Small Group Guide: “EKKLESIA: Devoted To…”

Opening Question: If you were given an unlimited shopping spree for one store of your choice, which store would you choose and why?

Opening Prayer: *Dear Lord, thank you for bringing us together as today. As we explore the message shared by Pastor Dan about aligning our financial stewardship with our devotion to Jesus, would You open our hearts to Your wisdom. Help us to engage genuinely with each other and learn more about your desires for us. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.*

Key Takeaways:

1. God’s chief competition for our hearts is not the devil, but our attachment to money and possessions.
2. Jesus spoke more about money than heaven and hell combined, indicating its spiritual significance.
3. How we handle our finances is a spiritual matter, reflecting our devotion and trust in God.
4. God wants our trust and loyalty, emphasizing that we can’t serve both God and money.
5. Financial independence means living independently of serving money, not necessarily having abundant wealth.

Discussion Questions:

1. Pastor Dan mentions that our “stuff” can slowly creep into our lives and become an object of worship. In what ways have you noticed this happening in your own life?
2. **Read Matthew 6:24.** Why do you think Jesus said you cannot serve both God and money? What implications does that have for our daily lives?
3. Pastor Dan states, “Giving is not a financial decision. It is a decision whether or not to allow God to rule your life.” How does this statement challenge your perspective on giving?
4. **Read Matthew 6:33.** What practical steps can you take to prioritize God’s kingdom in your daily life? What does it mean to seek first God’s kingdom and His righteousness in the context of our finances?
5. Discuss the three action steps for breaking greed: Give 10%, Save 10%, Live on 80%. How might implementing these steps impact your relationship with God and your finances?
6. How can the balance of giving, saving, and living be a spiritual discipline in your life?
7. **Read 1 Corinthians 16:2.** How does pre-planning your giving align with seeking God first?
8. What are some practical ways we can evaluate if our treasures align with God’s heart?
9. How does worry about finances reflect a lack of trust in God’s provision, according to the sermon?
10. **Read Matthew 6:25-32.** In times of financial strain or anxiety, how can we remind ourselves that God is aware of and cares for our needs?

Practical Applications:

1. Take some time this week to review your spending habits. Identify areas where you might be prioritizing “stuff” over your relationship with God.
2. Consider implementing the “Give 10%, Save 10%, Live on 80%” principle in your financial planning. If you're not currently tithing, prayerfully consider taking the 90-day tithing challenge mentioned in the sermon. (laurelridgechurch.org/tithe-challenge)
3. Identify one area of financial worry in your life. Commit to praying about it daily, asking God to increase your trust in His provision.
4. Practice gratitude by listing out the ways God has provided for you in the past, reinforcing your awareness of His faithfulness.
5. Engage in a giving act this week, whether monetary or of your time, without expecting anything in return, as a way of putting Jesus’ teachings into practice.

Closing Prayer: *Dear Lord, thank You for the discussions we had today and the insights we gained. As we leave this place, may we apply what we have learned about keeping Jesus first in our lives and honoring You through our financial stewardship. Help us to trust in Your provision and live in a way that reflects Your love and grace. Protect us as we go about our week, and bring us back together soon. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*