

Economic Atheism

Sermon Discussion Guide for the week of January 22nd, 2017

Primary Scripture: **Luke 19:11-27**

Relationships

As you begin the study portion of your gathering ask a few of these questions to help your group focus their attention.

What messages does our culture send about the power of self and the need to be self-sufficient?

How are these messages different from the message of the Christian faith? Are there any similarities?

In what area of your life are you most drawn to self-sufficiency or selfishness—family, work, church, friendships?

Which is easier for you to celebrate, someone who overcomes the odds on their own or someone who needs a team to help them succeed? Why?

Scripture

How would you describe the standard by which you and the people you know tend to assess financial status - both your own and that of others?

What attributes make someone wealthy or poor or average?

How do you respond to the idea of using the living conditions in the developing world as the standard for determining relative wealth or poverty? Does it seem meaningful to you or is it hard to relate to? Why?

Have a volunteer read **Hebrews 13: 5-6**

What fears might be hidden behind a love of money or a lack of contentment?

In what ways do you relate to the fears you're just identified?

If pursuing the generous life begins a battle, how would you describe the enemy territory you face? What resources or reassurance do you need from God in order to engage in the battle?

Have a volunteer read **Leviticus 19: 23-25.**

Why does God command the Israelites to wait five years before eating from a tree?

Discipline and self-denial and delayed gratification are hallmarks of spiritual growth. In what areas of your life do you struggle with this concept?

Why do you think so many people struggle with saving up for purchases?

Which of the following six statements best describes feelings about reorienting your finances to put God first? Share the reasons for your choice.

- I don't want to reorient my financial world - at least, not right now.
- I am willing to want to, but I'm not there yet.
- I want to but something is holding me back.
- I want to, and I am beginning to take some steps in that direction.
- I want to reorient my financial world (or have already done so) and am willing to do whatever it takes to follow through on my commitment.
- Other.

We sometimes tend to avoid verses about money and possessions because they make us feel uncomfortable or even guilty. As you consider our discussion, what, if anything, intrigues you or stirs within you and desire for what the verses describe?

Mission

What things might get in the way of reorienting your finances?

If you had to, what percentage of your current income could you live on?

What kinds of things tend to get in the way of your ability to be generous?

Development

What are God's expectations for us financially?

Is the life you live as counter-cultural as the one Jesus described in His teachings? Why or why not? In what area might it need to be more so?

Why is it often hard to remember our brokenness and need for God?

Pray