

Simplify small group session – questions for discussion and debate

"Do not think me mad. It is not to make money that I believe a Christian should live. The noblest thing a man can do is, just humbly to receive, and then go amongst others and give." – David Livingstone

"It is preoccupation with possessions, more than anything else, that prevents us from living freely and nobly." – Thoreau

Question 1: What is your most valued possession?

Read: *Matthew 6: 19 – 34*

Question 2: How important are money and possessions to you – does your lifestyle reflect more closely society's influence or that of this passage? Why do you think we find it so hard not to worry about money? How can we as Christians be different in the way we treat money during the recession?

Read: *Luke 18: 18 – 30*

Luke 8:3

Acts 16: 13 – 15

The rich young ruler's identity was so tied up in his belongings that he could not give them up, despite the promise of treasure in heaven – something far better in the long run.

Jesus didn't say that money and possessions are inherently wrong. Rather, our use of them needs to be directed towards putting God first, making him our treasure rather than our belongings. Neither did Jesus say enjoying life is bad; he certainly knew how to enjoy a celebratory feast for a special occasion with friends – I doubt the wedding at Cana served up Tesco Value!

Perhaps though, our culture has become so tied to its possessions that we no longer realise the hold they have over us. Perhaps, too, we are so used to having things whenever we want them, we have lost the value of a feast – of saving some things for special occasions.

Question 3: Why did Jesus ask the rich young ruler to give up all his possessions, but not the women who were his benefactors?

Question 4: What do you think would be the benefit of re-evaluating how we use our money and belongings? Where do we think we could simplify our own lives in response to this call? How can we make this about finding our identity in Him and not simply to save money or as an exercise in guilt?