



Discussion Guide

April 29, 2018

Contrast: In Conclusion

I Corinthians 16

Introduction

Read I Corinthians 16 together.

In the first 4 verses, Paul tells the Corinthians to receive a weekly collection for famine relief for the Jerusalem church. He doesn't state a certain amount or percentage to be given – he says, give as you are prospered. That is open ended as to how that plays out for each person. No doubt, you will have a lively discussion as to how Paul's and Jesus's teachings apply in our very affluent society of today.

Discussion Questions

1. A stereotype often applied to churches is, "The only thing churches are interested in is my money." What other entities in our lives are pretty much interested in our money? Does Target want your money? How about Walmart or Amazon? Surely Starbucks doesn't just want your money. Does the desire of companies to make a profit from us offend us or stop us from dealing with them? Which business, store or online shopping site receives the majority of your money each year?
2. It is not the stated goal of the church to separate us from our money in order to make a profit. Why then does church leadership make regular appeals for money and encourage people to give, even up to ten percent of total income? What compels us to lay out that challenge . . . and for what purpose?

3. God is very interested in our money, or at least in how we regard and use our money. It's not a matter of him "needing" to somehow pry us loose from our money so he can have it. It's all his to begin with. [Psalm 24:1] God's interest in our money management is a matter of how it affects our hearts for him. What did Jesus mean when he said, "Where your treasure is, that is where your heart will be." [Luke 12:34] How does our use of money affect or demonstrate our hearts for God? Why is this a touchy subject that can be uncomfortable to discuss?

4. If you suddenly had a windfall inheritance of a great sum of money, what would be your dream of some godly pursuit that you could create or underwrite? Are there hindrances in your life at present that keep you from being generous with the provisions you have in your hand right now?

5. Read more of what Jesus had to say after he told the parable of the foolish rich man in Luke 12:22-34. How can we practically live out this admonition from Jesus as we live in a location where life is expensive and money is necessary? On average, we tend to live well beyond our capacity to generate a livable income. Should we stockpile finances for a future that isn't guaranteed? How much should we lay aside for *someday*, especially retirement? When does *planning for the future* turn into a lack of faith in God's provision?

Moving Forward:

This might be a good week to do a financial review. Where does God fall in the priorities of your budget? Does he receive your best, your "first fruits" before anything else is paid? After locked-in expenses, what money is available to be used to bless others who are less fortunate? What expenses could be eliminated that don't have to be locked-in? Have a discussion with your family as to how you could pass some of your prosperity along as an unexpected blessing to someone in need. You may be surprised what a fun family activity this is, once it gets rolling.