



TRANSIT

WEEK 5 GROUP GUIDE | MESSAGE BY SHAWN JOHNSON

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

What is the one gift that stands out to you – like the one you were most excited about receiving as a kid? What made that gift so amazing?

SHARE

Welcome to “Transit.”

We all want to go somewhere. To get there, we have to make a purposeful decision to begin the journey. When we travel, we take different vehicles—cars, planes, subway systems, buses, bikes, etc. Each of these vehicles serves a distinct purpose in moving us closer to where we want to go. As we purposefully take a journey together through “Transit,” the hope is that we can discover how we can grow closer to God through prayer, studying God’s word, relationships, serving, giving, and sharing our stories about what Jesus Christ has done in our lives. As we talk about and experience these spiritual disciplines, we hope you realize that the power is not in the vehicles themselves, but in the subject of our affection, which is Jesus Christ. We can’t do anything to earn God’s love or salvation, but there are real ways we can cultivate a thriving relationship with God.

When the church starts talking about money, it can be really easy to tune out and ignore what you hear. Many of us are already uneasy about spending the whole group time talking about money, but don’t worry; there won’t be a collection plate passed around at the end of group! We’ve probably all heard before from at least one person that the only thing the church wants is our money. While there have certainly been times in the history of the Church where money became too much of a focus; you don’t have to look too hard in the Bible to see that the way we spend our money is certainly a reflection of our hearts.

Let’s read **Matthew 6:21**

In that passage, we see the biblical version of the old adage 'put your money where your mouth is.' We tend to spend money on the things we find most important. Whether it's watching movies, playing golf, being up to date with the newest fashions or eating at all the new restaurants, we typically don't think twice about the financial impact of these things because we are thinking about the joy of doing what we want. This verse challenges us to take our "treasure" and invest it in something more than just the material things we see on this earth. But what does that look like?

Do you think it feels awkward to talk about money? Why or why not?

Have you ever felt manipulated or forced to give money to a charitable organization, church or a cause? What drove you to give when you didn't want to?

GROW

Shawn mentioned in the message several times that God simply does not need our money. God is all-powerful and completely self-sufficient. God simply owns it all and if we are giving, we are really just giving back what was given to us. Nothing can thwart the plans that God has for his church. We can, however, choose to be a part of that plan or sadly just watch from the sidelines. There is a principle at work when it comes to giving and how we save or spend our money. We need to decide who or what we are going to serve.

Matthew 6:19-24

When we give back to God and invest in the kingdom work all around us, we are really reminding ourselves and those around us that we trust and serve the giver of all things – God. Giving isn't always easy at times and there are times we all have probably faced where being obedient in giving doesn't come easy.

In his book *Jesus and the Gospels*, Craig Blomberg states about this passage:

...even when a person's behavior and attitudes are correct, the greater righteousness demanded of disciples is not present unless God rather than money is served. Verses 19-21 command us not to accumulate too many possessions- a sure sign that our treasure is on earth and not in heaven. Verses 22-24 stress how decision making in this arena affects all of life. One either serves material possessions or God.

In verses 22-23 of that passage, why is there a mention of the eye and how it affects the whole body?

In your experience, have you found that there are some things God asks us to do that are easier to do than others? What are these in your own life?

Does it make you nervous to think about putting the Lord first in your finances? Why do you think that is?

MOVE

The benefits of giving are not only in being a part of what God is doing all around us, but what happens in our hearts when we let go and trust God.

God says some remarkable things about money throughout the Bible. One of the most remarkable statements can be found in Malachi 3:10 where God invites us to actually test him in this, and that this is the *only* command in the entire Bible where we are actually invited to do this. It certainly is not an easy thing to consider—trusting God with giving ten percent back to him, but as Shawn pointed out in the message; God is the one who has blessed us with that job and the abilities to earn that money in the first place. When we look at it this way, it is more like we are simply returning back to God what is already his. And again, God has promised to bless us when we are obedient in this, so why not test him and see what God will do in our lives? Will God entrust you with more finances to steward in the future because of your faithfulness? Maybe and maybe not. We don't give back to God because we just hope for more money in return.

Can God entrust faithful people with more finances to steward in the future? Of course he can if he desires, but the reason we give back is because God commands us to do so. What we get in return is a joy and peace knowing that we love and trust God and that when God asks us to do something, there is a good reason.

Have any of you seen God provide in an amazing way when you were obedient to financial giving?

As a group, would you consider giving ten percent back to God for the next 90 days? If you are considering giving back ten percent to God, what types of challenges do you think you will have? *(Please know you don't have to answer this question out loud, but pray about it after the group and make a decision and then let someone you trust in the group know about that decision. If you do decide to give, don't feel you need to give to Red Rocks Church, but find a place that you trust and want to begin giving to. We don't want your money, but we do want you to trust God with your giving)*

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO.

If you struggle with giving, try and memorize this verse and allow God's truth to rewire your thinking:

Proverbs 11:24-25

One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.

Additional Resources:

- **Dave Ramsey's *Financial Peace*** is a great book on the kingdom principles of giving.
- **Red Rocks University: Financial Peace University** – Contact chris@redrockschurch.com to get registered for our next class.