

IS IT BAD TO BE RICH?

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE MONEY POSSESSIONS PRIORITY

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 16:13-15; Gal 5:22-23

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children discover that money and possessions are neither good nor bad; they just cannot be our priority

MEMORY VERSE

“He answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Luke 10:27, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Read Like 16:13-15 and 19-31. Luke uses the parable of the “Rich Man and Lazarus” to address the Pharisees who loved wealth and mocked what Jesus said about this. They justified their materialistic attitudes, noting certain Old Testament scriptures and ignoring others. They taught that riches were a sign of God’s favor. And if a person was poor, it was a sign of God’s punishment.

This parable clearly contradicted the materialistic thinking of the Pharisees. Jesus’ message was clear: There was a rich man who died and went to hell. The beggar named Lazarus died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side in heaven. The parable rejects the idea that the rich have wealth because God rewards their righteousness. It also contradicts the common belief that poverty was a sign of sin. It is also important to note that Jesus was not condemning all who flourish. Likewise, he did not suggest that all those who were poor automatically inherit eternal life. His message was clear: “God knows (judges) our hearts.”

Your children are aware of materialism that is in our world. They know that people place value on wealth and possessions. And they have doubts about why some people have an abundance and others have much need.

This parable makes them think about their own value system. The lesson will also help them understand that neither wealth nor poverty are indicators of a person’s relationship with God. You will discover that the fruits of the Spirit are the only sure evidence of a good relationship with the Lord.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Activity: Seeing what is important

Give each one Student Activity Sheet #291-A titled "Seeing what's Important." Give them a few minutes to look at the pictures on the worksheet before asking them to answer the questions. Ask, "How much can you tell about other people just by looking at them? Pretend that you are detectives. Look at the pictures of the three children. What do you know about them just by looking at the pictures? (There will be answers about color of their hair, clothes, etc.) "Do you know their age? Do you know if they love God or not?" (Allow them to discuss the answers to your questions.)

Ask, "If these children moved into your neighborhood, what would you like to know about them?" (Accept all answers.) "What if you find out that they discriminate against people because of their skin color, race or social class or economic status? Would your attitude change?"

TEACH THE LESSON

Before reading the story, you may want to share some of the context found in the teacher preparation section so that children have a better understanding of the story.

Lazarus and the rich man

"No servant can serve two masters," Jesus said. "You cannot serve both God and money."

The Pharisees, who loved money, sneered at him. "He would not say that if he had money," the Pharisees thought. "Besides, our teachers taught us that God rewards those who serve him. Our money shows that God is blessing us. Jesus thinks God wants his chosen people to be poor? Everyone knows that being poor is a punishment from God."

"What many people value highly is detestable in God's sight," Jesus said.

A disciple said, "You know how proud the Pharisees are of their wealth. They believe that large amounts of money show that God is pleased with them."

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day," said Jesus. "At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table."

"What did the rich do to receive these blessings of God?" the Pharisees asked.

"I would like to know what Lazarus did to deserve such misery. I would not want to be him," thought another.

Jesus continued his story. "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried."

"It probably was a glorious funeral!" thought the Pharisees. "But we are surprised that Lazarus was with Abraham. What is going on?" they asked.

Jesus continued. "In Hades, where he was in torment, the rich man looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side."

The Pharisees were amazed. "How could a beggar be with Abraham and a rich and blessed man be sent to a place of torment?" This bothered the Pharisees.

Jesus continued telling his story: The rich man shouted, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire."

"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'"

The rich man thought of his five brothers (who also had many possessions). "Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they do not also come to this place of torment."

CONNECT THE LESSON

Who said that?

Give each Student Activity Sheet #291-B and review the lesson.

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #291-C and #291-D entitled "Who Said That." (Note: This activity has two sides, so if you are making copies, make sure to copy both sides, preferably on one sheet of paper. If that is not possible, then glue the two sheets together.) Say: "In this story, Jesus expresses some of the words that other Bible characters said. Look at the different verses to identify what words were said by which characters." (Have your children cut along the solid black line at the top of the square. Then children can work in pairs to get the answers. They can check their work by folding each triangle along the dotted lines.)

"Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire." (Luke 16:24) (The Rich Man)

"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.'" (Luke 16:25) (Abraham)

"... Covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table." (Luke 16:21) (Lazarus)

"... God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight." (Luke 16:15) (Jesus)

A special vision

Continue with "A Special Vision" on Student Activity Sheet #291-D. Help your students complete this activity. They will need to find 1 Samuel 16:7 and Galatians 5:22-23 in their Bibles.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Before the session, cut several sheets of paper into four parts each. On eleven of those pieces, write one or two words of the verse: (1) He answered (2) Love the Lord (3) your God (4) with all your (5) heart and with (6) all your soul (7) and with all (8) your strength (9) and with all your mind (10) and Love your (11) neighbor as yourself. Fold each paper and put them in a bag. Take some additional pieces of paper and write words that are not from the verse on them. Fold them and toss them into the bag to mix up with others. The total number of papers should equal to the number of children in your group. If there are less than eleven children, regroup the words so that you have at least the same number of papers as children. Repeat the verse with your children until they have it memorized. Then invite everyone to take a paper out of the bag. Have them read their paper and see if the words are part of the verse they have learned.

Have those that have the words of the verse line up in the order of the verse. Verify that the words are correct and ask them to repeat the verse aloud. Those who have memorized the verse will receive a star on their "Verse of the Month Club" certificate.

WRAP-UP

Pray

At the end of the session, pray with the group, asking God to help each one of them keep Him first place in their life. And that they will always listen to God's Word and grow spiritually.

Encourage

Thank your students for their attendance and encourage them not to forget what they learned.

Invite

Announce that this is the last lesson in this unit, and the next session will begin a new unit of lessons. Say something about the next lesson to increase the group's interest and ask them to invite others to join the group.