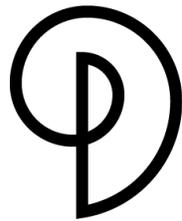


SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Abundance & Danger

February 15 & 16, 2020

The bible has a lot to say about how we handle money. Over 2300 verses in the bible talk about money, wealth and possessions. About 15% of Jesus' teaching and 11 of his 39 parables address the issue, making it his most talked about topic. I suspect that it's because God knows how much time we spend thinking about and worrying about money, which has profound spiritual implications for us.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: JAMES 5:1-6

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

So, what's the problem? Simply put, idolatry. Money is the heart's favorite junk food, the opiate of the soul. If we allow it, money can dull our hunger for God and become our god – the object of our worship, the desire of our heart, and the source of our greatest joy and security, all things that belong to God alone. And when money becomes our god we have a tendency to, as the saying goes, love money and use people, instead of loving people and using money. Do James words apply to us? Certainly! We all need to be continually warned of the danger that money poses to our spiritual lives.

James' words call us back to basics. And when it comes to what Jesus and all of Scripture teach about how we handle wealth the foundation of it all is a perspective called Stewardship. Living out of a stewardship perspective also teaches that all that God provides is meant to be used for God's purposes. That includes our needs, but it also includes the needs of others. Secure in God's promise to provide for us, not living out of scarcity or paralyzed by worry, we provide for the needs of others. We give to the needs of others out of gratitude for all that God has first given us, and out of compassion for the suffering of this world. God's heart aches for the poor. In a stewardship life, gratitude plus compassion equal generosity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- James uses some particularly strong language in this section. Why do you think that is?
- How has money positively or negatively impacted your spiritual journey?
- What practices, habits, or disciplines keep money in its proper place in your life and heart?
- How can we live into this truth: gratitude plus compassion equals generosity?

APPLICATION: This week, take note of how often you think about, or worry about, money. Then spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you grow in your stewardship perspective. Gratitude plus compassion equals generosity.