

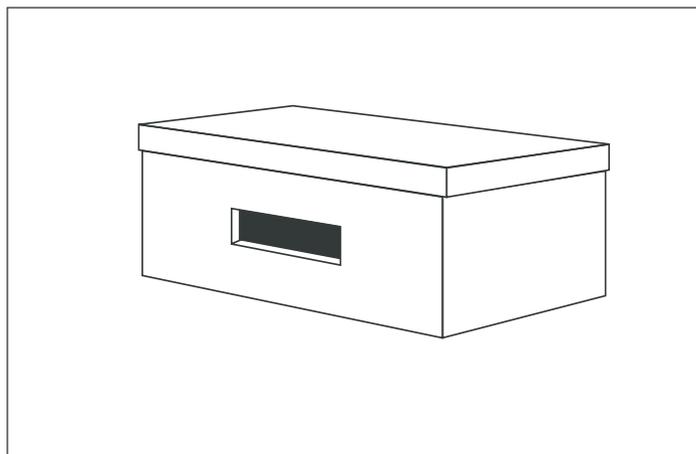
“What Shall I Do That I May Inherit Eternal Life?”

Lesson 17

Mark 10:17–30; 12:41–44; Luke 12:13–21; 14; 16

Purpose To help class members understand that we must be willing to sacrifice the things of this world to obtain a place in the kingdom of heaven.

- Preparation**
1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures:
 - a. Mark 10:17–30; 12:41–44. A rich young man asks what he must do to gain eternal life, and Jesus teaches that trusting in riches can keep a person out of the kingdom of God. Jesus praises a poor widow for casting two mites into the treasury.
 - b. Luke 12:13–21. Through the parable of the rich fool, Jesus teaches the dangers of covetousness. He exhorts his followers to seek heavenly, rather than earthly, treasures.
 - c. Luke 14:15–33. Through the parable of the great supper, Jesus teaches that those who follow him must be willing to forsake all else.
 - d. Luke 16:1–12. Through the parable of the unjust steward, Jesus teaches his followers to seek spiritual wealth with the same enthusiasm as those who seek worldly wealth.
 2. Additional reading: Matthew 19:16–30; Luke 18:18–30; 21:1–4; Jacob 2:18–19.
 3. If the picture Christ and the Rich Young Ruler (Gospel Art Picture Kit 245) is available, use it during the lesson.
 4. If you use the attention activity, make a monkey trap or draw one on the chalkboard (see the illustration below). To make a monkey trap, obtain a box with a lid. Secure the lid to the box, and cut in one side of the box an opening large enough for you to insert an open hand but not a fist. Put a piece of fruit or some nuts inside the box.



5. Suggestion for teaching: Nephi said, “I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23). Study *Teaching—No Greater Call*, pages 85–86 and 116–17, to see how you can help class members liken, or apply, the scriptures to their lives.

Suggested Lesson Development

Attention Activity As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson.

Display the trap you have made or drawn (see the “Preparation” section). Explain that a trap like this can be used to catch a monkey. A container is secured to the ground, and a treat (such as nuts or fruit) is placed inside. The hole in the container is large enough for a monkey’s empty hand to enter easily but too small for the monkey’s hand and the treat to come out together (you may want to demonstrate this). A monkey sees the treat and reaches in to get it. Once the monkey grabs the treat, it will allow itself to be caught rather than let go of the treat. It will not sacrifice this prize for a greater one—its freedom.

Point out that sometimes we make mistakes similar to the monkey’s. When we obtain something appealing, we may be unwilling to let it go even if keeping it might cause us to lose something better. This lesson is about some things we may have to sacrifice in order to receive the greatest blessing: eternal life with our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Scripture Discussion and Application As you teach the following scripture passages, help class members understand that each of us may be asked to sacrifice different things for the kingdom of God. We should be willing to sacrifice whatever God asks of us.

1. Trusting in riches can keep a person out of the kingdom of God.

Read and discuss Mark 10:17–30; 12:41–44. Display the picture of Christ and the rich young ruler.

- What did Jesus say to the rich young man who asked how to receive eternal life? (See Mark 10:17–21.) Why did these instructions sadden the young man? (See Mark 10:22.) Why do you think the Lord asked him to give up all his possessions? How does the Savior’s instruction to the rich young man apply to us?

President Joseph F. Smith said: “The difficulty with the young man [was that] he had great possessions, and he preferred to rely upon his wealth rather than forsake all and follow Christ. . . . No man can obtain the gift of eternal life unless he is willing to sacrifice all earthly things in order to obtain it” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 261).

- What did Jesus teach about the relationship between having riches and entering the kingdom of God? (See Mark 10:23–25.) What is the difference between possessing riches and trusting in them? How can we maintain a proper attitude toward earthly possessions? (See Mosiah 4:19, 21.)

