



Integrating faith & everyday life

Discovering ways to bring life and faith together, to help you see God in everything you do

REVIEW

Recap on your experience of the challenge. Ask the following questions:

How did it go? Was it helpful?

If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question:

Where and how did you experience God last week?

WHOLE LYFE STUFF

Jesus is not against personal possessions and shopping should not be a guilty pleasure – but in a culture where shopping and acquiring more and more stuff has become an addiction, can we find a new approach?

READ

Matthew 6.24-34

Money

²⁴ You cannot be the slave of two masters! You will like one more than the other or be more loyal to one than the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Worry

²⁵ I tell you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. They don't even store grain in barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth more than birds? ²⁷ Can worry make you live longer?

²⁸ Why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow. They don't work hard to make their clothes. ²⁹ But I tell you that Solomon with all his wealth wasn't as well clothed as one of them. ³⁰ God gives such beauty to everything that grows in the fields, even though it is here today and thrown into a fire tomorrow. He will surely do even more for you! Why do you have such little faith?

³¹ Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?" ³² Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. ³³ But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.

³⁴ Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today.

Contemporary English Verse - CEV

'Having, first, gained all you can, and, secondly saved all you can, then give all you can' John Wesley

REFLECT

Setting the scene:

- ▶ This selection of Scripture is part of the classic Sermon on the Mount – a series of Jesus’ teaching covering the most important aspects of life.
- ▶ Verse 24 touches on the theme of ‘single-mindedness’. We choose what to set our hearts on, material things or God – but we can’t prioritise both. Money here refers also to ‘material possessions’.
- ▶ Jesus does not call us to be care-free, lazy or irresponsible. We are to provide for ourselves – even the birds have to search for food. But they do so without worry and anxiety. In these verses, Jesus sets out seven arguments and defences against worry. Worry is essentially the inability to trust God to provide what we require – including food, clothing and other needs.
- ▶ Our priority is to put God first in all things – this is the key to the entire sermon and the antidote to anxiety and worry.
- ▶ What are the ‘shockers’ and ‘blockers’ for you in this passage?
- ▶ Are you a regular buyer of ‘stuff’? Why is shopping the no. 1 leisure time activity? What was your last big purchase?
- ▶ How have you seen God’s provision in your life?

RESPOND

Stuff challenge: As a group, create a challenge that will help you to live with a good attitude towards money and possessions.

Challenge ideas:
If you struggle to come up with your own challenge then why not try one of the following...

01 Generosity

This week, practice being generous as a way of gaining a good perspective over money and possessions. You can practice generosity by tipping double if you go out for a meal (without being flash about it!). You could buy cinema tickets for a friend. You could pay for the car behind you at the toll. The key is to do these things without showing off or making other people

feel awkward. If you can, practice secrecy – deliver a bag of shopping or a gift to someone without leaving your details. You could order a gift online and have it delivered. You don’t need to be extravagant, it is not about the value of the gift – it’s about developing a good lose hold on your stuff.

02 Check Your Balance

Spend some time this week analysing your spending habits. Look back at your bills and bank statements to get a view on where your cash is going – are you buying stuff you wanted or stuff that you needed? Are you buying on impulse? How prepared would you be to show your bank statements to others? In the light of this, consider whether you could make better use of money. Consider putting away credit

cards and only using cash for a week – does that help to gain perspective on spending?

03 Shared-ownership

Consider setting up a communal pool of items with a few others that could be shared rather than owned – for instance a communal lawnmower, laptop, bikes, barbeque, car. We don’t always need to own stuff, we could make arrangements to borrow stuff from each other as we require them. In doing so we promote community and enjoy the freedom of living more simply.

Don't Forget

1. To record your experience of the challenge so that you can accurately share it with your lyfe group when you next meet. You might like to text/tweet each other throughout the experience!
2. Consider posting your created challenge on the lyfe facebook site for others to view.

More resources on 'Whole Lyfe'

- Listen to video interview with Mark Greene and Dallas Willard
- Read articles on Work & Family and Interview with Joe Davis
- Read 'lyfe story' biographies on GK Chesterton and Brother Lawrence
- Recommended Reading 'Working It Out – God, you and the work you do' by Mark Greene & Ian Coffey

GROUP PRAYER:

You might like to commit to praying for each person in the group this week as you look to evaluate your attitude towards possessions.