

And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15

The Young Rulers Questions



LEADER BIBLE STUDY

CONTEXT AND COMMENTARY FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND PREPARATION

(For age-appropriate language, use the Bible story on the following pages.)

LIFE POINT

People can choose to do what is right even when it is hard.

LEVEL OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

People are responsible for their choices and any consequences for their actions.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Mark 10:17-22;
Luke 18:18-23

BIBLE VERSE

“Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.”
Psalm 119:34

Which of the following do you protect most fiercely: your time, your talent, or your treasure?

Some people protect their time, perhaps because they have so little of it, and it is so easily wasted. Others protect their talent, fearful that if they are generous with using it to serve others, they might get asked to serve too often or be taken advantage of. For many people, they most closely guard their treasure-their financial resources.

The rich young ruler clearly fell into the latter category. When Jesus asked him to give them away, he could not or would not do it.

Notice when Jesus questioned him about keeping the Commandments, He did not quote all ten. In both the Mark and Luke accounts, He chose to mention only some. What do all of these commands have in common?

Jesus chose to mention commands that specifically address a person's relationship with others. In response, the man claimed to have consistently treated others in a way that honored God and kept His commands. Jesus then gave him a challenge. What was that challenge?

You may have read this challenge as a test of the man's willingness to obey sacrificially, and that is undoubtedly part of it, but remember that Jesus had just asked the man if he had kept the Commandments regarding how he treated others. Is it possible that Jesus' challenge further revealed the man's deep-rooted selfishness, even though he was checking all the right religious boxes? After all, by walking away, the man chose to keep himself comfortable, surrounded by his money and possessions, rather than financially helping others who really needed it.

As you pray this week, ask God to help you see in which areas of your life you fiercely protect your time, talent, or treasure. Ask Him to show you when that protectiveness veers into selfishness and an unwillingness to serve or help others, even if you have ample resources to do so. Ask God to change your heart so that you hold nothing back in obedience to Him.



TELL THE STORY

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Play: “Would You Rather.” Tell kids you will give them two choices, and they’ll run to one side of the room or the other to show which one they’d rather do. Say, “In our story today, a man had to make a choice if he would follow God by giving up all the things he owned.” Ask questions like “Would you rather have spaghetti for hair or maple syrup for sweat?” “Would you rather sneeze glitter or burp bubbles?” “Would you rather explore the deep ocean or outer space?” “Would you rather help cook dinner or wash all the dishes?”

1. GETTING TO THE POINT

- **Invite** the preteens to share a time when they had to make a difficult or important choice.
- **Encourage** the group to listen respectfully while the preteen shares, and ask appropriate questions when needed.
- **Close** by praying for each preteen by name, asking God to guide them in making wise choices.

2. LOOK IN THE BOOK

- **State** that today's Bible story is found in two books of the Bible-Mark and Luke.
- **Request** all boys to locate Mark 10:17-22 and all girls to locate Luke 18:18-23.
- **Instruct** each group to read its passage silently, then as you read each passage aloud, ask them to raise their hands if they hear any differences between the two.
- **Invite** either group to answer: "How is the man described in the passage you read?" (Some versions will give descriptors, such as rich, young, ruler to describe the man.)
- **Distribute** a color sheet of paper to every preteen. Instruct them to get into groups of five, with each group having one paper of every color. If you have an odd number, distribute the missing colors) so that every group has all five colors.
- **Assist** preteens who are new or may have trouble finding a group.
- **Distribute** markers and explain that groups should choose one of the Bible story passages and divide the passage into five sections. Each group member should read one section and make a cartoon illustration on her paper of what she read.
- **Watch** for when most groups are done or when time is almost up, and call for attention.
- **Invite** each group to display its pictures on the clothesline. Offer encouragement as the pictures are shared.



TELL THE STORY

3. REVIEW CHALLENGE

- Remove the pictures from the clothesline, turn them facedown on a table, and shuffle them.
- Invite teams to race to locate their team's sheets and assemble them back in the correct order of the Bible story.
- Point out that in the Bible story, Jesus reminded the young man about the commandments that the young man had kept all his life. Then Jesus told the young man that he needed to sell all of his possessions. Selling your possessions is not the way to eternal life. Jesus was teaching the man that keeping the law, the commandments, while also loving possessions more than people, did not coincide with faith in Christ.
- Jesus challenged the man to give up what he loved the most, which were his things.
- Use "Sharing the Gospel with Kids" (page 5) to share with preteens how they can make a decision to follow Jesus.
- Tell preteens if they have not made the choice to follow Jesus as Savior, you would love to talk with them about that decision with a parent or guardian.
- Follow your church's protocol for salvation conversations with kids.
- Ask each group a review question in the sidebar until preteens answer all questions correctly.

4. UNIT VERSE CHALLENGE

- Invite a volunteer who has attended each session to recite the unit verse and share what the verse is about.
- Display the "Unit 2 Verse" and lead everyone to read it aloud.
- Use a marker to circle all the nouns and action words in the verse.
- Form as many groups of preteens as you have words circled and give each group markers and a half sheet of poster board.
- Assign each group a circled word and allow time for groups to illustrate their words.
- Reassemble and allow each group to share its poster.
- Recite the verse together, using the illustrations to help preteens remember the words.

5. APPLY THE BIBLE AND PRAY

- In one minute or less, share the story of when you trusted in Jesus as your Savior. Invite preteens to share the name of someone they know who has made the decision to follow and obey Jesus.
- Mention that Jesus was not saying that it was wrong to have possessions. Instead, He was pointing out to the man that he lacked one thing-a love for the Lord, which is the reason and motivation for wanting to obey and keep the commandments.
- Pray for each preteen by name and ask God to help him or her to know and follow Jesus as Savior.
- Dismiss preteens to Live It Out groups.



BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Place a variety of items from your home or classroom on the table. Research their prices, but don't tell anyone. Ask preteens to guess the price of each item. Work in teams to see who can get closest without going over the price. Say "These items have value, but nothing is more valuable than God!"

DAY OFF

Give kids paper and markers. Ask "If you had a whole day off at home, when you could do whatever you wanted, what would you do?" Tell them to draw it. Then ask "If God asked you to give up all the things you drew and wrote down, would you be willing to give it up to follow God?"

COIN HUNT

Say "We are going to play a game about treasure. In our Bible story, there was a leader who was very rich. Jesus asked him to give away all his treasure. We are going to play a game about treasure." Ask preteens to face the wall and close their eyes. Hide many coins all around the room. When you say "Go!" preteens can search for coins. Play a few rounds. Say "Was it easy or hard to find the coins? What would it feel like to give up all your coins if God asked you to? How can we give God our best?"

CRAB WALK RELAY

Say "In our story, the man came and knelt down before Jesus. He wanted to know how to follow God. We are going to play a game where we get on the ground." Divide kids into two teams. Line teams up on the same side of the room. Instruct preteens that on their turn, they will "crab walk" down to one side of the room and crab walk back. When one player returns, the next can go. Play until everyone goes. If you have uneven turns, make one player go twice.

PLAY-DOH CREATIONS

Instruct preteens to make valuable possessions out of play-doh. Give them suggestions like gaming systems, phones, jewelry, makeup, sporting equipment, fidget toys, etc. Have preteens show to the class what they think is valuable. Say "In our story, Jesus asked a man to give up all his valuables. Would you be willing to give up your creation to follow Jesus?" Have kids trade sculptures with someone else, and smash the creation that someone else made. Say "Following Jesus is more valuable than anything else."