President Smith also taught: “God is not a respecter of persons. The rich man may enter into the kingdom of heaven as freely as the poor, if he will bring his heart and affections into subjection to the law of God and to the principle of truth; if he will place his affections upon God, his heart upon the truth, and his soul upon the accomplishment of God’s purposes, and not fix his affections and his hopes upon the things of the world” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 260–61).

- Contrast the rich young man with the poor widow in Mark 12:41–44. What was the widow willing to do that the rich young man was not? (See Mark 12:44. She was willing to give all she had for the kingdom of God.) How can we develop an attitude like the poor widow’s?

2. Seek heavenly, rather than earthly, treasures.

Read and discuss Luke 12:13–21.

- What did Jesus tell the man who was concerned about his inheritance? (See Luke 12:13–15.) What is covetousness? (A strong desire for wealth or for another person’s possessions.) What things do people covet today? Why is it dangerous to covet?
- In a world that often places great value on material possessions, how can we remember that our worth as individuals is not determined by how much we own? (See Luke 12:15.) What blessings are more important than material possessions? (See Luke 12:31–34; D&C 6:7 for some examples.)
- How had the man in the parable of the rich fool been blessed? (See Luke 12:16.) What did he decide to do with his excess? (See Luke 12:18.) What did his actions demonstrate? (See Luke 12:19–21. His heart was set on his riches.) What might he have done with his abundance if he had been seeking heavenly, rather than earthly, treasures? (See Mosiah 4:26; D&C 52:40.)
- Why do many people set their hearts on worldly wealth even though they know it is only temporary? How can we determine whether we are too concerned with material possessions? How can we be more generous with our material wealth and other blessings, such as time and talents? (You may want to encourage class members to give more thought to these questions outside of class, by themselves or with family members.)

3. Followers of Christ must be willing to forsake all to be true disciples.

Read and discuss selected verses from Luke 14:15–33.

- Interpreting the parable of the great supper, Elder James E. Talmage taught that the invited guests represented the covenant people, or house of Israel. When the servant (Jesus) asked them to come to the feast (accept the gospel), they made excuses and refused to come (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [1916], 452). Why didn’t the Israelites come to the feast? Who are “the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind” who did come to the feast? (Luke 14:21).
- How does the parable of the great supper apply to us? What excuses do we make for not feasting at the Lord’s table—for example, not reading the scriptures or going to the temple? How can we demonstrate our acceptance of the Lord’s invitation to the feast?
- Jesus taught that his disciples must be willing to sacrifice anything that he asks of them (Luke 14:26–33). What are some things early disciples were asked to sacrifice? What are some things disciples today are asked to sacrifice? What has the Lord asked you to sacrifice? How have you been blessed for making these sacrifices?

4. Seek spiritual wealth with enthusiasm and energy.

Read and discuss selected verses from Luke 16:1–12. To help class members understand the parable of the unjust steward, share the following information:

Elder James E. Talmage explained that the Lord used this parable “to show the contrast between the care, thoughtfulness, and devotion of men engaged in the money-making affairs of earth, and the half hearted ways of many who are

professedly striving after spiritual riches.” The Lord was not suggesting that we should emulate the evil practices of the unjust servant, but that we should seek spiritual wealth with the same eagerness and effort that the servant displayed in seeking material wealth.

Elder Talmage continued, “Worldly-minded men do not neglect provision for their future years, and often are sinfully eager to amass plenty; while the ‘children of light,’ or those who believe spiritual wealth to be above all earthly possessions, are less energetic, prudent, or wise” (*Jesus the Christ*, 463).

- Ask class members to silently compare the amount of time, thought, and energy they devote to accumulating money and possessions with the amount of time, thought, and energy they devote to seeking spiritual treasures. How can we become more dedicated and enthusiastic in seeking spiritual treasures?

Conclusion

Testify that to receive eternal life, we must be willing to put away the things of the world and serve the Lord with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. Encourage class members to be grateful for earthly blessings but strive to view them in the proper perspective.

Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

1. Humility

Read and discuss Luke 14:7–11.

- How have you seen the truth of Jesus’ statement in Luke 14:11?

2. True charity

- What can we learn from Luke 14:12–14 about how to serve? (Answers may include that we should not serve with the goal of getting something in return, and we should not limit our service to those who will repay or even thank us.) What should be our motives for serving?

- How does true charity help us grow closer to the Lord?

3. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus

Have class members read and discuss the parable in Luke 16:19–31.

- After the rich man died, what did he ask Father Abraham to do for his brethren? (See Luke 16:27–28.) How did Abraham respond? (See Luke 16:29–31.) What does this teach us about listening to the prophet?
- What does this parable teach us about the importance of caring for the poor? (See D&C 104:18.)

Youth may enjoy dramatizing this parable. Place two class members (Abraham and Lazarus) on one side of a barrier such as a row of chairs (the great gulf), and another class member (the rich man) on the other side. Have a fourth class member be the narrator. Have the class members read their lines directly out of Luke 16:19–31, with the narrator reading everything that is not directly spoken by one of the other characters. (See *Teaching—No Greater Call*, 141–42.)