

## **“If I Had a Million Dollars”**

Million Little Things - Week #4

*Mark 8:34-37 NLT - 34 Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. 35 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. 36 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? 37 Is anything worth more than your soul?"*

*Matthew 19:23-26 NLT - 23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. 24 I'll say it again--it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" 25 The disciples were astounded. "Then who in the world can be saved?" they asked. 26 Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible."*

If we look at our bank balance and see it as the security we have created, we deny that God is our ultimate source and security, and everything is His. God doesn't need our money (that's why he didn't tell the man sell everything and give to the church), He only needs our hearts.

*When have you seen God provide for a need or multiply generosity in an unexpected way?*

### **WRAP-UP**

Our eternal life is not based on meeting the minimum requirements; it is a free gift, and all that we have has been provided by God, and ultimately belongs to Him. So, if money, or anything else, prevents you from following Jesus whole-heartedly, it needs to be disposed of, because Jesus must be our first love.

### **Memory Verse**

*36 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? 37 Is anything worth more than your soul?*

*Mark 8:36-37 NLT*

### **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

*Challenge- Ask God for an opportunity to extend generosity this week.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Even if you don't consider yourself rich, compared to the standard of living worldwide, we are all pretty well off. But is there a connection between our wealth and our eternal life? In His interaction with the rich young ruler Jesus addressed his question "What must I do to have eternal life?" The answer came in two parts. The first part was what the man needed to do. But the second revealed his highest priority. Most of us want to put Jesus first, but when faced with the challenge to sell everything and follow Jesus, there was no joyful revelation on the part of the rich young ruler, for "he had many possessions". Before we judge this man too harshly, let's admit that most of us would fail that challenge as well. So, what is the relationship between wealth and eternal life? That is the topic of this study.

### **Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)**

What would you do if you had a million dollars?

### **STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)**

#### **1. Keep the Commandments**

*Matthew 19:16 NLT - 16 Someone came to Jesus with this question: "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?"*

At the heart of the question asked by the rich young ruler in Matthew chapter 19 is "What good must I do to get something good?" That question is based on the assumption that if I do something good, I will get something good.

*Do you think people still hold that assumption? How does it shape our opinion of the poor and the wealthy? How does Romans 6:23 describe how we receive eternal life?*

*Romans 6:23 NLT - 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

We tend to apply the principles of the natural world to our spiritual lives, but very often, Jesus corrected that point of view. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus turned conventional wisdom upside down when he said, "Blessed are the poor..."

Jesus' initial response in this passage was probably what the man expected. Jesus said, "Keep the commandments." But this man was looking for more detail, even though he probably knew the law.

*What do you think might have motivated him to ask, "Which ones?" What are some situations (not just money) that you have found yourself asking God, "How much is enough?"*

If you are familiar with the Ten Commandments you probably noticed that Jesus didn't give a complete list.

*Which did Jesus include and which did He omit? What is the main difference between the two groups of commandments?*

*Matthew 19:18-19 NLT - 18 "Which ones?" the man asked. And Jesus replied: "You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. 19 Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself."*

*Exodus 20:3-4, 7-8 NLT - 3 "You must not have any other god but me. 4 "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. ... 7 "You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name. 8 "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.*

The man said he had kept those commandments, and Jesus didn't challenge him. But not long before this encounter Jesus taught what it means to keep the commandments. (see the example in Matthew 5:21-22)

*Matthew 5:21-22 NLT - 21 "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' 22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.*

*Based on what Jesus taught, do you think the man had really kept the commandments?*

Now at this point most of us would have been satisfied.

*Why do you think he continued to press Jesus with the question, "What else must I do?"*

## 2. Sell Everything and Follow

*Matthew 19:21-22 NLT - 21 Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 22 But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.*

Here is the bottom line for the rich young ruler; Jesus said, "If you want to be perfect, this is what you need to do, sell everything." The word for perfect in the Greek is *teleios* and refers to being complete, whole or mature. In this way Jesus unmasks the heart of the problem; What was his deepest desire, highest priority, greatest love?

*1 Timothy 6:10 NLT - 10 For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.*

*How does Jesus instruction to sell everything actually introduce the first two commandments in Exodus 20:3-4? What does 1 Timothy 6:10 warn us may happen if we love money?*

Some misinterpret this passage to say, the way to eternal life is to sell everything and give it to the poor. Jesus' instruction is intended to address the source of the rich young ruler's problem. Anything that comes between you and God needs to be disposed of, because it has become an idol.

*What are some other things that can easily become idols in our lives?*

It is very easy for money to become an idol. Those who don't have it can idolize money. Those who have wealth can become obsessed with it. And those in between can feel they need more and chase after it.

## 3. A Matter of Perspective

This brings us back to the question, "What is our highest priority, greatest value, and first love in our lives?" One way to judge this is to follow your resources, because the way you invest your resources reveals what you value most. Are we generous with what we have? That's not just your money, but your time and affection as well.

*What do you think prevents us from being generous to others?*