Call to worship God, to gather together

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!*

*Give thanks to him; bless his name!*

~ Psalm 100:4

You cannot divide human beings into those who worship and those who don't. Everybody worships; it's just a matter of what, or whom, we serve.

~David Paul Tripp



**Prayer prompt:** Are you courageous enough to ask God do whatever is necessary to implement his lessons about money into your life?