



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

**September 25-October 1, 2017**  
**Sermon by Lead Pastor Doug Forrester**  
**“Discovering Gravity”**

Notes from sermon on 9/24:

Prayer requests:

**Family Focus Question (before sermon):**

What does Jesus mean when he says “Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God?” How are we to live?

**3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):**

1. What does “treasure in heaven” mean to you?
2. What “impossible” thing does God need to do in your life today?
3. What is the allure of possessions?

**Monday, September 25: Read Matthew 19:16-22**

“Here we go,” we say to ourselves: “Stewardship season.” This is the time of year that some congregations and most pastors dread – needing to focus on the unpleasant topic of money in order to keep a church’s doors open. How nice it would be, we think, if we just magically did not need to give away any of our possessions in order for Christ’s body to do its work in the world. That would be a win-win, right? Pastors dread creating sermons on stewardship because it can be perceived as asking for something, rather than giving something to their congregants.

What if we are looking at it all wrong, however? What if God’s commandments in both the Old and New Testaments about money are for *our* benefit – the givers? What if we are being offered peace, freedom, and eternal joy through letting go of the things that are weighing us down? For the next few weeks we will be exploring how we can defy gravity by letting go of our false idols, including money, and embracing the eternal life Christ died to give us all.

**Tuesday, September 26: Read Matthew 19:23-26**

In ancient Jerusalem, a traveling caravan desiring to enter the city gates had to dismount their camels, unload their cargo, and pass through a small opening called the needle, that required the camels to literally crawl on their knees. This humbling and awkward process ensured the city's safety from armed bandits and controlled contraband from entering. How perfect an image Christ gives us for how those of us with a surplus of material goods must approach the Kingdom of God. What burdens could we be laying down to more easily enter the gates of joy and peace? In what areas of our lives is pride preventing us from leaving the rat race, simplifying our lives, and being content with less so we can give and love more?

**Wednesday, September 27: Read Exodus 20:1-8**

God never tells us to do anything that isn't for our own good. The Ten Commandments are not a burden on the human race, but one of the greatest gifts humanity has received, providing a moral compass that, while never completely followed, has given us the guidelines for our entire society and prevented us from complete self-destruction. When we approach every commandment as a gift, we can start to see the freedom in refusing to follow false idols like power and money. We will more fully appreciate the Sabbath and refuse to have it ruined by filling it with distractions and material pursuits, forgoing the restoration, fellowship, and communion that God's Sabbath offers. What can we lay down on Sundays so we can embrace the lightness and joy of God?

**Thursday, September 28: Read Exodus 20:9-17**

The second five commandments focus largely on our relationships with one another. Some are relatively easy to follow – like not murdering. How many of us have been emotionally tortured, physically exhausted, and financially ruined by failing to obey the final commandment, "Thou shall not covet"? How different would our houses, cars, clothes, and schedules be if we simply did not compare ourselves to others and allow others to enslave us to their material standards and judgment? How heavy of a burden we could lay down!

**Friday, September 29: Read Leviticus 25:33-37**

We would be hard pressed to find a single commandment in the Bible that was less obeyed than this one. We can't even imagine a society, or a single home, in which doors were opened without question or expectation of payback so everyone could live in dignity, fellowship, and security. We can focus on what we would give up by opening our hearts and doors, or we could consider what we would gain. Today, let us ask why God asked us to do this, and why we think it's okay not to do it now. We have plenty of good reasons for drawing boundaries around our lives, bank accounts, and property, but just for a moment let's imagine how we could defy these parameters by breaking down walls and unchaining ourselves from so many of the savage inequalities of our world by letting go and looking up.

**Saturday, September 30: Scripture Memorization: Matthew 19:21**

"If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

**Sunday, October 1: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession:** *Almighty God, we have been wandering in the wilderness of sin. We have complained in the face of your mercy. We have been selfish and conceited in the face of your sacrifice. We have not done your will. Teach us humility. Teach us gratitude. Infuse your spirit into our beings so that we might be reconciled to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*