

Study Group

February 2016 Listening Guide



Working in the Eye of the Storm

Dr. Wayne Schmidt

Dr. Schmidt's friend, Paul, helped to reveal the critical importance of money in the realm of discipleship. Money is not just a financial issue; it is a spiritual and discipleship issue.

Dr. Schmidt's friend, Mark, helped to reveal the challenge pastors face when talking about money with their congregation.

Matthew 6:19-24 (New International Version)

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 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."

One way to look at this passage is as follows:

- Two treasures: earthly and heavenly
- Two eyes: where is our focus – good or bad?
- Two masters: God and money

Another way to look at this passage is as follows:

- Begins with the connection between the heart and the treasure: "What captures my heart?"
 - Then, it looks at the question, "Where is my focus?"
 - Lastly it moves to submission, "Who am I serving?"
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What captures my heart?

Jesus is building a contrast between earthly and eternal wealth. Jesus reveals the relative vulnerability of earthly wealth versus the certainty of heavenly treasure. He challenges His audience, "Where should your loyalty be?"

There is debate about this verse in particular. Scholars debate whether it begins with the heart first or the treasure first. Perhaps Jesus intentionally stated it this way to keep it open.

Both the pastor and advisor are challenged to make disciples.

Sometimes discipleship begins with the finances and through learning proper stewardship in all financial areas, including generosity and giving, a person's heart is captured. Other times, it begins with the heart and from that foundation of the heart, there is a challenge given to properly steward and generously give financial resources. For most financial professionals, making disciples begins with financial or treasure conversations. Through this, there is a connection laid for their heart to God.

- **The challenge:** If the advisor does their work well, the client's earthly treasure will increase. This is wise. As the treasure grows, it could provide a greater temptation for clients to treasure that in their heart.

- **The challenge:** Accumulate appropriately, but without allegiance. Advisors can help clients wisely save resources without serving them.
 - **The challenge:** Helping clients to examine, “Which treasure do I look to for meeting my deepest needs, such as security and identity?”
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Where is my focus?

In Jewish literature, there is a close connection between the heart and the eye. Whatever your eyes focus on, that provides a conduit for what it is that happens in the heart.

- **The challenge:** You want your clients to pay appropriate attention to their finances, but attention without preoccupation. Advisors can help with the stewardship of attention.

In Jewish literature, there is a close connection between the heart and the eye. Whatever your eyes focus on, that provides a conduit for what it is that happens in the heart.

Who am I serving?

Hate and love, devotion to something and despising something are strong ideas. Jesus is strongly saying that you cannot serve both God and money. In Jesus’ day, some people co-owned slaves. With God, there is no co-ownership. You must choose what you do with your loyalty. Hate and love are not so much emotions as patterns of loyalty and allegiance in this context. One of the main areas of spiritual warfare in our culture is money and materialism.

- **The challenge:** Advisors serve in the eye of the storm. The enemy knows that if people are serving money, then they cannot be serving God.

Worry is an indicator that someone has crossed the line from wise saving and investing to becoming a slave to money.

Conclusion:

You have the opportunity to have relationships that are more than transactional – relationships that are transformational!

1. Money is a **doorway** to discipleship. You can draw people’s hearts to God by teaching them to steward their resources.
 2. Money is a **battleground** of discipleship because you can’t serve two masters. When you are doing your very best work, people are becoming disciples. Never forget that as you do the work, “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” (I John 4:4, New American Standard Version)
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Discussion Questions: Take the time in your groups to discuss the following questions:

1. Dr. Schmidt mentioned at the beginning of his talk that two key relationships – one with an advisor and one with a pastor – helped to enlighten the fact that money is a doorway to discipleship. Are there any significant relationships or “aha” moments that you can share that have done the same for you?
2. Spend a few minutes discussing the heart/money connection and ways that you have seen it flow from heart to money and from money to heart in your own life and in the lives of your clients.
3. Discuss Dr. Schmidt’s first set of challenges related to the “What captures my heart?” question. Specifically share how you seek to help clients wisely save resources without hoarding them or looking to them as sources of identity.
4. In relation to the “Where is my focus?” question, what do you do in your own life to steward your attention? How could you broach this topic with clients?
5. Dr. Schmidt mentioned that, “Worry is an indicator that someone has crossed the line from wise saving and investing to becoming a slave to money.” Do you see this play out in your life or your client’s lives? How might you address this tension as you encounter it in both places?
6. You are serving in the eye of the storm. Share how you’ve encountered spiritual warfare. Spend the last few minutes of your time together praying for one another as you go back out to the battlefield at the conclusion of this study group.

Coming Next Month

March: Financial Finish Lines Engage with the question, “What does it look like to wrestle with setting financial finish lines in terms of generosity and lifestyle for me and with my clients?”

Study Group:

Exploring a Wealth Cap with
Ron Blue, Todd Harper, and
John Cortines

Accepted for CE

National Teleconference:

Tim Mohns, Wells Fargo
Advisors, Todd Harper,
Generous Giving, and Steve
Scalici, UBS Financial Services

Tools and Resources:

- [God and Money: How We Discovered True Riches at Harvard Business School](#) by Greg Baumer and John Cortines
- [The Modern Day Rich Fool Parable](#) adapted by John Cortines

Monthly Focus Resources Available at: kingdomadvisors.com/members

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Join us for our March 2016 Study Group