

Lesson 9:

The Widow's Mite/The Rich Young Ruler

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

Matthew 6; Mark 12, Luke 21

MEMORY WORK:

Luke 19:10

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

One way I show God that I love Him is by giving cheerfully (gladly; with a good attitude).

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION:

Review last week's lesson.

Jesus was the best Teacher that has ever lived. He taught important lessons about how we should live so we can go to heaven. We can learn the same lessons He taught by reading the Bible. Today we are going to talk about an important lesson Jesus taught about how we should give.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Some of the Jewish leaders [Pharisees, Herodians (Mark 12:13), Sadducees (Mark 12:18), and Jewish scribes (Mark 12:28)] came to Jesus to try to trick Him with difficult questions. They wanted to find some excuse to have Jesus arrested so that they could stop His teaching and His miracles. These men thought they were better than other people. They often wore special clothing to set themselves apart from everyone else. When they gave to the poor and put money in the Temple treasury, they made sure that other people saw what they were doing. They liked to draw attention to themselves and make others think, "Wow, look how religious they are!" These men thought they should even have seats of honor in the synagogues. But Jesus condemned them for trying to make themselves look better than everyone else when their actions (e.g., taking away widows' houses, etc.) showed that they loved themselves and not God.
2. Jesus and His apostles were sitting in the Temple courtyard, watching people put money (their offerings to God) into the treasury box. Jesus had just finished condemning the Jewish leaders for their arrogant, show-off behavior when He spotted a widow approaching the box. He saw her put two small copper coins into the treasury box. He had seen a multitude of people put large sums of money into the box, but He was much more impressed with what this poor widow had done. Even though the other people gave large amounts of money, they gave out of their abundance. They wouldn't miss the money they put in the treasury box; they were not

giving all they could. They were giving so that others could see them and praise them. The poor widow gave to God out of love. Jesus told the apostles that the widow gave more than the rich people because she willingly gave all she had; she truly sacrificed to God.

HISTORICAL NOTE: The Temple in which Jesus was sitting was the one being built by Herod Antipas—the same Herod who beheaded John (Matthew 14:1-12) and who would be part of Jesus’ mock trials before His crucifixion. In the ruins of this Temple, archaeologists have found several treasury boxes with cone-like openings on top through which money could be deposited.

The widow’s mites were two “leptons” (*lepta*), which were Jewish coins made before the Romans took over Palestine. The word lepton means “thin.” As its name implies, this tiny coin was thin, very lightweight, and made of inferior bronze or copper. These coins may have been worth as much as 3.5 cents or as little as 2 cents. Since the average daily wage was about 18 to 20 cents (one denarius), the mites would have been a sizable part of the common person’s daily income.

3. Why do we give things to people? When we love and appreciate someone for what they do for us, we want to show them how we feel by giving them something special (Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, birthdays, teacher’s gifts, etc.). God gives us many wonderful blessings because of His great love for us. So how do we show God that we love Him and appreciate all He’s done for us? By giving back to Him! We should plan (“purpose”) what to give, with much thought and prayer. If you get an allowance, you should plan to put some of it aside for your contribution on Sunday. If you earn money by cutting grass or baby-sitting, you should make it a habit to save some of your earnings to give back to God.
4. What is our money (contribution) used for? We give money to help missionaries and teachers and preachers tell others about Jesus, both here and in other parts of the world. We give our money to buy things (food, clothing, medicines) for people who have lost their jobs or can’t work. We give our money so we can have a place to worship and materials to use in Bible class. We give our money to buy Bibles for people who don’t have any. We give our money to help children who do not have a home.
5. Do we give other things to God besides money? Yes! We can give our time and talents (abilities) to help others and honor God. Under the Old Law, the Jews not only gave gold or silver to God, they also offered sacrifices at their place of worship (Tabernacle, synagogue, or Temple) to show their love for Him. Today our sacrifices include praising God, doing good to others, sharing what we have (Hebrews 13:15-16), being kind and fair to others, and being humble (Micah 6:6-8).
6. When do we give? We are told to give on the first day of the week, Sunday (1 Corinthians 16:2), but there are also other times when we can give (i.e., whenever there is a special need—2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Acts 6:1-4).
7. How do we give? We should give cheerfully, with a willing heart—not grudgingly. A cheerful giver never says, “Do I have to give **my** money? Why should I give **my** money?” (2 Corinthians 9:7). No matter how much I give, if my attitude toward God isn’t right, I am not making the kind of gift God expects or appreciates. A large amount of money given with the

wrong attitude is worthless in God's sight.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (note disclaimers):

- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- ABeka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book;)
- Free Bible Images – Saved on flash drive. Can be presented on classroom tv. Script included in lesson file. This lesson will have two files: "09A" is the widow, "09B" is the Rich Young Ruler
- Pennies or play money

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS:

SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Coin Rubbings – Make copies of the sheet that says "God loves a cheerful giver." Bring various coins for the students to rub. This will probably be a new activity for this age group so give lots of guidance.
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WEDNESDAY NIGHT

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday's lesson (see N.T. 5 Review Questions for example questions). Continue talking about making a habit of saving money for the weekly contribution.
2. A good object lesson would be to give each child ten one dollar bills (play money), and ask them to pretend this is their allowance, given to them on Saturday morning. Play-act the part of the mother taking each child shopping for the day, (i.e., toy store, the mall, grocery store, etc.), and have the child "spend" his money on various items. At the end of the shopping trip, have each child count how much money is left. Some may not have anything. Ask them "How much money do you have left to give to God tomorrow?" Help the children think about planning ahead so that their offering to God is set aside first before they spend all that they have on themselves.
3. Build on the object lesson by showing that if they are given more from God, they should also give more to God ("storing up as he may prosper"—1 Corinthians 16:2). Give the children twenty play dollars instead, and show how they should give two times as much as they gave when they only had ten dollars.
4. In Luke 18, we read about a man who came to see Jesus—a wealthy young man (vss. 18- 30). He had trouble letting go of his riches for God. He asked Jesus what he needed to do to inherit eternal life (to go to heaven and be with God forever).
5. He assured Jesus that he had been careful to obey the Old Testament laws (the Law of Moses) all his life (from his youth). Jesus knew that this was partly true, but He knew that the man had not really followed one of the commandments very well: the tenth commandment
6. of the Ten Commandments (You shall not covet/strongly crave things...). Jesus knew that the man loved material things (e.g., money, clothes, games, and toys) more than he loved spiritual things (e.g., God, heaven, helping others, and the Church).
7. Jesus told the rich young man that to make sure he would be with God, he needed to let go of all of his material possessions—his stuff. He needed to sell everything he had and then follow Him. The young man went away sorrowful, because he did not want to do what Jesus told him to do. He had a lot of money, and he wasn't willing to give it up. He did not want to give up all the things he had in order to follow Jesus. Things were very important to him— more important than God, and more important than heaven. Read Matthew 6:19-20; 16:24.
8. After the rich young man walked away from Jesus, Jesus told His disciples how hard it is for a rich person to go to heaven—harder than it is for a camel to go through the eye/hole in a needle. But He also told His disciples that with God, all things are possible. He then told His disciples that those who are willing to give everything up for the Kingdom (things, and even their family if it is necessary to do what's right) will be blessed on Earth and in heaven.
9. Let's be sure to never love money and things more than others. Use every opportunity you have to help those in need and to share with and give to others—especially God, Who gave us our things in the first place!

Review Questions

1. Where was Jesus in this story?
 - a. In the Temple
2. What was a synagogue?
 - a. A place of worship and study of the Scriptures
3. How were the Jews putting their money in the box?
 - a. They were doing it to be seen of men. They were making a big show about it.
4. In what way were they not giving in the right way?
 - a. They were giving out of their abundance, not making a real sacrifice.
5. How much did the widow give to the Temple?
 - a. Two mites
6. About how much was a mite worth?
 - a. Two or three cents
7. How did the widow give her money in the right way?
 - a. She gave all she had to the Temple, making a real sacrifice.
8. When do we give money to the Church today?
 - a. On the first day of the week—Sunday
9. With what attitude are we to give?
 - a. With a cheerful heart and not grudgingly
10. What else can we give to God besides our money?
 - a. Our time, abilities, and our possessions

