



Micro-Group (MG) Moment: Considering “The value of simplicity” within the context of our Small and Micro-Groups:

Opening conversation (tent cards on tables): Read this quote to the group and answer the questions below:

“If you make \$25,000 a year or more, you're in the top 10% of the world's wealth. And if you make \$34,000 a year or more, you're in the top 1%.

~ J.M. Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, p. 202

- Is this set of statistics new to you (prior to reading the book)?
- Do these statistics surprise you?
- Do you think of yourself as rich?

Comer follows those statistics with this: Listen to Paul's commands to the rich in Ephesus: *Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain.... Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life* (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

- Do you think of wealth as uncertain? Especially lately?
- What treasures can you lay up regarding the coming age?

Leader: Let's discuss some other quotes from our Lenten book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by J.M. Comer: (Have someone read)

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

The worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful (Mark 4:19). You're saying that wealth is by nature “deceitful”? A personified con artist? That it has a suffocating effect on the soil of my heart, choking out the life of the kingdom?

~ J.M. Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* p. 178

- How does wealth deceive?
- How does it choke it God's Word? Do you believe that this is true? Do you live like it is true?

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

If you're not on board with Jesus' view of money, it could be that you, like many Christians in the west (myself included until quite recently and with frequent relapses) don't actually believe the gospel of the kingdom – the good news that the life you've always wanted is fully available to you right where you are through Jesus. Through him you have access to the Father's loving presence. Nothing – not your income level or stage of life or health or relational status – *nothing* is standing between you and the “life that is truly life.” (1 Timothy 6:19) It could be that you believe another gospel. Another version of what the good life is and how you obtain it. Let's call it “the gospel of America.”... This gospel makes the exact opposite claim. In a nutshell: the more you have, the happier you will be.

~ J.M. Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* p. 178

- How have you bought into the “gospel of America”?
- Do you believe you already have everything you need through Jesus? Explain how your life aligns/contrasts with your answer.

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

Jesus and the writers of the New Testament put the number of our material needs at a whopping two things: food and clothing. *If we have food and clothing we will be content with that* (1 Timothy 6:8). Now, Jesus and his friends lived in and around

the Mediterranean Sea, where it's warm and dry. I live in the Pacific Northwest, where it's cold and wet half the year, so I would add one more to the list: shelter. But even the thought of living by that expanded list – food, clothing, and shelter – sounds *crazy* to most of us. What if the only material things we need to live rich and satisfying lives are food to eat, clothes on our backs, and a place to live? If you doubt your ability to live that simply and thrive, you're not alone. The propaganda machine is working like a charm. Most of us believe the lie: more money and more stuff equals more happiness.

J.M. Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, pp. 187, 188

- Do you think that you could live in a simplistic fashion and be content? *Describe the reason for your answer.*
- *What emotions rise up while reading this quote? Guilt? Satisfaction? Intimidation? Fear? Excitement?*

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

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 (Matthew 6:24). Again, cannot, not should not. For Jesus it's a non-option. You

cannot serve God and the system. You simply can't live the freedom way of Jesus *and* get sucked into the overconsumption that is normal in our society. The two are mutually exclusive. You have to pick. And if you're on the fence about it, as I was for years, the next line from Jesus was the clincher for me: *Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life* (Matthew 6:25). Notice how Jesus connected money and stuff to *worry*. You see that? The word "therefore" is the key.

It ties together three short teachings on money and stuff to one long teaching on worry (go read the end of Matthew 6 for the full version). Basic point? We worry about what we worship. If you worship money, it will eat you alive.

~ J.M. Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* p. 197

- As a group share some examples of how money is worshipped in our culture or across the world?
- Have you mastered money or has money enslaved you?
 - What evidence would you put forth to back your view?

To close for today, have someone read the final quote and then someone else share a prayer asking God to help us live in contentment and godly simplicity.

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

The truth is you can be happy right here, right now, "through Christ who strengthens me," meaning, through investing your resources in an ongoing relational connection to Jesus. You can live a rich and satisfying life whether you are rich or poor, single or married, infertile or counting the days until your four kids are out of the house, crushing it at your dream job or at a minimum wage J.O.B. Right now you have everything you need to live a happy, content life; you have access to the Father. To his loving attention. Who would have thought it's that easy of a yoke?

J.M. Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, pp. 216, 217

Close in Prayer as directed above.