

Discussion Questions for Small Groups and Families:

Idols, part III: Money | Luke 19:1-10 | Chapter 3 of "Counterfeit Gods"

1. What evidence do you see in our culture that money/wealth has become a counterfeit god? Be specific.
2. Tim Keller argues that we can't see our own greed because we compare ourselves, not to the rest of the world, but to "those in your bracket" (p. 52). Does this ring true for you? Who do you tend to compare yourself to in terms of your wealth, possessions and lifestyle?
3. "Jesus warns people far more often about greed than about sex" (p. 53). Why do you think this is the case?
4. Zacchaeus "sacrificed everything else in order to get money" (p. 55). What price did Zacchaeus pay for his wealth? Do people in our culture pay a similar price? If so, how so?
5. "For Jesus, greed is not only love of money, but excessive anxiety about it" (56). If this is true—it means that you can be a slave to money whether you have it or not! When we worry excessively about money—what aspects of God's character and which of His promises are we forgetting?
6. Jesus said in Luke 16, "What is highly valued among [people] is detestable in God's sight." Sometimes it's hard to admit that there is a gap between the world's values (or our values) and God's values. Can you name some things that you've grown to value that have no currency in the Kingdom of God?
7. "Ultimately it was not Zacchaeus who asked Jesus into his life, but Jesus who asked Zacchaeus into His" (60). What is significant about this reversal? Is that true of our lives as well? What difference does that make?
8. Look closely at page 62. Tim Keller seems to be arguing that Christians, this side of the cross, should consider tithing (giving away 10% of your income) a "minimum standard." What is his rationale? What do you think about this?
9. "God's salvation doesn't come in response to a changed life, a changed life comes in response to God's salvation" (63). This is the central message of Zacchaeus' story, and a wonderful encapsulation of the gospel of grace. How does God's grace *make* you generous? Is it safe to say that if you're not particularly generous, you've yet to truly experience God's grace? Talk about that.
10. Do you tend to treat money as an end, or a means to an end? If you view it as a means—then a means to what?
11. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." What does your checkbook and credit card statement say about your heart? What would an auditor conclude about what's most important to you?
12. Does the way you spend money show the world that Jesus is your treasure? Would a non-believer be persuaded to consider the matchless worth of the Son of God by the way you handle your wealth?
13. The recent earthquake in Haiti has reminded us of some of the over 2 billion neighbors who live on less than \$2 a day (including 80% of the Haitian population). Is there any way to keep the poor from becoming invisible to us on a day to day basis? How do we keep our wealth in global perspective?
14. What is God saying to me today through this chapter, and this discussion?

Spend some time in prayer for one another

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

--from "Be Thou My Vision"