

THE SHEMA

MIND



HEART

Week 2: Money “You Cannot Serve God and Money”

MATT 6:19-24

⊕ OPEN

Welcome to our series “**The Shema**”. The first message in this series, taking our cue from Deuteronomy 13:1-3, explored the propensity of our hearts to make idols—anything that takes the place of God—that we look to for ultimate meaning in our lives. We learnt that idols were deceptive and ultimately enslaving while promising control and meaning. Bottom line: *we become like what we worship*—lifeless idols or alive in Christlikeness. Today we consider the idol of money—the only thing Jesus elevated to the status of a rival to Himself.

👥 SHARE & RECONNECT

- When did you first start giving money “to God” and what got you started?
- How have your views about money and material possessions changed since you first became a Christ follower. If they haven’t...why not?

🗨️ READING

- Read Matthew 6:19-24.
 - What do you think was the likely economic make up of Jesus’ audience and how does that further illuminate the human heart?
 - What would it mean for the crowd around Jesus to “lay up treasure in heaven” in practical terms?
- Read Luke 12:13-15.
 - Why wouldn’t Jesus act as “judge” since the request was in fact a “justice issue”?
 - Is there an implied agenda in Jesus’ response? (Hint: If Jesus had granted the request, then...?)

REFLECT

- Read 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 (*The longest section in the Bible on giving*).
 - Brainstorm everything here that might inform our own decisions when it comes to giving/sharing our material resources.
 - What can we learn about “fund raising” and motivating ourselves and others to give to the cause of Christ?
- In contrast to the Old Testament’s commands to “tithe” from their flocks and harvests, the New Testament says that “each one must give as he has decided in his heart” (2 Cor 9:7) and “as we have prospered” (1 Cor 16:2).
 - Brainstorm ideas to come up with a practical strategy to “decide in your heart” (specifics vs nice sounding generalities).
- Read Mark 12:41-44. If all Christ followers were to give literally everything they had, we would all become helplessly dependent on welfare. But Jesus wasn’t given to foolish sentimentality either. So what from this incident do you think He wanted his disciples, and hence us, to “get right” when it came to giving money to God?
 - If Jesus were to watch your giving, who might he call to himself as a result and what would he say to them (you)?
- The sermon noted that money is a surface idol promising to satisfy deeper hidden idols like power, prestige, security, acceptance, _____.
 - What root idols might be linked to money in your lives?
 - How might this have come about (e.g childhood, family of origin)?

PRAY

- **Confess** root idols you may have identified, cultural values you may have bought into, wrong attitudes in your giving to God.
- **Pray** for faith to believe the promised blessings you might have identified in 2 Cor 9 that are linked to generosity.
- **Silence.** Ask the Spirit to speak to you about specific changes you might need to make in the stewardship of your possessions and for grace to obey.
 - Fuel your praise with the magnificent portrayal of Jesus in Col 1:15-20
- **Pray** for yourself and each another in the group. Shape your prayers with your response to this question:
 - How might we change/grow as a CG/church if each of us reflected the kind of jealousy that gripped the apostle Paul in 2 Cor 11:2-3?