

SEASONS OF GIVING 1: I want to be free

seasons of giving

cell notes

Money is a huge part of our lives: earning it, spending it, and often worrying about it. No wonder that the Bible says so much about it! Over 2,000 verses in fact! Jesus himself talked a great deal about money. He knew that how we handle money and our practice of generosity either helps us or gets in the way of the abundant life he longs to give.

This cell meeting material helps us to explore our relationship with money and possessions and what it means to live as generous disciples.

session 1: I want to be free

- To think about our money experiences and our attitude towards it, and share these thoughts with others in an enjoyable, relaxed setting
- To understand that generous giving can set us free from the captivity of money
- To encounter a powerful modern story that will help us see the issues surrounding money and generosity in a new light

welcome

Play the money ludo game

OR

Share one or two of your earliest money memories. What emotions do you recall: funny, sad, angry, grateful?

word

Read together Luke 18:18-30: the rich ruler who asks Jesus about eternal life.

This powerful story raises important issues about money and discipleship. Jesus' answer focused on money so it is fair to assume that money was at least part of the ruler's spiritual restlessness. Certainly, his wealth was a stumbling block to his discipleship: he is the only person in the gospels to turn down a direct invitation to follow Jesus.

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Luke 18:18-30

1. We are used to money opening doors for us but it closed a door, at least spiritually, for the rich ruler. Can you suggest ways in which:

- money can be a blessing to us in life
- we use money to compensate for missing other things in life
- money can actually make us restless or dissatisfied

2. The ruler's wealth had a strong gravitational pull on his life. Can you suggest some reasons why money can be a spiritual problem, a stumbling block to following Jesus?

You might wish to look up one or two of the following passages as you discuss this: Matthew 6:24; Luke 8: 14; Luke 12:34; I Timothy 6:10

3. The rich ruler is told to sell his possessions. What would you say to someone who argued that giving everything away is the only way to follow Jesus?

You may want to look up some of these passages: Luke 5:27-29; Luke 6:30; Luke 8:1-3; Luke 12:33-34; Philippians 4:12-14

witness

Giving is one of the key ways in which we can break free from the gravitational pull of money. Share any examples of how this can happen.

worship

Share your needs and pray for each other

Then read the abridged version of *The Selfish Giant*, having prepared in advance or invited a good reader from the group to read on your behalf. It is at the end of the red seasons of giving workbook

- At the end of the reading allow some time for silence/ play some quiet music
- Invite group members to share briefly any Bible passages that came to mind any lingering images from the story;
- Close with the Lord's Prayer and the grace or a song - Suitable songs include Giver of grace by Stuart Townend Jesus be the centre by Michael Frye I lift my hands by Andre Kempen

extra resources

Seasons of Giving Members pdf includes abridges story of the Friendly Giant

Seasons of Giving Money Ludo Game

Both downloadable from www.tasvalley.org/resources

and www.stewardship.org.uk/money/spotlight/seasons-of-giving